

# Western Australian Bird Notes

Quarterly Newsletter of  
**Birds Australia Western Australian Inc**  
(a division of Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union)

No 99 September 2001

ISSN 1445-3983

## WHERE PLATEAU AND PLAIN MEET: BIRDWATCHING IN JOHN FORREST NATIONAL PARK

Although most of the landscape immediately surrounding Perth has been altered to some degree, a number of small parks and reserves have been put aside on the edge of the metropolitan area. One of these, John Forrest National Park, is located approximately 28 km east of Perth – (to the number two entrance) via the Great Eastern Highway (Figure 1). Here one can see a mix of the birds of the Jarrah (*Eucalyptus marginata*) Forest and the drier Wandoo (*E. wandoo*) Woodland areas, as both vegetation communities are represented in the park. Over one hundred species have been recorded including nine honeyeaters, nine parrots and cockatoos and eight raptors.

To get to the park you need to have the use of a motor vehicle, as it is poorly served by public transport, no form of which currently enters the park. The need for such a service is mentioned in the management plan (CALM 1994). Buses go past the park on Great Eastern Highway, some two kilometres from the facilities area and, on Sundays and public holidays, the service is currently limited to six eastbound and five westbound buses for the whole day.

John Forrest was Western Australia's first national park, established in 1898 and declared an "A" class reserve in 1900. Originally known as Greenmount National Park, the name was later changed to Forrest National Park and, in 1947, changed again to its current name "in recognition of John Forrest's involvement in the establishment of the park" (CALM 1994, p. 46). As was the case with many of Australia's early national parks,

facilities focused more on recreation than conservation. Now, even though the emphasis has changed, many of these facilities are still present. The park is managed for the people of Western Australia by the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) and forms part of the Darling Range Regional Park.

John Forrest National Park covers 2676 ha on the western edge of the Darling Plateau —a landform

composed mainly of granite capped with laterite. Like Perth, it experiences a Mediterranean climate of hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters but due to its elevation above the coastal plain receives a higher average rainfall, varying from 217 mm in June to 12 mm in January. Similarly, average temperatures follow the seasons with the coolest being in July - 15.4 °C — and the hottest in February - 30.8 °C.

In 1978 the park was placed on the Register of the National Estate due to its natural attributes. These attributes, added to its location and the facilities that have been established, attract a broad spectrum of the population.

### Features

The natural attributes of John Forrest National Park include the scenery and the flora and fauna. Its visual landscape comprises "valleys and undulating hills

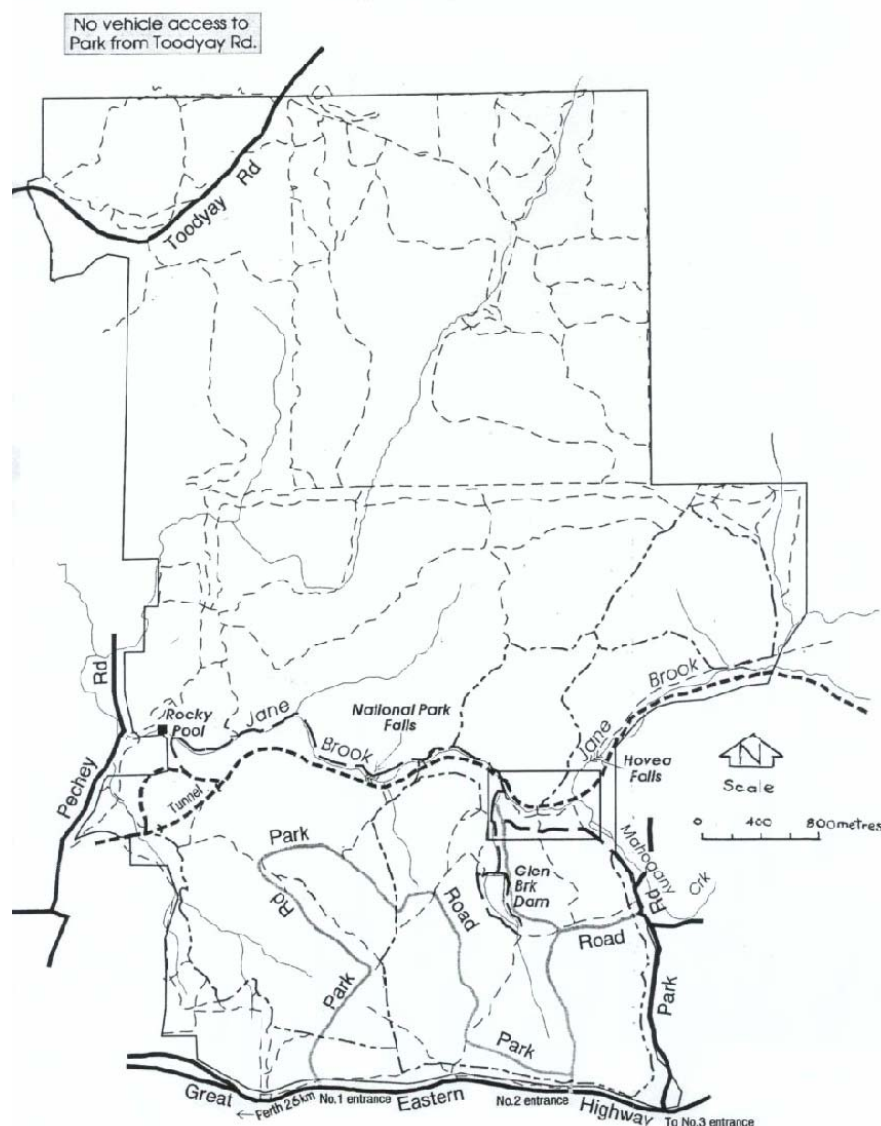
covered with a diversity of vegetation interspersed with granite outcrops, waterfalls and stream courses, and is one of its most valuable resources" (CALM 1994, p. 20).

From the top of the scarp, there are magnificent views over the Swan Coastal Plain to the City of Perth and the



The Red-capped Parrot is a  
feature bird of John Forrest  
National Park  
*Drawing by Judy Blyth*

## JOHN FORREST National Park



**Figure 1.** Location map of John Forrest National Park (Based on CALM 1997).

coast beyond. The valley of Jane Brook which runs east to west through the park also has scenic views, particularly around its two main waterfalls - Hovea Falls and National Park Falls, which are major attractions of the park after substantial falls of rain. Jane Brook is the park's main drainage line and usually flows between May and November depending upon rainfall. Other small streams and brooks flow into it including Mahogany Creek and Glen Brook, both of which have small dams built across them, the latter being used for watering the gardens around the main facilities area and for flushing out the swimming pool on Jane Brook. The Mahogany Creek dam originally served the same purpose but is now used as "a refuge for waterbirds and aquatic fauna" (CALM 1994, p. 19).

A major element of the scenery within the park is the relatively unspoilt native vegetation. Although most of the park is classified on a broad scale as Jarrah/Marri forest and Marri/Wandoo/Jarrah woodland (CALM 1987, map 4), there are also a number of specialised and interesting

vegetation communities. These include the herbfields and heaths associated with granite outcrops, mixed species heaths of the valley slopes and Sheoak (*Allocasuarina*) woodlands. During the spring months when flowering is at its peak, the attraction for tourists is at its greatest.

The vegetation communities support a diverse fauna that is typical of such areas and includes a number of species that have been declared as rare or in need of special protection, for example, the Chuditch and Short-billed Black-Cockatoo. These wild creatures can enhance the visitor experience for many. As well as natural attributes, the park has cultural and historic landscapes that are of significant interest. There are a number of Aboriginal sites within the park but the "locations must be confidential as they can be threatened by over-visitation and vandalism" (CALM 1987, p. 33). The most obvious feature apart from the roads and buildings is the old railway alignment and its associated bridges, embankments and tunnel that generally follows the course of Jane Brook. This was the route of the main east-west railway from 1896 to 1966 when it was replaced by a new line through the Avon Valley to the north. Two stations within the park — Hovea Station and National Park Station — allowed picnickers and day trippers to travel from Perth to enjoy its attributes. The John Forrest Heritage Trail now follows the railway alignment through the park. To the south-east of the old National Park Station site is the main facilities and picnic area (Figure 2). The

rock gardens, paths, swimming pool, picnic shelters, parking areas and scenic drive were built by sustenance workers during the Great Depression of the 1930s. The tearooms were also built around that time. More recent additions are the rangers' houses and the tavern.

One drawback is that the park is directly below the eastern approaches to Perth Airport and the noise of planes large and small can be annoying when trying to locate birds by their call or enjoying the peace of the bush.

### Birdwatching

If visiting the park on a fine weekend or public holiday, plan to be there early to secure a parking bay and enjoy the bird life in the rock gardens and picnic areas before the crowds arrive. This is one of the three best birding sites that are not too distant from the car park, the others being:

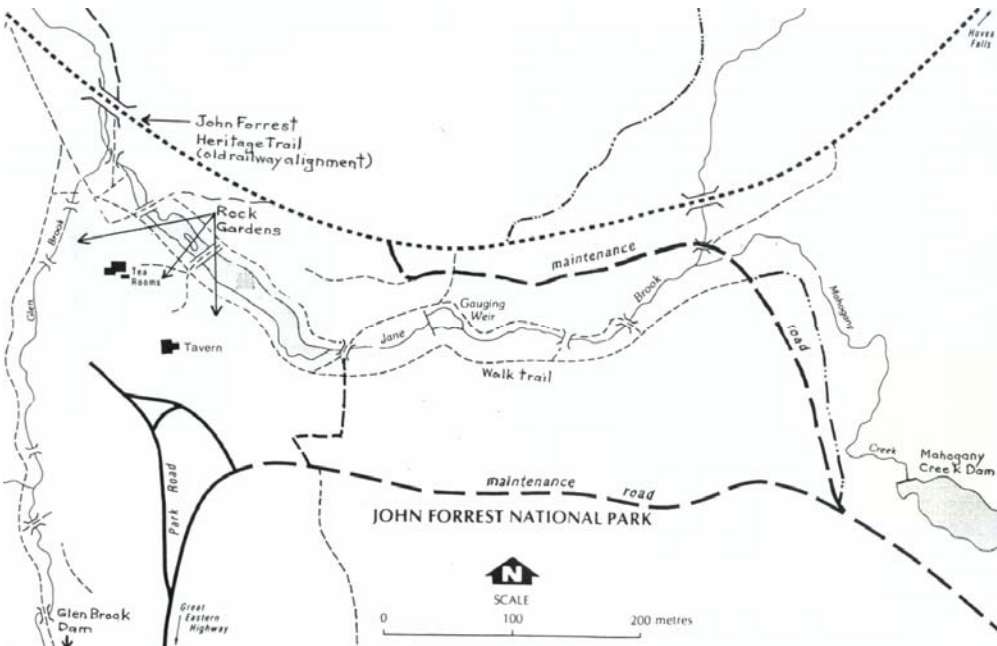
Hovea Falls — the heath to the south of the railway alignment and the woodland along Jane Brook below the falls, and

Glen Brook Dam — the southern end near the bend in Park Road and the eastern side.

The fire and management trails provide access to the less used areas deep within the park but don't necessarily guarantee a better bird list. All three sites mentioned above have water for at least part of the year that acts as an attractant for birds and people alike. Table 1 lists the twenty most commonly seen species at each of the three sites.

A recent Spring visit has been used as a basis for the following commentary:

Good weather for birding, moderate cloud, a light easterly breeze and a forecast maximum of 30° C. Arriving at the car park, you find that the sound of traffic on the main east-west highway is but a distant murmur. In the trees above Striated Pardalotes urge you to 'be quick, be quick' as they glean lerps off the leaves. New Holland Honeyeaters dash madly from bush to bush, particularly the red-flowered *Calothamnus* (*Calothamnus quadrifidus*) and introduced bottlebrushes, while Red Wattlebirds attempt to defend their favourite patch. A male Splendid Fairy-wren,



**Figure 2.** Map of John Forrest National Park facilities area and its surrounds (based on CALM 1997).

resplendent in recently moulted plumage of cobalt, sky-blue and black, flies across the car park to join some females in the low shrubs that line the edge. At this early hour the purring sound of its tiny wings moving at speed can be heard. Nearby a small clan of Western Thornbills forage, easier to follow by their call than by their movement. The deep 'oom, oom' calls of Common Bronzewing can also be heard across Glen Brook.

Rank	Rock Gardens	Hovea Falls	Glen Brook Dam
1	Pacific Black Duck	New Holland Honeyeater	Australasian Grebe
2	New Holland Honeyeater	Brown Honeyeater	Grey Fantail
3	Australian Ringneck	Silvereye	Red-capped Parrot
4	Australian Raven	Splendid Fairy-wren	Tree Martin
5	Australian Magpie	Tree Martin	Western Gerygone
6	Silvereye	Australian Raven	New Holland Honeyeater
7	Brown Honeyeater	Red-capped Parrot	Brown Honeyeater
8	Laughing Kookaburra	Striated Pardalote	Striated Pardalote
9	Red-capped Parrot	Grey Fantail	Australian Raven
10	Splendid Fairy-wren	Australian Magpie	Splendid Fairy-wren
11	Striated Pardalote	Western Gerygone	Pacific Black Duck
12	Western Gerygone	Australian Ringneck	Australian Ringneck
13	Galah	Golden Whistler	Western Thornbill
14	Grey Fantail	Weebill	Silvereye
15	Magpie-lark	Laughing Kookaburra	Western Spinebill
16	Red Wattlebird	Grey Butcherbird	Australian Magpie
17	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Western Thornbill	Laughing Kookaburra
18	Common Bronzewing	Western Rosella	Grey Shrike-thrush
19	Grey Butcherbird	Rufous Whistler	Golden Whistler
20	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Galah	Inland Thornbill

**Table 1.** The twenty most commonly seen species at each site.

As you begin to cross the bridge over Jane Brook, the loud and almost startling 'e-chong' call of a Rufous Whistler comes from directly above in a eucalypt overhanging the brook and is followed by a sustained burst of whistling. Western Gerygones sound like they are having trouble getting started, even though the sun has been up for some time, and another group of Splendid Fairy-wrens scurry about the empty picnic area near the swimming pool. Pacific Black Duck and Australian Wood Duck floating on the pool seem particularly pleased to see you until they realise that you are not going to feed them. The song of Brown Honeyeaters can be heard all around and there appear to be almost as many of them today as the more usual New Holland Honeyeaters. A pair of the latter have their nest too close to the edge of a bush and it is ransacked by Australian Ravens. A Grey Fantail 'chips' excitedly as this goes on and a small flock of Australian Ringnecks of the subspecies *semitorquatus* watch from a nearby tree.

Up to 50% of your bird list can be gleaned from this site and can include some of the less common visitors to the area. Ones to watch for are the endemic Red-capped Parrot, Western Thornbill and Western Wattlebird as well as White-cheeked Honeyeater, Rufous Whistler and Grey Shrike-thrush. By now the first car loads of picnickers have begun to lay claim to the barbecues and tables and, as more people arrive, many bird species retire to the edge of the picnic area, still able to be seen, but far less easily than before. Now is a good time to move on to the second site at Hovea Falls.

This site is reached most easily by walking east along the old railway alignment — watch out for cyclists here. As you move away from the rock gardens and approach the falls, Tree Martins can be seen high above, hawking for insects, along with a Little Eagle soaring on a small thermal created by the rock outcrop alongside the falls. These attractive birds breed in the park and are one of the most commonly seen raptors. In the heath on the hillside to your right (south), many small bird species can be found including Western Thornbill, Silvereye, Splendid Fairy-wren, New Holland Honeyeater and Western Spinebill. Other species such as Striated Pardalote, Australian Magpie, Galah, Red-capped Parrot and Australian Ringneck prefer the trees around the edge of this area.

Crossing the bridge over the falls, you then descend the rock outcrop past herbfields and sections covered in pink and white feather flowers (*Verticordia huegelii*) to a path that meanders along the brook edge. Here the breeze sighs through the top of the trees above your head and the main competition with the birds is the brook flowing past and the persistent singing of the cicadas. A Grey Shrike-thrush gives a squawk of alarm as you disturb it and Grey Fantails, Silvereyes and Brown Honeyeaters flit to and fro across the path. Large areas of bright green with orange flowers can be seen in the wetter areas. This introduced plant, a species of *Watsonia*, is gradually being brought under control. Away from that in the native vegetation, a Golden Whistler calls to its mate further up the hill; a Red-capped Parrot is busy feeding on the nuts of a Marri tree (*Eucalyptus calophylla*) and flies off as you approach

## Birds Australia Western Australia Inc Office, Perry House

71 Oceanic Drive, Floreat WA 6014

Hours: Monday-Friday 9:30 am to 12.30 pm  
Telephone: (08) 9383 7749  
Facsimile: (08) 9387 8412  
Email: [birdswa@starwon.com.au](mailto:birdswa@starwon.com.au)

### Birds Australia Home Page:

<http://www.birdsaustralia.com.au>

### Chairman:

Clive Nealon  
35 Hilarion Road, Duncraig WA 6023  
Tel: (08) 9448 5921  
E-mail: [clivenealon@bigpond.com](mailto:clivenealon@bigpond.com)

### Joint Editors:

John Blyth  
Tel: (08) 9405 5100 (w)  
Tel: (08) 9381 6293 (h)  
Fax: (08) 9306 1641 (w)  
E-mail: [johnbl@calm.wa.gov.au](mailto:johnbl@calm.wa.gov.au)

Allan Burbidge  
Tel: (08) 9405 5109 (w)  
Tel/Fax: (08) 9306 1642 (h)  
Fax: (08) 9306 1641 (w)  
E-mail: [austecol@cygnus.uwa.edu.au](mailto:austecol@cygnus.uwa.edu.au)

## 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
- except for Observations, 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 2001 Issue "Our Centenary"

1 November 2001 at Perry House

## Advertising Rates

1/4 page	\$30.00
1/2 page	\$50.00
Full page	\$90.00

while Splendid Fairy-wrens call to each other in the dense undergrowth — much harder to see here than in the rock gardens. Many of the wildflowers are at their best including *Leschenaultia*, *Grevillea*, *Dryandra*, pea flowers and the beautiful Granite Feather Flower (*Verticordia plumosa*). Species to watch for at this site are Western Rosella and Scarlet Robin. The path continues in a westerly direction and eventually links up with the railway alignment near the picnic area.

Back at the picnic area most parking bays, barbecues and tables have now been claimed by the influx of visitors. Between 11 am and 2 pm this area is often full to overflowing and the level of noise during these periods can be quite high. The main sources are vehicles, people talking and children playing, with the occasional loud roar as a football lands in the middle of a group of picnickers or a Laughing Kookaburra steals a sausage from a barbecue. Once you are seated at a table or on a rug on the ground, Australian Ringnecks arrive and, if not discouraged, will help themselves to your sandwiches, biscuits or cake as well as fruit. Around you Australian Magpies, Magpie-larks, more ringnecks and sometimes even Pacific Black Ducks will wait for handouts. A sweet tinkling sound draws the attention to a clan of Yellow-rumped Thornbills landing at the edge of the path and foraging with their characteristic hopping action. Other species that can be readily seen at this time are Australian Raven, Grey Butcherbird and Red Wattlebird. While all this action is occurring on the ground, a Galah quietly preens itself in the tree above, next to the hollow where its mate is incubating the eggs.

Once lunch is over, it is time to visit the third site, at Glen Brook Dam. From the picnic area, a trail along the western side of Glen Brook wends its way towards the destination. The thicker vegetation provides a cool and shady place for the birds to rest as the temperature has reached the promised maximum. Many species can still be heard although quieter than they were earlier. The trail rises as you approach the dam wall and then continues along the western side of the lake that has been created. Here Australasian Grebes dive in the deep water, Pacific Black Ducks are still hopeful that there might be a handout and a White-faced Heron stalks silently along the edge in the shadow of the overhanging trees. Arriving at the southern end of the dam, Tree Martins and Dusky Woodswallows can be seen hawking for insects on the freshening breeze. In the bushes along the south branch of Glen Brook Western Spinebills are nesting, a soft 'zit, zit' call announces the arrival of a group of Weebills while in the tree tops above Western Gerygones still sound sleepy. The raucous cackling of a family of Laughing Kookaburras then shatters the peace, drowning out the sounds of the smaller birds.

As you move along the eastern side of the dam a Splendid Fairy-wren practices its rodent run to draw you away from its nest. Brown Honeyeater, Red-capped Parrot, Silveryeye and Striated Pardalote are all seen again. On the dam wall there is a flash as a Sacred Kingfisher dives into the water before returning to its perch. Tree Martins swoop low over the water, their beaks just touching as they take a

drink with each dive. Rainbow Bee-eaters do the same from a perch in a nearby Marri.

From the dam you return to the picnic area via the same trail. The numbers of people have dropped considerably by now and the birds are starting to return to the rock gardens. Common Bronzewing quarter the ground near tables looking for crumbs and Australian Ravens pick over a chop bone at one of the barbecues. It has been a pleasant day and the bird list is up to the average expected (see Table 2). A couple of Red-capped Parrots fly across the car park as you drive past the gatehouse on the way back to Perth.

#### Site Statistics

Table 2 shows the average number of species that you can expect to see in each season. The average number of species endemic to the south-west of Western Australia that are likely to be recorded in each season is four although not always the same ones. These are listed in Table 3 along with some less common species that have been recorded in the park.

Season	Summer	Autumn	Winter	Spring
Average no. of species expected	31	32	34	31

**Table 2.** Average number of species likely to be seen in each season at John Forrest National Park.

Apart from the occasional aviary escapee, only five introduced species have been recorded in the park. The most common one is the Laughing Kookaburra, a native of eastern Australia, which was introduced from the South Perth Zoological Gardens in 1897. The Rock Dove, Laughing Turtle-Dove and Spotted Turtle-Dove are all seen occasionally, the latter two being introduced in the same way as the Laughing Kookaburra. A more ominous sign is the recently recorded breeding of Long-billed Corellas in the park.

Endemic species	Less common species
Long-billed Black-Cockatoo	Brown Quail
Short-billed Black-Cockatoo	Wedge-tailed Eagle
Western Rosella	Square-tailed Kite
Red-capped Parrot	Peregrine Falcon
Western Thornbill	Painted Button-quail
Western Wattlebird	Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo
Western Spinebill	Tawny Frogmouth
Red-eared Firetail	Southern Emu-wren

**Table 3.** Species endemic to the south-west of Western Australia likely to be seen in John Forrest National Park and some less common species that have been recorded there.

For a park that is heavily visited by a diverse range of people seeking a wide range of different experiences, the fact that one can still see most of the Jarrah forest bird

species as well as many from the drier Wandoo woodland areas is a tribute to the professionalism and care of the rangers.

**Note:** The statistics used in this article have been taken from over eleven years of regular data collection visits to John Forrest National Park.

**References** (The acronym CALM has been used in the referencing of this article to indicate a document published by the Department of Conservation and Land Management as listed below)

Department of Conservation and Land Management (1987). Northern Forest Region Regional Management Plan 1987 - 1997: Management Plan No 9. (Department of Conservation and Land Management, Perth).

Department of Conservation and Land Management (1994). John Forrest National Park Management Plan 1994 - 2004: Management Plan No 26. (Department of Conservation and Land Management, Perth).

Department of Conservation and Land Management (1997). John Forrest National Park (visitor leaflet), (Department of Conservation and Land Management, Perth).

**Peter Sandilands**

They established a one hectare 'arboretum' on half their block, long before tree-planting became fashionable. I think one of their happiest moments was when in 1987 a pair of White-breasted Robins nested in their newly created 'forest', for these were a species they had studied closely for years. Besides the robins, Dick was particularly interested in the reed-warblers that nested in the *Typha* around the dam adjoining their property, and in the Welcome Swallows that nested nearby. Besides these special interests, he recorded details of 4385 nests in the neighbourhood.

Eleanor and I first met the Brown's in 1980 after we had read in their first Annual Report that they had caught a number of Red-winged Fairy-wrens. We persuaded them to colour-band any wrens that they caught in the future, and thus began a long-term collaborative study that lasted fifteen years.

Dick was a good friend who will be sadly missed by many — especially those who enjoyed a good argument.

We hope that Molly will enjoy many more years on 'the block' and still find time to enjoy her birds; her writing is a joy to many.

**Ian Rowley**

*Editors' note:* a more complete obituary is published in the current issue of *Western Banders News* (No. 48, August 2001).

## Obituary

### IN MEMORY OF DICK BROWN 1915-2001

Dick and Molly Brown will be known to many BAWA members as two keen amateur ornithologists who amassed and published a great deal of information about the birds near their home at Middlesex, near Manjimup. Sadly, Dick died on 25 June 2001.

Dick grew up in the lowlands of Scotland, spent 1939-45 as a navigator in the RAF, followed by a range of jobs, finally marrying Molly and travelling to Australia in 1967. Eventually they settled near Manjimup in Western Australia in 1972.

They called their home 'The Middlesex Field Study Centre' and encouraged visitors from far and wide to enjoy their facilities and make use of their extensive library. Starting in 1974, Dick and Molly banded 47 500 birds in 66 species. Dick did much to spread a general interest in birds locally, and published his results in 14 successive Annual Reports of the Middlesex Field Study Centre, and in *Emu*, *Corella*, *Safring News*, *Australian Bird Watcher* and *Ibis*.

They set about being self-supporting: they kept a cow which Dick milked, and made butter and cheese; they kept chooks and grew their own vegetables, and Dick became the local bee expert, not only producing delicious honey, but a potent and delicious mead.

## 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* No. 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)**

**Emu** – 2, 4/07/01, Albany Hwy, 12 km SE of the Jarradale turnoff (Armadale) – GM

**Australian Shelduck** – 1000+, 13/07/2001, about 30 km SSW of Moorine Rock on lake on Nulla Nulla South Road, near Dulyalbin Rock (Yilgarn) – RS, JH

**Antarctic Prion** - 1, 17/6/2001, HPT/FO

**Slender-billed Prion** - 5, 17/6/2001, HPT/FO

**Wilson's Storm-Petrel** - 35+ (12 at one stop), 18/6/2000, HPT/FO (highest count for a Hillarys trip)

**Cattle Egret** – 1 (non-breeding bird with cows), 17/05/01 and again on 2/08/01, Blackadder Creek, Viveash (Swan) – MB, JW

**White-bellied Sea-Eagle** – 1 immature, 07/01, Quinns Rocks (Joondalup) – MS, KS (rare near Perth)

**Great Skua** - 36, 18/6/2000, HPT/FO (highest count for a Hillarys trip)

**Arctic Tern** - 1, 17/6/2001, HPT/FO/JD (detailed description available)

**Lesser Noddy** - 1, 17/6/2001, HPT/FO (vagrant near Perth)

**Redthroat** – 1, 14/3/01, ca 10 km north of Moora (Moora) – RD (western limit in this area)

**White-naped Honeyeater** – 3, 16/06/01, Dianella (Stirling) – RD, WB

**Southern Scrub-robin** – 4, 7/6/01, Tandegin Rock, ca 30 km SE of Merredin (Merredin) - RD

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

**Malleefowl** – 2, 29/06/01, Great Northern Highway 86 km N of Wubin (Yalgoo) – SD \* 1, 1/07/01, Thundelarra road, between Warriedar and Paynes Find (Yalgoo) - DA

**Bush Stone-curlew** – up to 4, 2-9/06/01, Sulphur Springs in the headwaters of the Strelley River East Branch (East Pilbara) - BM, JW, PS, MB

**Beach Stone-curlew** - 1, 1/06/01, Karratha (Roebourne) – BM (unusual on Pilbara mainland)

**Striated Grasswren** - lots, including a nest with eggs, 7/06/01, Sulphur Springs in the headwaters of the Strelley River East Branch (East Pilbara) - BM, JW, PS, MB

**Western Yellow Robin** – 1+, 24-26/06/01, Warrdagga Rock, ca 20 km E of Ninghan HS (Yalgoo) – AB, JR (N edge of range in this area)

**Golden Whistler** – 1 (adult male), 26/06/01, Warrdagga Rock, ca 20 km E of Ninghan HS (Yalgoo) – AB (N edge of range in this area)

## **KIMBERLEY**

**Helmeted Guineafowl** – 1, 19/06/01, Kalumburu (Wyndham – East Kimberley) - SW (established feral population 25 km from human habitation)

**Eastern Reef Egret** - 100+ (grey and white forms both numerous), 11/2000, Troughton Island (13° 45' S,

126° 09' E) (Wyndham – East Kimberley) – RC (Nesting in beach hibiscus in two locations on the west side of the island; eggs through to half-grown young, but less than half involved in nesting and many currently unoccupied nests)

**Brolga** - 3, 10/06/01, Kalumburu (Wyndham – East Kimberley) - SW

**Whimbrel** - 2, 9/06/01, Kalumburu (Wyndham – East Kimberley) - SW

**Eastern Curlew** – 10+, 8/06/01, Pago, near Kalumburu (Wyndham – East Kimberley) - SW

**Grey-tailed Tattler** – 11, 9/06/01, Kalumburu (Wyndham – East Kimberley) - SW

**Bush Stone-curlew** – 2, 14/06/01, Kalumburu (Wyndham – East Kimberley) - SW

**Pied Oystercatcher** – 11, 8/06/01, Pago, near Kalumburu (Wyndham – East Kimberley) - SW

**Red-capped Plover** - 9, 9/06/01, Kalumburu (Wyndham – East Kimberley) - SW

**Greater Sand Plover** - 9, 9/06/01, Kalumburu (Wyndham – East Kimberley) - SW

**Little Tern** – 100+ birds, at least 10 pairs breeding (three nests examined each had 2 eggs), 11/2000, Troughton Island (13° 45' S, 126° 09' E) (Wyndham – East Kimberley) – RC \* 2, 20/06/01, Kalumburu (Wyndham – East Kimberley) - SW

**Diamond Dove** - 5, 18/06/01, Kalumburu (Wyndham – East Kimberley) - SW (uncommon visitor to this area)

**Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo** - 3, 10/06/01, Kalumburu (Wyndham – East Kimberley) - SW

**Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo** - 1, 14/06/01, Kalumburu (Wyndham – East Kimberley) - SW (unusual in this area)

**Spangled Drongo** – 1, 25/05/01, Kalumburu (Wyndham – East Kimberley) - SW (rare near Kalumburu)

**Cicadabird** - 1 male, 27/05/01, Kalumburu (Wyndham – East Kimberley) - SW (1st sighting in 28 months)

## **OBSERVERS**

AB = Allan Burbidge

BM = Brenden Metcalf

DA = Don Anderson

FO = Frank O'Connor

GM = Greg Marston

HPT = Hillarys Pelagic Trip

JH = Joyce Hegney

JR = Julie Raines

JW = Jenifer Wilcox

KS = Karen Shaw

MB = Mike Bamford

MS = Mark Shaw

PS = Peter Smith

RC = Ray Chatto

RD = Robert Davis

RS = Rod Smith

SD = Stephen Davies

SW = Simon Wilson

WB = Wesley Bancroft

## Book review

### **BIRDS – THEIR HABITS AND SKILLS**

This book is an excellent general introduction to the evolution, life cycles and behavioural characteristics of birds. It is aimed at beginners in bird studies, but more experienced ornithologists and birdwatchers will find it rewarding, because several things set it apart from most other such books. First, the authors are both highly qualified academics working on the behaviour of birds, Gisela Kaplan as an ethologist (one who studies bird behaviour in the field) and Lesley Rogers as an expert on development of the avian brain and how that relates to behaviour. Secondly, an outstanding feature of the book is the emphasis throughout on evolutionary principles, analysing the development, life cycles, and especially the behaviour, of birds in terms of what has been of benefit for survival over evolutionary time. Finally, each chapter has a significant reference list, often of papers from the primary scientific literature. These are complemented by a bibliography of books on general topics of interest regarding the life of birds.

Despite providing some quite detailed and scholarly information, especially on those factors influencing bird behaviour, the book is very clearly written and easy to read. Difficult terms are defined where they occur in the text, and the book should be intelligible and rewarding to anyone with an interest in birds and in how and why they behave as they do.

Part 1 is made up of two chapters, one on the special features of birds and the other on their evolution. These two chapters are reasonably conventional, except for a comparatively detailed description of the evolution of the brain of birds, linking it strongly to behaviour, and this points the way for the rest of the book.

Part 2, titled "The Life Cycle" has three chapters: Choosing a mate, Reproduction and Development. Again, the first two chapters are not greatly different to those in other general bird books, but the third is more unusual, with a fascinating description of the development of young birds from the beginning of incubation to fledging. Following on from Part 1, the links between evolution, development and final behaviour are highlighted.

Part 3, "The Senses" has a full chapter on vision and another to cover the other four senses, hearing, smell, taste and touch. There are many fascinating examples of behaviour of different birds in relation to their particular capacity to see, hear, smell, taste or touch, and the linkage between structure and function of particular organs is made clear.

Part 4, the one that I found most interesting is called "The Minds of Birds". The three chapters of this section are How birds communicate, Learning, and Are birds intelligent? These chapters together show clearly that birds are capable of much more complex communication, learning and analytical behaviour than is generally realised. The authors present many examples of bird behaviour, including highly sophisticated application of memory,

taking account of "what, where and when", in a way that, according to the authors, is known elsewhere only in humans. This idea, that birds are capable of quite sophisticated conceptual thinking and problem-solving, should not be a surprise to most birdwatchers, especially those who have watched any of the Australian corvids for any length of time!

The authors make the point that much of this behaviour is far from the stereotyped and mainly instinctive activity shown by reptiles and some of the less highly evolved birds (such as Emus, Ostriches and game birds) on which derogatory terms such as 'bird-brain' have been based.

The book concludes with Part 5, "Birds and Humans" with two Chapters: Domestication, and Birds, humans and conservation. I found this last, quite short, chapter the least satisfying of the book, with considerable emphasis on the individual animals rather than the species. It does not seem to have the same high level of scholarship, nor the evolutionary reasoning, of the other chapters. Statements in this chapter that are unsupported and I believe incorrect or questionable include the following: "In Australia, almost all owls are endangered and we seem to be losing the battle to save them". In fact, of the nine species of owls in mainland Australia three are not treated at all in the recent Action Plan for Australian Birds (Garnett and Crowley 2000), implying that there is little evidence for significant decline, while the six that are listed have been assigned a global status of Least Concern at the species level. Several subspecies within mainland Australia are listed as Near Threatened while the Tasmanian subspecies of the Masked Owl is listed as Endangered. There is an inference in the same chapter (page 195) that direct taking of specimens by hunting and collecting is the single largest reason for extinction of plants, fish and mammals. I am not aware of any scientific support for this suggestion. It is generally accepted that habitat destruction and introduced species are much more significant.

The presentation and editing is generally good, although there are a few mistakes, such as "Jerring Gull" instead of Herring Gull on page 126, and the caption on Figure 6.1 is not consistent with the figure. There are also one or two errors of fact that are unfortunate in what is otherwise a scholarly and authoritative book. On page 52 the Great Northern Diver is referred to as "a most unusual looking duck". It is not a duck (order Anseriformes), but belongs to the order Gaviiformes, shared only by three other species of divers. Anseriformes and Gaviiformes are not considered to be closely related.

The shortcomings referred to above are minor and do not detract from the overall value and interest of this book. It should encourage a more detailed consideration of observed behaviour when watching birds and add greatly to the pleasures of birdwatching.

"Birds. Their habits and skills" is published by Allen and Unwin and is 252 pages, in A5 soft cover format. Recommended retail price is \$29.95 which represents good value for money.

**John Blyth**



## WA Group reports

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I must apologise for producing such a short report for this issue. I have been travelling overseas on business and have had very little time to prepare a full report.

Fortunately, most of the issues that I should have reported on — the new Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo project where Leonie McMahon has accepted the role of project officer, and the latest achievements of the Grants Subcommittee — have been addressed by others in this issue, and I am grateful to those people.

Of course, the major event for the group took place in May when we hosted the national body's AGM. The whole event was a major success and I am extremely grateful to everyone who contributed to the weekend to make it so. Certainly, visitors from outside the State were most impressed with the program that we put on, as evidenced by the letter from Alison Russell French who is a member of the BA Council (copy of letter follows).

Immediately before my travels I attended the second meeting of BA regional groups in Sydney. There are many issues that the regional groups share and many areas where we may all benefit by working together. There is currently a strong spirit of co-operation and I am sure that this can only be of benefit to BA.

On the local front, we have just taken delivery of a new batch of cards, both plain and with Christmas greetings. With these newly printed cards we have five new designs and reprints of some of our other 'bestsellers'. Our cards are still the mainstay of our fundraising efforts and I encourage everyone to shop till you drop at the card shop.

You can also help to boost the funds of your WA group by trying to interest others in our cards, and if you need help with this, please call the office, or call me. I would love to have the problem of needing to order more cards next year.

**Clive Nealon, Chairman**

### GROUP PROJECTS

The following letter, from a BA Council member, is a note of appreciation concerning the way in which BAWA members contributed to the successful national BA meetings in Perth in May.

*Mr Clive Nealon*

*Chair, Birds Australia Western Australia Group*

*Dear Clive*

*Through you, I would like to express my appreciation to the BA WA Group for the wonderful efforts they contributed to making the recent Birds Australia Annual General Meeting, Extra-ordinary General Meeting, and the scientific presentations in the morning of Saturday 26 May such a success.*

*It was a pleasure to be in Western Australia and to be able to meet with so many like-minded enthusiasts. It was also a great opportunity for Council members to see how successful the WA group is in its activities and to be able to appreciate the other side of the continent if only for a regrettably short time.*

*The scientific presentations were fantastic and congratulations to all involved in their preparation. It was really heartening to see how much all those present enjoyed the presentations, and from a Council perspective, to be exposed to the impressive amount of work being done in WA to conserve birds.*

*Although I didn't get the opportunity to meet a large number of your members it was a pleasure to meet those that I did. I hope that the Council can look to meet with its constituency around Australia more frequently and get a much better view up close about what is happening across a range of areas and groups. I must confess that I am looking forward to the next two years of being a Council member and appreciate the support I received from your group.*

*I would be grateful if you could pass on my appreciation to your members for a thoroughly enjoyable occasion and I look forward to returning to WA to actually do some bird watching without the demands of work interfering.*

*Best wishes*

*Alison Russell French, Council Member*

*13 June 2001*



Ian Rowley (RAOU Fellow) and Jenifer Wilcox (Secretary, BAWA) cutting the Centenary Cake, while BAWA Chairman, Clive Nealon, applauds, during the National BA meetings in Perth in May.

## WA GROUP PROJECTS

### CARNABY'S BLACK-COCKATOO PROJECT

My name is Leonie McMahon and I am the newly appointed project officer for the recovery program of Carnaby's (White-tailed) Black-Cockatoo. I will be working in conjunction with CALM and Birds Australia to coordinate community involvement in the conservation of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo, which is listed as endangered and is found only in the South West and the northern sand plains of Western Australia.

I have been an amateur bird watcher ever since a primary school teacher with an avid interest in wildlife fired my enthusiasm. In 1992 I took part in a field trip with the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service that involved bird counts and identification in wetlands in northwest NSW. After the trip I worked for three months with the National Parks and Wildlife Service in Sydney on the Wildlife Atlas database. Now I live very close to Lake Herdsman where I get to observe once again the Pink-eared Ducks and Blue-billed Ducks I first 'discovered' at Nocolechi Nature Reserve and at Lake Cowle in NSW.

I am a journalist with a science background and three years experience in the publishing industry. I have a science degree majoring in mineral chemistry (for which I understand I shall be forgiven since I do have a strong interest in the biological sciences) and I worked as an industrial chemist for several years. I did a diploma of Journalism in 1996 and have worked as a journalist and editor since.

I'm starting as project officer on Monday August 20 and I'm looking forward to it very much. I will be working three days a week on average, based either at my home or the Birds Australia office at Perry House in Floreat.

I'd like to hear from anybody interested in taking part in the recovery program so please feel free to contact me on the following numbers or email address:

Home: 9287 2448      Mobile: 0438 678 492

Birds Australia Office: 9383 7749

Email: [ljmcmahon@yahoo.com](mailto:ljmcmahon@yahoo.com)

**Leonie McMahon**

### HOODED PLOVER PROJECT

The Hooded Plover project has just received its second year of funding. Management actions initiated in year one are now being refined and implemented.

In addition, some of us have been at work recently to obtain funding to write a Hooded Plover Management Plan for Western Australia. The good news is that we have just received notification from the NHT Coast and Clean Seas program that we have been successful. This is important for the Hooded Plover as it will help ensure the continuation of management after the end of the current project.

We are also surveying in Yalgorup National Park in late September and are seeking volunteers – details elsewhere in this issue.

**Julie Raines**  
**Project Officer**

## GRANTS SUB-COMMITTEE

### State Government Community Grant – A Pleasant

#### Morning Tea

On Friday 6 July, our Chairman and members were invited by the Mayor of the City of Cockburn, Stephen Lee, to a morning tea at the City Council for the launch of the publication *Birds and Reserves of Cockburn City*.

We were able to thank Mr Fran Logan, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage and member for Cockburn representing the Minister, for the grant to undertake this project.

Representatives from several environmental organisations were present and the opportunity was taken to thank our members, many of whom were present, for their contributions to the publication. Thanks were also expressed to our artists who made their paintings available for an excellent display in the reception hall and whose contribution to the publication makes it a colourful guide to the identification of birds of the City of Cockburn.

The Mayor spoke of the high priority placed by Cockburn City on the management and upkeep of their valuable beach, wetland and bushland resources. Residents are being encouraged to form Friends Groups and are given support and guidance in their efforts.

The guide contains information on the native plants and bird life of 23 reserves, with maps and bird and plant lists.

Our thanks to the Mayor and Councillors for this appreciation and to the Minister for the Environment for her support.

### Lotteries Commission Grant

We are very pleased to advise members that the Lotteries Commission has once again supported our group with a \$5500 grant towards the purchase of a new printer/photocopier. The committee has approved the balance of \$3000.

This latest 'state of the art' printer/copier will be appreciated by our volunteers, many of whom have met with office Manager, Liz, at a special training session and morning tea.

We now have a digital machine that provides automatic multiple copying, prints quickly and double-sided, collates documents and will be connected to the computer for direct copying. With care and economy we will have a reliable and modern machine for several years to come.

Many thanks to the Lotteries Commission for their much appreciated support.

### Healthway Grant 2000-2001

We are again pleased to report to members that the Healthway Grant of \$2000 has been of great value in supporting our community activities for the past year.

Willing volunteers have responded to over 30 requests from schools and community organisations for speakers. The monthly mid-week bird walk, organised by a sub-



committee, continues to be well supported by both members and the general public.

During the first stage of the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Project, members attended country shows and expos at seven centres with support from Healthway.

Volunteers assisted with programs organised by schools and community organisations. One of the highlights was a Harmony Day at Booragoon Lake with the Taiwanese Association, which donated \$100 to the WA group. Members assisted in the planting of rushes and joined in bird walks. Programs have included a series to the School for the Blind.

The Display Centre, in the storeroom, continues to have frequent calls from a range of organisations for material for displays and the recently appointed Display Manager, Rob Mather, is warming to his task. The latest request was from Floreat Primary School for bird images on CD to prepare a program for the website. What next!

The range of requests increases for our office volunteers who are kept busy obtaining guidance for tertiary students in their environmental studies.

We say a big THANK YOU to HEALTHWAY for their help with the costs associated with our community support.

## LIBRARIAN

### Additions to the Library and Pamphlet Stand since May 2001

#### Library

598.3	<i>The Stilt</i> , no 38, Apr 2001; no 30, Jul 2001
598.723	<i>Emu</i> , vol 101, no 1, 2001
598.9944	<i>Cumberland Bird Observers Club</i> , Mar-Apr, vol 22, no 5
598.723	<i>Bird Observer</i> , Apr 2001, no 811
598.099423	<i>South Australian Ornithological Assoc Inc</i> , Mar 2001
598.9941	<i>Birds on Farms Project in Western Australia 1996-1999</i>
598.09941	<i>Birds of the Kimberley Division, Western Australia</i> Storr, WA Museum
598.3	<i>Queensland Wader</i> , Autumn 2001
598.9942	<i>Contact Call</i> , Jun 2001
363.7	<i>Guidance for the Assessment of Environmental Factors</i> , no 10
598.91	<i>Australasian Raptor Association News</i> , past copies donated
598.099423	<i>Birds SA</i> , The South Australian Ornithological Association Inc
598.3	<i>The Tattler</i> , no 28, Jun 2001
363.7	<i>Bold Park Environment Management Plan 2000-2005</i>
363.7	<i>Bold Park Environment Management Plan 2000-2005</i> , Analysis of Public Submission

#### Pamphlet Stand

- *The Harrier*, no 8
- *Ecoplan News*, Autumn 2001
- *Greener Times*, Apr 2001; May 2001
- *Swan Avon Info Sheet*, 4/2001
- *Naragebup News*, May 2001; Issue 16, Aug 2001
- *Narpulungup News*, Apr 2001
- *Eyre Waves*, May 2001
- *CALM News*, Mar-Apr 2001; May-Jun 2001
- *WA Bird Notes*, no 98, Jun 2001
- *South Coast Threatened Birds Newsletter*, Issue no 5
- *Swan Avon Training Calendar*, 2001
- *Marine Conservation Matters*, CALM, Jun 2001

#### Library

There are some items in the Library that are not for borrowing, for example the HANZAB, *Emu* and *WA Bird Notes*. It is important that these are kept together as both a reference source and for archival reasons. Some of the copies of *Emu* and *WA Bird Notes* are missing. If by chance they are under your bed, under a heap of bills on the desk, or on the coffee table, could you please return them.

There have been a number of donations through the year and those titles which are already held in the Library or are not suitable for the collection will again be offered for sale to members at the new members' night and the Christmas party. Some of these donations have made valuable additions to the Library collection.

There are a number of videos currently on order and these should be in the collection shortly.

#### *Emu*, vol 101 no 1, 2001

This edition of *Emu* contains several articles of interest to Western Australians, including one on Birds of a Salmon Gum woodland near Kalgoorlie, a new look at thornbill relationships and taxonomy, and an assessment of the role of Silvereyes in dispersing the introduced Bridal Creeper in SW WA.

- Population dynamics of the Cattle Egret (*Ardea ibis*) in south-east Queensland: a 20 year study.  
*N. G. McKilligan* 1
- The structure and dynamics of an assemblage of small birds in a semi-arid eucalypt woodland in south-western Australia.  
*W.J. Morris and R.D. Wooller* 7
- Biometrics and moult of Grey Plovers, *Pluvialis squatarola*, in Australia.  
*C.D.T. Minton and L. Serra* 13
- The marine distribution of seabirds from Christmas Island, Indian Ocean.  
*J.N. Dunlop, C.A. Surman and R.D. Wooller* 19
- Avifauna changes along a *Eucalyptus* regeneration gradient.  
*A.M. Fisher* 25
- Molecular systematics of the thornbills, *Acanthiza*.  
*J.A. Nicholls* 33

- Dispersal of the environmental weed Bridal Creeper, *Asparagus asparagoides*, by Silveryeyes, *Zosterops lateralis*, in south-western Australia.  
*C.D. Stansbury* 39
- Westland Petrels and the Hoki fishery: determining co-occurrence using satellite telemetry.  
*A.N.D. Freeman, K.J. Wilson and D.G. Nicholls* 47
- Helping behaviour in Australian Magpies, *Gymnorhina tibicen*.  
*P.G. Finn and J.M. Hughes* 57
- The role of vocalisations and aggression in breeding male Rufous Whistlers, *Pachycephala rufiventris*.  
*P.G. McDonald* 65
- Aspects of the ecology and behaviour of White-winged Fairy-wrens on Barrow Island.  
*S.G. Pruett-Jones and K.A. Tarvin* 73
- A trial translocation of Gould's Petrel (*Pterodroma leucoptera leucoptera*).  
*D Priddel and N. Carlile* 79
- Foraging ecology and habitat selection of the Yellow-plumed Honeyeater, *Lichenostomus ornatus*, in a Western Australian woodland: implications for conservation.  
*K. Wilson and H.F. Recher* 89

#### **Emu, vol 101 no 2, 2001**

- Parental investment in male and female offspring by the Peregrine Falcon, *Falco peregrinus*.  
*M. Boulet, P.D. Olsen, A. Cockburn and K. Newgrain* 95
- Vocal behaviour of the Common Koel, *Eudynamys scolopacea*, and implications for mating systems.  
*C.J. Maller and D.N. Jones* 105
- The Norfolk Island Green Parrot and New Caledonian Red-crowned Parakeet are distinct species.  
*W.M. Boon, C.H. Daugherty and G.K. Chambers* 113
- A new petrel species (Procellariidae) from the south-west Pacific.  
*M.J. Imber and A.J.D. Tennyson* 123
- The breeding biology of the Mangrove Gerygone, *Gerygone laevigaster*, in the Darwin region, with notes on brood parasitism by the Little Bronze-cuckoo, *Chrysococcyx minutillus*.  
*R.A. Noske* 129
- Distinguishing between sexes and species: bill size in Orange-fronted and Yellow-crowned Parakeets, *Cyanoramphus auriceps*.  
*J.R. Young and J.C. Kearvell* 137
- Foraging behaviour and success of Black-necked Storks (*Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*) in Australia: implications for management.  
*E.J. Dorfman, A. Lamont and C.R. Dickman* 145
- *Accipiter imitator* on Isabel Island, Solomon Islands.  
*M. LeCroy, A.W. Kratter, D.W. Steadman and H.P. Webb* 151
- Effects of supplementary feeding and artificial twinning on nestling growth and survival in Australasian Gannets (*Morus serrator*).  
*A. Bunce* 157
- Selective foliage foraging by Red Wattlebirds, *Anthochaera carunculata*, and Noisy Friarbirds, *Philemon corniculatus*.  
*A.S.J. Saunders and S. Burgin* 163
- Effect of plumage wear on field identification of White-naped Petrels, *Pterodroma cervicalis*.  
*C.M. Miskelly* 167
- Further observations on the cephalopod diet of Wandering Albatrosses (*Diomedea exulans* L.) at Macquarie Island.  
*J. van den Hoff* 169
- Moulting in adult Royal Penguins, *Eudyptes schlegeli*.  
*C.L. Hull, J. Wilson and K. le Mar* 173

**Sue Mather**  
**Librarian**

#### **NEW MEMBERS**

The following people joined Birds Australia WA between 1 May and 31 July 2001. We look forward to meeting you at our excursions and general meetings.

S Aeria, S Blunt, J Booth, M Brown, L Cowans, S Davamoni, W Davamoni, J L Davies, A de Rebeira, A Doley, J Doley, R N Evans, R Greble, D Harris, M Howard, J D T Hughes, G Hunt, M F L Hunt, R Jarvis, S L Kostera, C A Lippiatt, A J Longeman, J Mack, L Marshall, A Mitchell, R Passmore, B Pritchett, T Simmons, E Stoney, K Stratford, Y Toussaint, M Webber, E Wheatley, A Worsley

### **Members' contributions**

#### **WHITE IBIS SOUTH OF THE RIVER**

For some time now we have been aware of Australian White Ibis becoming more common in the Canning River Regional Park. We suspected that numbers might have become so high at Booragoon Lake that some were forced to find other areas for roosting, and possibly breeding.

On 27 April this year, at about 5:50 pm, we noticed a group of about 100 birds flying upstream from the old Riverton Bridge, then on 25 May, while walking along Shelley Foreshore, we saw 12–14 waves of ibis flying up-river, late in the afternoon. The two largest groups numbered over 100; several groups contained about 50 birds; the rest were smaller groups of 15–20 birds.

On 31 May, again while walking in the Shelley area between 5:15 and 5:30 pm, we estimated the number of ibis flying further east to be closer to 1000. We made a quick visit by car to Surrey Road, in Wilson. From the rise at the end of the road we were able to see large numbers of

white ibis roosting in an area of (predominantly) sheoak along the north bank of the Canning River.

On 6 June we made a point of being at the car park beside Riverton Bridge at 4:45 pm. We counted approximately 655 white ibis, all of which dropped down into riverine areas near Surrey Road. The birds arrived from a west to south-westerly direction.

On another occasion we observed a number of ibis already at the roost site by 3:30 pm. Another group of about 100, then several smaller groups, flew in as we watched.

On 28 June, after watching large numbers of ibis at the Surrey Road site, we made a quick trip to Booragoon Lake just on dark, specifically to check on how many ibis remained at this site. The light was not good, but we both had binoculars — and could not locate a single white ibis! We checked Blue Gum Lake immediately after this, with the same result.

On other occasions we have noticed small groups of ibis roosting in gums at the 'end' of Bull Creek, close to where it meets Leach Highway.

Good news for Booragoon Lake vegetation perhaps, as it will now have a chance to recover from the ravages of the ibis colony, but a worry for Canning River Regional Park. It will be interesting to see whether the ibis actually nest at the new site this year.

**George and Pam Agar**

## SEASONALITY OF THE FAN-TAILED CUCKOO IN THE GINGIN AREA

Mees and Mees-Balchin (2000) present evidence that the Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cacomantis flabelliformis* breeds in the extreme South-West, and question the accepted wisdom that the species migrates from the south-west during its breeding season, as is suggested by various texts on the subject. The publication of their observations is very helpful to developing a proper understanding of the movements of our birds, so I thought I should do the same for observations made in the Gingin area.

From July 1983 to March 1986, I spent 6 to 10 days every month on a farming property near the railway siding of Mooliabeenee, between Gingin and Bindoon (31° 18'S, 116° 03'E). Bird censussing was carried out at from four to six woodland sites every morning during each of these monthly visits, and therefore I was able to calculate the percentage of site visits in each month on which each bird species was observed. These monthly observations for a period of nearly three years provide some interesting information on seasonal and annual variation in the abundance of birds, and are presented in full in my PhD thesis (Bamford 1986). The Fan-tailed Cuckoo was one of the birds recorded.

Fan-tailed Cuckoos were recorded only in July 1983 (5% of site visits), June and July 1984 (7% and 8% of site visits respectively) and July 1985 (12% of site visits). This pattern of observations is consistent with the suggestion

that the species is a migrant in the Gingin area. While most observations were based on hearing rather than seeing the birds, the June/July period is much shorter than the calling period of April to January noted by Mees and Mees-Balchin (2000). Furthermore, birds were occasionally seen when not calling and the amount of time spent in the field every month virtually ensured that any bird the size of a Fan-tailed Cuckoo would be seen if present.

These Gingin observations do not conflict with those of Mees and Mees-Balchin (2000), but rather complement them. It is probable that the migratory nature of the species has been exaggerated and that only a proportion of the Fan-tailed Cuckoo population is migratory. This is exactly what Serventy and Whittell (1976) state. This would explain the annual appearance of the species at Mooliabeenee but the presence of the species throughout the year in the extreme South-West.

It would be interesting to know why some birds migrate and others clearly do not, and if the same birds migrate each year. Banding studies may eventually clarify this, but there is one record of a recaptured bird that is at least consistent with the suggestion that Fan-tailed Cuckoos do migrate each year. It comes from earlier than the period from 1983 over which Mees and Mees-Balchin (2000) searched for banding recoveries. In August 1982, Diane and Peter Congreve recaptured a Fan-tailed Cuckoo at Eyre Bird Observatory; it had been banded at the same location in September 1981 (Congreve and Congreve 1985).

### References:

- Bamford, M.J. (1986). The Dynamics of Small Vertebrates in Relation to Fire in Banksia Woodland near Perth, Western Australia. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Murdoch University, Perth.
- Congreve, D.P. and Congreve, P. (1985). Wardens' Report. In Eyre Bird Observatory Report No. 3. *RAOU Report* No. 9. (Western Australian Group of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union).
- Mees, G.F. and Mees-Balchin, V.J. (2000). Is the Fan-tailed Cuckoo migratory in Western Australia? *Western Australian Bird Notes* **96**: 14-15.
- Serventy, D.L. and Whittell, H.M. (1976). Birds of Western Australia. (University of Western Australia Press, Perth).

**Mike Bamford**

## FAN-TAILED CUCKOOS

In WABN No 96, December 2000, G F Mees and V.J. Mees-Balchin raised the question of migration by Fan-tailed Cuckoos. Perhaps the following information may be of interest.

Since the start of our banding project in Torndirrup National Park in 1992 we have banded 59 Fan-tailed Cuckoos. As shown in the following table, 77.9% were trapped during the months of January and February. Birds were aged on plumage and to date we have had no retraps.

It seems obvious that the species breeds in this area as evidenced by the number of young birds trapped. During

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Adult	10						2	1		1		1
Immature	11	6	1	1	1			1			1	
Juvenile	16	3								1	2	

Table: Numbers of Fan-tailed Cuckoos caught at Torndirrup since 1992.

the summer months they seem to be less vocal but are often observed perching on telephone lines, fences, etc. Calling seems to commence around the end of March.

While our data do nothing to solve the migration puzzle it does appear that some birds may be resident on the south coast throughout the year.

In September 2000 we travelled with eight other birders to Norseman, Balladonia, Zanthus, Lake Boonderoo, Kanandah Station, Rawlinna, Plumridge Lakes Nature Reserve, Laverton and back to Albany. A total of 168 Atlas surveys were completed. No Fan-tailed Cuckoos were recorded until Queen Victoria Rock, Latitude 31° 17', Longitude 120° 55', 43 km SW of Coolgardie, on the way home. Pallid, Shining Bronze, Horsfield's Bronze and Black-eared Cuckoos were also recorded.

**Alex and June Morrison**

## THOSE FAN-TAILED CUCKOOS

Drs Mees and Mees-Balchin (WABN 96, Dec 2000) point out the conflict that exists between the published literature and his own records of the Fan-tailed Cuckoo in the lower south-west. Also, observations by myself at Banksiadale, summarised below, which was situated on the South Dandalup River 10 km north of Dwellingup, differ from both.

"Generally and thinly distributed. Called strongly and consistently during September and October 1964 and during August 1969. In November 1968 it was only calling regularly in the early morning, but during December it only called in the very early morning and at dusk (as do most species in the Jarrah forest during summer). The species was unnoticed during January and February 1969 (and by default March 1969 too) but on 6 April and 31 May 1969 a few birds were seen, but none were heard calling. On 6 April 1969 one bird seen was either a juvenile or an adult undergoing an extensive body moult. And another had a loose outer primary and the outer pair of tail feathers were only half grown."

These moults seem to be too late to be post-nuptial.

From which we can deduce that the Fan-tailed Cuckoo was either absent during January and February (and March by default) or was simply not calling, the latter being my

guess. So, because it was present for some nine or ten months of the year, at least, is it likely that it would be migratory for only two or three months? And during late summer and autumn, which seems to be a lean time for our birds.

But I will now complicate things further. Namely, it is during the late autumn and winter months that a few individuals 'migrate' onto the coastal plain, and call while there. I have witnessed this at two times and two locations:

- (1) at what is now western Floreat Park in the late 1950s, and
- (2) at Maylands in recent years, the 1990s.

However, this local movement onto the coastal plain may be a result of its broader movements, as described in the literature.

Storr (1991) certainly does imply that the species spends summer in the south, and Storr and Johnstone (1988) state that it is a visitor here from the deep south west. But my observations indicate that it is at least partly resident at the latitude of Banksiadale, Dwellingup and Perth. My observations tend to agree with Mees and Mees-Balchin (2000), and Serventy and Whittell (1976) cite movements which Mees and Mees-Balchin and I could partly agree with. However, in addition to the above, some individuals, at least, remain in the Jarrah forest at these latitudes during the period of January and February and possibly March, the period of autumn being a time that it is supposed to be migrating.

I agree with Mees and Mees-Balchin (2000) that the species can be inconspicuous when not calling, but it is easily identified at any time.



Movements of Fan-tailed Cuckoos are still not well understood.  
Drawing by Judy Blyth

## References

- Mees, G.F. and Mees-Balchin, V.J. (2000). Is the Fan-tailed Cuckoo migratory in south-western Australia? *Western Australian Bird Notes* **96**: 14.
- Serventy, D.L. and Whittell, H.M. (1976). Birds of Western Australia. (UWA Press, Nedlands).
- Storr, G.M. (1991). Birds of the South-West Division of Western Australia. *Records of the Western Australian Museum*, Suppl. No. 35.
- Storr, G.M. and Johnstone, R.E. (1988). Birds of the Swan Coastal Plain and adjacent seas and islands. *Records of the Western Australian Museum*, Suppl. No. 28.

**Robert Stranger**



### KOOKABURRA PREYING ON A WILLIE WAGTAIL

Mary Bremner (WABN 95, Sept 2000) asks if anyone has seen a domestic cat kill a Willie Wagtail. I confess that I haven't but once saw a Willie Wagtail half inside a Laughing Kookaburra. The Willie Wagtails tail protruded from the kookaburra's beak and was still wagging. Mr Willie Wagtail called out in a very harsh, chittering kind of noise, and though I flushed the kookaburra with a well-aimed rock, it didn't release Willie Wagtail. I never saw the final outcome but the outlook for Mr Willie Wagtail didn't look good.

Robert Stranger

### WHITE-BREASTED ROBIN AT MOORE RIVER

Dr Allan Burbidge cites an observation of the White-breasted Robin at the southern end of Neerabup National Park, or 6 km NW of Wanneroo (WABN 68, December 1993). He goes on to say that if the bird was a member of the northern population, then it may also occur between Neerabup and Lancelin. Hence my observation of the species at Moore River is of interest because it reveals that his prediction is correct, even though my observation took place three years before his, namely, 15 August 1990.

The locality was about one kilometre from the coast and was dense thicket on the high-ground bordering the northern bank of the river. But it was not far from housing development, which may have overtaken it since then. It surprises me that the late Julian Ford didn't trace its southern extent and boundary south of Lancelin, but Alexander collected a bird at Floreat Park in 1919 (Serventy and Whittell 1976).

A good project for an enthusiastic birder would be to record other localities in the area.

References:

Burbidge, A.H. (1993). White-breasted Robin at Neerabup.

*Western Australian Bird Notes* 68: 1.

Serventy, D.L. and Whittell, H.M. (1976). Birds of Western Australia. (UWA Press, Nedlands, Western Australia).

Robert H Stranger

### AN EXPLOSION OF AUSTRALASIAN SHOVELERS ON LAKE MONGER, PERTH

On 27 April after a record minimum rainfall in Perth from November 2000 for a six-month period, Lake Monger had dried up on the western side and become overgrown with reeds in the western channel. The north-western corner, although appearing dry, was in reality deep mud as exhibited by the laboured walking of the Black-winged Stilts, which with great effort lifted one leg after the other, each leg sinking down to half its length with each step. Two Little Eagles were perched nearby on a post that was normally submerged waiting in anticipation for a stilt to falter.

On the south-eastern side there was an expanse of sand with spoonbills and Black-fronted Dotterels. There was

also a Great Egret accompanied by a juvenile. On the deeper portions of the lake, bird numbers were reduced but there were 73 Australasian Shovelers.

The following week the first winter rains began. Lake Monger rapidly filled with water from the storm drains, the water gushing out in strong streams well out into the middle of the lake. On 18 May, mainly on the northern and eastern side, there were over 300 Australasian Shovelers. In fact there were more shovelers than individual numbers of either Pacific Black Duck or Eurasian Coot over this area.

Mary Bremner

### APOLOGIES TO DOMESTIC ROOSTERS

A cool, sunny Sunday late afternoon in mid June saw me doing my weekly check of the birdlife at Lake Monger. It was my first visit in two months, as I had been away in Africa. Immediately I noticed the higher water level and wondered what waterbirds I would find.

I did see that my favourite ducks, Pink-ears, were still on the lake. Last year there had not been any between January and November. I felt very fortunate to see two Pink-eared Ducks circling, in their head to tail feeding fashion. As I rounded the island in the western corner of the lake I could see many more Pink-eared Ducks. Several were roosting on the still-exposed rocks and some were swimming nearby. One Pink-eared Duck was standing on the tallest of the rocks with his head up high and beak wide open 'trumpeting' across the lake. There was no change in the behaviour of all the other Pink-eared Ducks, despite the trumpeting persisting for a while. I have often heard their communicating 'whistle' before, but never before have I seen one performing like this.

The picture of a domestic rooster crowing from the top of a midden comes to mind, but it is far too vulgar a picture for my favourite Pink-eared Ducks.

Claire Gerrish

### AMBIVALENT DUCKS: SALT LAKE VERSUS FRESHWATER

Approximately 10 km north of Cranbrook between latitudes 34°14'41" and 34°15'32" and longitudes 117°37'59" and 117°41'17" there are two lakes of approximately the same area and about 500 m across east-west.

The western lake, Lake Munrillup, 34°14'41" 117°37'59" is salt, and surrounded by dead and fallen trees and glasswort. The lake level is 2 m below the surrounding non-salt affected area and the water surface is pink with algae.

The eastern lake (unnamed) 34°15'32" 117°41'17", approximately 4 km east, is fresh and surrounded by sedge with grass reaching the sedge line. The surrounds are flat with healthy trees within 30 m.

These two lakes were visited on 23 June within the hour. Lake Munrillup yielded a count of over 300 ducks: Chestnut Teal 100, Pacific Black Duck 100, Australian

Shelduck and Grey Teal (separate area) each 50 birds. The freshwater lake yielded a nil duck count.

Questions posed:

Is there any pattern of preference for these ambivalent ducks (salt/fresh) between salt and freshwater habitats and does it vary during the mating season when the birds must be in peak physical condition?

We know that certain ducks prefer freshwater, eg, Australasian Shoveler, Blue-billed and Hardhead. We know that the food chain can be quite different in salt lakes from freshwater lakes both with plants and animals. Water levels are of course also important for both divers and dabblers.

However, do these ambivalent ducks generally choose between salt and freshwater habitats? Is the salt/fresh diet changed during the mating season when the birds must be in peak physical condition?

**Mary Bremner**

### **A CONFUSED CORELLA**

During my routine suburban bird survey at the little lakes on the corner of Parkland Road and Jon Sanders Drive, I saw a single corella sitting in a eucalypt tree at the edge of the water. Little Corellas are often seen in groups, with maybe a straggler or two, flying raucously between Lake Monger, Jackadder Lake and Herdsman's Lake. This occurs mainly in summer.

I first saw the single corella, bigger than a Little Corella, with a long bill and some red on the chest, on 24/6/01 and have seen it over the three weeks since then. Simpson and Day refers to corellas, whether Western or Long-billed, as flock birds and ground feeders. I should not have been surprised when I saw it with a few other mainly white birds that also feed on the ground. However, they were Australian White Ibis, not corellas! in groups of five to eleven birds.

Wherever I see the Australian White Ibis, whether in a tree or on the grass feeding, the 'long-billed' corella will be there. It keeps up a constant subdued chatter and moves to each bird in the group whether they are on the ground or in a tree. The behaviour and the bird appear to be tolerated by the Australian White Ibis. Isn't this rather unusual?

**Claire Gerrish**

### **BARKING OWL AT BLUE GUM LAKE**

Good Friday proved appropriate as instead of putting on the suit and tie and driving to work I was walking around Blue Gum Lake (BGL) in Perth suburbia.

I suspected an owl was present due to the scolding calls of Red Wattlebirds, Grey Butcherbirds, Australian Ravens (approximately 40, one of the largest gatherings I have ever seen), Mudlarks and Australian Magpies. Within a few minutes I spotted the owl about 10 metres up a eucalypt. However to my pleasant surprise this was not the Boobook I was expecting but a much larger owl with mainly white breast with limited black streaks mainly confined to the upper half of the underparts. It had

powerful talons and left its perch after a couple of minutes whereby the noise from the other birds reached a crescendo. Due to its large size all the birds appeared very wary and did not approach closely like they do when buzzing a Boobook.

I suspected it was a Barking Owl and this was confirmed when I checked the field guides. The BGL owl had very little streaking on its underparts compared with the field guides. This is a new species to me and is rather appropriate considering this is where I started birding many years ago. I have recorded over 70 species at BGL and the Barking Owl is a definite highlight, along with an Osprey sighted in the 1980s.

**Wynton Maddeford**

### **CHANGES IN CORMORANT COLONIES**

On the morning of 13 April I saw over 3000 Australian White Ibis roosting at Booragoon Swamp before some commenced to leave at 7:15 am. They were roosting where Great Cormorants usually breed, raising a concern that they may disrupt the cormorant breeding colony. Unfortunately this concern proved to be correct, as they are not breeding for the first time in my experience. Whether it was due to the ibis or some other reason I am not sure.

The cormorants normally breed on an island of thick vegetation, but this has now died off and perhaps this was caused by the ibis. It has also coincided with another disturbing fact that after using Booragoon for decades the Swan River population of Little Black Cormorants is no longer using Booragoon as a roosting place, and presumably breeding location.

I first noticed this on 12 June when at 0800 I noticed 3000 Little Black Cormorants leaving their roosting spot at the Narrows Bridge ornamental lakes (facing Mounts Bay Road).

On 17 June I went to the Narrows Bridge site at 1705 and observed hundreds of Little Black Cormorants, together with Little Pied Cormorants and Darters. The roosting site was also characterised by a strong smell of guano. I then drove to Booragoon and at 1740 confirmed there were no cormorants or Darters.

Over the past few weeks I have made regular trips to Booragoon, but there are practically no cormorants or Darters in attendance.

I have also spoken to some locals and they have confirmed the lack of cormorants. It is quite sad that after decades and decades the daily sight of thousands of cormorants flying in and out of the swamp has now ceased. In addition it is disturbing that breeding for the Great Cormorant has ceased at this lake.

I have, however, discovered a new breeding location for the Great Cormorant. On 4 June I went to the NW section of Herdsman Lake and discovered a breeding colony of about 35 nests located on a dredging barge! All stages of nesting were observed including nest building, incubating and nestlings. In general however, most birds appeared to be incubating.

I strongly suspect these are the Booragoon birds due to the time of year and the size of the colony, which is similar to what occurred at Booragoon.

Due to the limited breeding sites around Perth, it is important to ensure the success of the Herdsman colony. This will be dependent initially upon the dredging barge remaining stationary in its present location.

Research should also be done to attempt to determine why the cormorants have abandoned Booragoon as a roosting and breeding site. Booragoon is a wonderful refuge in the middle of suburbia and it would be tragic if the cormorants never returned, as they are the main reason why it is such a special place.

**Wynton Maddeford**

### **PEREGRINE FALCONS IN PERTH**

A pair of Peregrine Falcons has tried unsuccessfully to breed on a window ledge of the Westpac Bank at 109 St Georges Terrace in Perth for the past few years.

I was informed last week that Westpac have agreed to install a nesting box on the roof. The box will be constructed and installed by Phil Pain of Eagles Heritage Foundation, Margaret River. Westpac have agreed to pay for the construction and installation. Let's hope the pair nests in this box, as the bare window ledge is an unsatisfactory location for a nest, especially considering the strong winds experienced along St George's Terrace.

**Wynton Maddeford**

### **UNUSUAL FLOCK SIGHTING AT ALFRED COVE**

Even though I am currently assisting a review of wader populations in the East-Asian Australasian Flyway, I have rarely been wader watching and struggle to identify a stint from a stilt. So when a couple of spare hours came my way recently (on 12 February), I made the most of them and eagerly ventured out to Alfred Cove. It was early afternoon and, as I was not equipped with a telescope, I was not expecting to see much. I did manage good viewings of Greenshank and Grey Plover (not at all unusual, I'm told) but it was what came next that surprised me.

Something high above me caught my attention. I fumbled with my binoculars and when, eventually, I found the focal point I was treated to the sight of 100-200 shopping bags (both plastic and paper) wheeling around on the Easterly. I don't know where they had begun their journey, but the flock passed over Wireless Hill and then many of the group began to descend on the waters of Alfred Cove. In the next ten minutes there were more than 50 clumsy landings on the waters, beach and grassland of the Cove. February is the heart of non-breeding season for most migrant waders so it was peculiar to note that the new arrivals were still in moult: green, blue and brown individuals were sighted amongst (what I assume are 'non-breeding') white individuals. I lost sight of the remainder of the flock soon after, but I'm pretty sure they were headed in the direction of Rottnest Island.

It is ever apparent that the migration of these little beings is an exhausting journey because, as I returned to my car, I was able to collect several lifeless bodies from where they had landed. A novice at wader-watching I decided the best place for them was in a Bird Identification Network (BIN). I remain hesitant about asking the WA Museum for confirmation of identification.

Has anyone else ever witnessed this phenomenon? I'd be very interested to know where the flock originated and where the remaining individuals settled.

**Wes Bancroft**

Editors' note: We assume from the reference to "green, blue and brown individuals" that this was a multi-species flock!

### **HEIRISSON AND THE BLACK SWANS**

On the night of Monday 8 June 1801 a northerly gale separated the *Geographe* and the *Naturaliste* as they explored the western Australian coast. After sailing out the gale, the captain of the *Naturaliste*, Jacques Felix Emmanuel Hamelin, set his course for Rottnest Island, the rendezvous pre-arranged in case of separation with the captain of the *Geographe*, Charles Baudin. On arriving off Rottnest on 14 June Hamelin found no sign of his colleague and so anchored his vessel between the island and the mainland.

Determining to put the time waiting for the *Geographe* to good use, Hamelin sent out three exploration boat parties, one to Rottnest, one to the other nearby islands and one to travel as far as possible up the 'River of Swans', discovered by de Vlamingh in 1697.

The Swan River party was under the command of Sub-Lieutenant Francois Heirisson. Among his party was Charles Bailly, a mineralogist sent to assess the mineral potential of the area. The party left their ship before dawn on 17 June 1801, grounding their boat three times on the rocky bar at the mouth of the river, before passing through the lower channel to lagoons beyond. There they observed great numbers of Australian Pelicans before rowing on to spend the night of 17 June on the river bank near the foot of Mt Eliza.

The next morning they grounded frequently on banks of mud as they moved towards what is now Heirisson Island. In this area the party saw their first Black Swans, some of which were shot for food. Not only were they noted as being very tasty, but Charles Bailly noted that after death the shiny red beak of the swan lost its colour to become a dull black.

HANZAB does not mention this phenomenon, nor do any other of the usual field guides. Why does it occur?

**Bruce Buchanan**

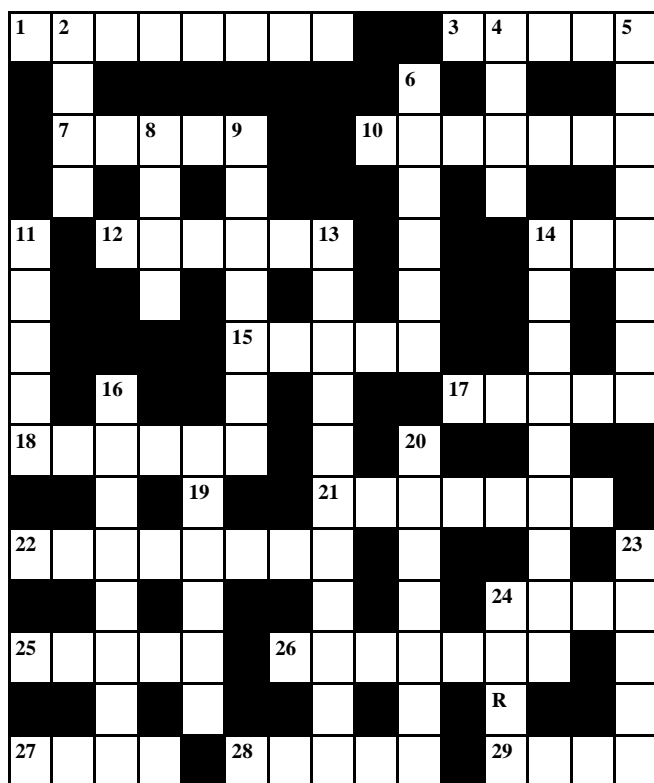
### **ALBINO WILLY WAGTAIL**

The albino Willy Wagtail first seen on the eastern side of Lake Monger on 16 June 2000 remained in this area until at least mid November, which was my last sighting. Its territory extended over 400 m along this eastern side. Willie Wagtails are both territorial and locally nomadic. What is the average size of a Willy Wag's territory?

**Mary Bremner**

## Crossword No 26

by Pam Agar



### Clues across

1. Speckled
3. Pale violet
7. Garden trees sometimes used for nesting by Rainbow Lorikeets
10. Rarely seen duck
12. Wader with up-turned bill
14. Noise in a breeding colony
15. In official records, one could be critical
17. Ideal conditions for birding
18. Smallest of the ibis found locally
21. May be a Malleefowl's initial step in mound-building
22. These parents are more likely to be successful
24. Construction material for a grebe's nest
25. To clean and straighten feathers
26. Marking on wing
27. Dark facial area
28. .... pouch of pelican
29. Lake home of endangered subspecies of Western Corella

### Clues down

2. To call shrilly
4. Nesting pardalote may seem to disappear ... a bank
5. Records from this period provide comparisons for today
6. Lamellae on a duck's bill enable it to do this
8. Opposite to dead

9. Body of people with similar interests
11. Bee-eaters leave this part of their meal
13. Ground-dwelling
14. Occasional visitor from Asia
16. Formal meeting to share ideas
19. It may help to be this when watching birds
20. To cause a response
23. Smell, often unpleasant
24. Failure to keep eggs this way spells disaster

## Notices



*The Inaugural*

Australian  
Ornithological  
Conference

Charles Sturt University  
Bathurst NSW Australia  
4-7 December 2001



Call for  
Papers

## Invitation

The AOC is intended to provide a forum for the exchange of information and ideas between people involved in avian-based research and conservation throughout Australasia. Designed to complement the 4-yearly Southern Hemisphere Ornithological Congress, it is anticipated the AOC will be held every two years and become the main scientific event on the Australian ornithological calendar.

## Location

The conference will be held at the Bathurst campus of Charles Sturt University, located at the base of Mt Panorama and within easy walk of the town centre. Set in Australia's oldest inland agricultural landscape, Bathurst is about 200 km west of Sydney in the central tablelands of NSW. In addition to historic buildings and leafy parks and gardens, Bathurst has some excellent restaurants and cafés. Lodging is available on campus and at a variety of hotels and caravan parks to suit all budgets.

## Social Program

There will be a Welcome Mixer and Conference Dinner, with ample opportunity to network while sampling CSU's award-winning wines. Post-conference tours will visit some of Australia's premier bird-watching locations, including the Capertee Valley, Macquarie Marshes, Wollemi National Park, the Blue Mountains, and Kanangra-Boyd National Park.

## Scientific Program

The conference program will span three full days and feature topical symposia, poster sessions, workshops and round-table discussions in addition to regular contributed paper sessions.

- Professor Allen Keast will give the keynote address on "Adaptations of birds to an arid continent".
- There will be sessions for discussing the role of Birds Australia in the development of Australian ornithology as well as a session on planning future AOCs.
- There will be an award for the best student presentation

### POTENTIAL TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Systematics of Australian birds: new approaches and challenging results
- Distribution ecology and biogeography: the Australian perspective
- Adaptations to the Australian environment: physiology, movements and life-history strategies
- Bird-habitat relationships: a hierarchy of scales
- Seabirds: ecology, conservation and management
- Birds in degraded landscapes: declines, consequences and management implications
- Birds on the brink. Captive breeding and reintroduction: lessons for management
- Bird impacts on human interests
- Birds and ecotourism: is it a win-win?

## INAUGURAL AUSTRALIAN ORNITHOLOGICAL CONFERENCE, CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY, BATHURST NSW, 4–7 December 2001

The AOC is intended to provide a forum for the exchange of information and ideas between people involved in avian-based research and conservation throughout Australasia. Designed to complement the 4-yearly Southern Hemisphere Ornithological Congress, it is anticipated that the AOC will be held every two years and become the main scientific event on the Australian ornithological calendar.

The conference program will span three days and feature topical symposia, poster sessions, workshops and round-table discussions in addition to regular contributed papers.

For further information, contact:

*AOC 2001 Conference Secretariat*

Conference Solutions

PO Box 238, Deakin West ACT 2600

Phone: 02 6285 3000 Fax: 02 6285 3001 E-mail: [birds@con-sol.com](mailto:birds@con-sol.com)

Website: <http://clio.mit.csu.edu.au/aoc2001>

## **WABN NO. 100 – IDEAS AND CONTRIBUTIONS NEEDED**

The December issue of WA Bird Notes will be number 100 – quite appropriate in the year of the BA Centenary!

We would like to make this issue a little different, and any suggestions you may have would be most welcome – please let us know your ideas as soon as possible.

Items from the past could provide one form of interest – one of the suggestions is to invite people to let us know their ‘memorable moments’ from the past. This could be in the format of ‘one-liners’ (it would be great if we could get 100 of these) or short anecdotes (a paragraph or two or three, depending on the seriousness or hilarity of the situation).

So, please put on your ‘thinking caps’, and dredge out all those highlights – great bird sightings, embarrassing moments, etc, etc!

Remember – deadline for issue number 100 is the 1<sup>st</sup> of November.

**John Blyth and Allan Burbidge**  
Editors, WABN

## **HOODED PLOVER SURVEY, YALGORUP, 29 SEPTEMBER**

We are carrying out our third survey of the Yalgorup lakes on 29 September. The aim is to survey the whole lake system to determine how many Hooded Plovers use the system at this time of year.

The area to be searched is large, so we need volunteers to walk different sections of lake shore and count Hooded Plovers. It was great fun last time, so do join us again. Some people will probably camp at Waters Edge Caravan Park on the Friday night and possibly also Saturday night.

If you are interested in surveying, please phone Dick Rule on 9581 1894, or Julie Raines on 9306 5819.

## **Country Groups**

### **ALBANY BIRD GROUP**

#### **Wellstead, 10 April**

Tim Hunt, who has been responsible for Atlas returns, organised the Bird Group outing in April. Twelve members travelled to Wellstead. Records were taken from there up Cape Road to the Pallinup River and 64 species were recorded.

Tim and Eiko have left Albany to live in the eastern states. Our loss is Ballarat’s gain. We thank them most sincerely for all their help and good work over the past few years.

Anne Bondin has taken on the task of Atlas Regional Organiser from Tim, and we thank her.

### **Bakers Junction, 8 May**

Fifteen members met at Bakers Junction at 8:00 am. We shared cars and travelled to Knights Road, with groups of 3-4 working together to produce the records. From there we went down Washpool Road and on to Kamballup for lunch. Sixty-seven species were recorded in total for the morning.

**Vivian McCormick**  
Albany Bird Group

## **Observatory reports**

### **BROOME BIRD OBSERVATORY**

During the past few months, the Broome Bird Observatory has undergone a huge staff turnover with new and old faces coming and going frequently. Our ex-manager Bill Rutherford and his wife Paula have left to have their child (Hannah) in Perth, and we thank them greatly for the time and effort that they both put in and around the observatory. We would also like to thank Vickie Heaney, Jane Rusden and Chris Powell for their time spent at the observatory. Our new team consists of Natalie Pawlik (Nat), Antony Williams (Will) and Luke Paterson (Luke!).

Water! Since 1988, the Broome Bird Observatory has relied on trucking in water, which was relatively expensive and at times very inconvenient. This was highlighted especially during the ‘wet’ as the truck could not get down the road, essentially leaving us high and dry. With the generous support from the Wen Family of Cable Beach Club and the Department of Conservation and Land Management we have now had a 12 km pipeline laid, tapping into the town water supply. The tap was officially turned by some of the Wen children on 21 July, now equipping us with a permanent supply of water. Guests and birds alike can now look forward to plenty of cool refreshing showers.

Early June saw the arrival of 14 Michigan State University students from the USA, as part of a six-week study abroad course on Environmental Management in north-western Australia. They became involved with various activities including cannon netting, pitfall trapping, mud sampling and mist netting with the assistance of Perry and Alma de Rebeira. Some students even tried their hand at ‘Aussie Rules’, eventuating in surprising results.

Once again we await the arrival of the migratory shorebirds landing on the scenic beaches of Roebuck Bay. Already there are around 7000-10 000 birds present at the time of writing, including several Asian Dowitchers (one in slight breeding plumage), Common Redshank, Broad-





billed Sandpipers and a Bar-tailed Godwit sporting an orange leg flag!

Some interesting bird sightings have been noted within a 50 km radius of the observatory, including a family of Comb-crested Jacanas at Nimilaica, one of our nearby claypans. Kidney Bean Claypan on Roebuck Plains was also teeming with various breeding waterfowl, including pelicans, Magpie-Geese and Black Swans. Yellow Chats were occasionally seen on Roebuck Plains during the months of May and June, with a Grass Owl, Brolga and numerous Australian Bustards spotted on the plains in July.

Our mangrove species, including Mangrove Grey Fantail, White-breasted Whistler, Dusky Gerygone, Broad-billed Flycatcher, Red-headed Honeyeaters and Striated Heron, have been seen in good numbers during May-July.

An interesting sighting on 1 July, was two Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters having a bath outside the shadehouse, while one very excited Assistant Warden chased the couple cautiously with a camera in hand (unsuccessful in capturing the moment). This was the second sighting of this particular species in the Broome region.

Grey Fantails and a Hooded Robin have been loitering around the observatory grounds, along with some spectacular male Red-backed and Variegated Fairy-wrens. A Welcome Swallow has also been observed swooping at the local sewerage works on a couple of occasions.

Our workshop dates for 2002 are as follows:

'Wave the Waders Goodbye': 15-19 April

'Banding Fieldcraft': 20-24 May

'Welcome back the Waders': 19-23 September & 4-8 October

We are now taking bookings for 2002 workshops, with plenty of vacancies still available, but these are likely to fill quickly so book your spot now. Please feel free to contact the observatory for further details.

**Luke Paterson**

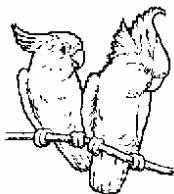
## EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY

Eyre has whales!

A little to the west of the observatory two Southern Right Whales, along with their calves, have taken up residence at Kanidal Beach. Further west again there are two more Southern Right Whales with calves at Twilight Cove.

What an amazing experience it is to watch these graceful giants of the sea frolicking with their young just outside the breaking surf along with a plethora of dolphins and sea lions who have come to join in the fun.

However, these are not the only visitors to our fair shores.



There has also been a marked increase in migratory activity. Singles and pairs of Black-winged and Banded Stilts along with groups of Red-necked Avocets and Red-kneed Dotterels have all been seen during the weekly shore counts. Throw in a number of Australasian Gannets, Hoary-headed Grebes and some Grey Teals and you can begin to see how much we look forward to our beach jaunts.

One poor Grey Teal must have been exhausted from its journey. There we were having a morning 'cuppa' on the veranda when this solitary figure waddled in, plonked itself down in the sun just in front of us, then promptly went to sleep for the better part of the day. Great photos!

Most recently we've seen flocks in excess of 200 Crested Terns, 100 Silver Gulls and 50 Pacific Gulls all resting or feeding in the seaweed banks along the shore. Roll on the spring, we say!

Staying with the beach, the White-faced Herons we mentioned last report are still with us and so too, it appears, is the White-bellied Sea-Eagle. It was observed one day collecting what looked like seaweed, perhaps for a nest and has been sighted in subsequent weeks patrolling the same area of coast. Here's hoping.

With continued good falls of rain every couple of weeks the area is a profusion of colour. The mallee along with a number of other shrubs and bushes are in, or are about to, flower. The Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters have moved into the area in very good numbers as a result and it's a delight to listen to their beautiful warbling song while they battle for domination of the bird baths with the 'locals', the Singing and New Holland Honeyeaters.

Perhaps the good flowering is also responsible for the unusual appearance of a Tawny-crowned Honeyeater. Spotted close to the observatory, it was singing its heart out, in euphoria perhaps at having discovered such a wonderful place?

More unusual still was the visit of a Sacred Kingfisher. While regular sightings have occurred in early spring or late summer, we don't believe one has ever been seen in the depths of winter. Wonders never cease!

Regular checks of the nesting boxes for Western Pygmy Possums saw very early activity. Probably this reflects the kind autumn and winter to date. Very few sites are now unoccupied while many appear to have a number of young which bodes well for their continued presence around the observatory.

Finally, last night, we had a nocturnal visitation. With a log fire burning in the hearth, we were applying the final touches to the day, when we became aware of an increase in the chatter and agitation amongst the Welcome Swallows. Suddenly, a ghostly apparition glided past the veranda windows, caught in the light spilling through them. Returning moments later, we grabbed a torch and raced outside in much anticipation. Alas, our ghostly visitor had vanished, perhaps to enjoy the spoils of its foray. A hasty search of the area revealed no trace, no clues. Southern Boobook, Barn Owl or Tawny Frogmouth, we know not. We await its return.

**Helen and Paul Evans**  
Wardens

## Excursion reports

### **RAY MARSHALL PARK, VIVEASH, 28 April**

A group of 17 appreciated the walk along the river bank. A beautiful clear, warm morning yielded 45 species in all. Pelicans were present, along with Darters, Great, Little Black and Little Pied Cormorants. The ducks were not so plentiful at this time of year and on the river were mainly Pacific Black. However later, on the creek near the wetlands, a group of about 15 Grey Teal were flushed.

Over the open grassland area we sighted Black-shouldered Kite, Swamp Harrier and Nankeen Kestrel.

The small wetland lake still had quite a bit of water in it in spite of the dry weather, and here we sighted Great Egret, Australian Shelduck, Straw-necked Ibis and about 15 Black-fronted Dotterels.

One of the most striking aspects of the walk was the very large number of corellas flying down the river. They appeared to be Little Corellas and group after group continued passing us as we walked along. We estimated at least 800 birds.

A good morning's birding was enjoyed by all.

**Jan Rogers**

### **YANGEBUP LAKE, 6 May**

The walk at Yangebup proved to be the day the rains came. After months of dry, sunny weather, the heavens opened overnight and in the morning the rain was falling steadily. Only five hardy birders risked the uncertain weather but were rewarded with almost two hours of rain free walking time. We walked along the path among the trees and back by the lake's edge and saw a good variety of birds, 46 species in all. These included Musk, Blue-billed and Pacific Black Duck, Australasian Shovelers, Australian Shelduck, Australian Wood Duck, Grey Teal and Black Swans.

The lake has maintained a good level and there were Australasian and Hoary-headed Grebes as well as White-faced Heron and Purple Swamphens.

There was a good selection of bushbirds with the only bird of prey being a Swamp Harrier.

Due to another heavy shower of rain the party broke up early, but two hardy souls saw Red-necked Stints, White-fronted Chats and Red-capped Plovers on the southern side of the lake.

**Wendy Napier**

### **LAKE GWELUP, 26 May**

It was a fine, still morning when 14 members gathered to walk around part of the lake and explore some of the bush tracks. We found the water level very low so that muddy islands had formed in the lake. These proved good areas

for Black-fronted Dotterels and Black-winged Stilts, but there were very few ducks or swans present.

Apart from the usual bushbirds, our best sightings were four species of raptors which included a Peregrine Falcon, a Swamp Harrier, a Black-shouldered Kite and a Little Eagle.

A total of 39 species was seen during the morning.

**Bryan Barrett**

### **CAMPOUT AT MOUNT GIBSON STATION, 2-4 June**

Clive Napier led a group of 27 people on a weekend camp out at Mount Gibson. The Homestead Camp is attractively set up and each individual site well defined with a certain amount of screenage. There was an interesting shower arrangement.

The members of the party who had arrived on the Friday afternoon had a Saturday morning drive to Lake Moore. On leaving the campsite they saw a flock of Major Mitchell Cockatoos. Lake Moore was practically dry, but on investigation a distant blob was identified as a Banded Lapwing. In the afternoon we drove to a nearby hill, which people scrambled up and down. The view was excellent, the birds less so. A drive around the Emu Farm via the Shearers Quarters was again not productive of any remarkable bird life, and even the Crimson Chat that had stood on the wire to greet the Bennetts earlier in the day did not put in an appearance.

The Bennetts chickened out of the camping (apart from the evening fire and red wine) and had a desirable residence: a rammed earth chalet at the Emu Farm, which was very comfortable with running hot and cold water!

On the following day a stop off at a beautiful Salmon Gum woodland found many Regent Parrots swooping and calling through the trees. Two hours were spent wandering through this wonderful area, which was described by Brian Barrett as in his opinion one of the finest areas of woodland in the area. One wanted to reach for paints and an easel. Rufous Treecreepers, different honeyeaters, Red-capped Robins (plenty) and fairy-wrens were seen.

This area was returned to on the homeward drive, the party having had a very midgy lunch under the Beanathany rocks. Members roamed and climbed at will during the afternoon and saw Red-capped and Western Yellow Robins, and a Southern Scrub-Robin was heard if not seen. Babblers and Splendid Fairy-wrens were among others. During the drive to the rocks the leading members of the party saw a Chestnut Quail-thrush.

On returning to the campsite Jan Rogers and her brother were able to observe some interesting bird behaviour. A male Red-capped Robin was hopping along the trim of the car's (which had remained in camp) window and was attacking its reflection set up by the low sun. Nothing would stop him from this pursuit and his female eventually joined him.

The evening meet up round the camp fire (with the Bennetts again!!) and a fullish moon yielded a total of 57 species, a figure well down on previous excursions, presumably due to low rainfall.

Tony and I inspected the new campsite set up at the Emu Farm. While not as attractive as the Homestead it consisted of a large circle around a central fire and BBQ and had the advantage of 'porta loos' and showers and the presence of Major Mitchell Cockatoos.

So a very enjoyable weekend camp out, ably, as ever, lead by Clive Napier.

**Pat Bennett**

### **NORTH LAKE, 14 June**

It was a pleasant change for our walk at this lake in June to have a lovely sunny morning — other years it has been cold and wet! So it was very satisfying to have eight members arriving early, including two who had recently joined the group. The water level of the lake was quite low and the only waterbirds were several Australian Shelducks, a Muscovy Duck and a Domestic Goose! However, there were quite a few bushbirds and lots of Purple Swamphens.

We walked all round the lake and were rewarded by a sighting of a Black-shouldered Kite sitting on a dead tree quite close to us. We also saw a Yellow-billed Spoonbill and finally two Pacific Black Ducks as we returned to the cars.

During the bird call we were interrupted by the arrival of an Australian Hobby that flew into a tree beside the lake, and also a Little Eagle, which flew overhead.

A pleasant mid-week walk was enjoyed and a total of 38 species was seen.

**Margery Clegg**

### **BICKLEY WALK, 16 June**

Fourteen members gathered on a cloudy, uncertain winter morning to walk along Bickley Brook. We had a request from researcher Wes Bancroft to watch out for Red-eared Firetails with leg bands.

We split into three groups for maximum coverage and walked as far as the bridge with minor detours. The weather held well and everyone had good sightings. Mixed flocks proved most productive and there was an abundance of fairy-wrens. The most challenging bird was a long calling, well concealed Scarlet Robin high up in a tree.

Glad to see those new and young faces, as well as the regulars, of course. Extra thanks to Tom and Henk for leading the other groups. A pleasant, cheerful, friendly group. Forty-two species overall including four from Henk who explored on afterwards.

**John Stewart**

### **HILLARYS PELAGIC TRIP, 17 June**

A small front overnight left us wondering what we might see. A large 3 m swell near Rottnest Island made conditions uncomfortable to begin with but once past Rottnest the conditions were excellent and the birding very good except that only a few birds could be attracted to land on the water behind the boat.

The highlights were four uncommon species with one Antarctic Prion, five Slender-billed Prions, one Arctic Tern and one Lesser Noddy. The other highlights were the highest numbers of Great Skuas and Wilson's Storm-Petrels. The number of Yellow-nosed Albatross and Great-winged Petrels were much lower than usual. Several Soft-plumaged Petrels and a Cape Petrel were also seen.

For details of future trips contact Frank O'Connor on foconnor@iinet.net.au or (08) 9386 5694.

**Frank O'Connor**

### **NORTHERN HERDSMAN'S LAKE (FLOREAT WATERS), 24 June: 1**

Twenty birdwatchers had a most enjoyable walk and 50 species of bush and waterbirds were seen. We had very good views of Clamorous Reed-Warblers, while Little Grassbirds were heard all during the walk, but remained invisible. An obliging Australasian Grebe and a Hoary-headed Grebe swam around together so we could see the differences between them. A telescope was helpful in the identifications. Great Crested Grebes were also seen.

A highlight was seeing the Great Cormorants nesting on the unused dredge in the lake. Some of the nests were new with sitting birds and on other nests, birds were feeding very large nestlings. More than 40 nests have been counted here. Chestnut-breasted Mannikins were seen in several places. They are aviary escapees that have remained relatively confined to this area and do not appear to have displaced other birds. A Richard's Pipit and two Red-capped Plovers were seen in the extension now for sale. The glorious sunny day enhanced the colours of birds like the male Australasian Shoveler, just one of the many waterbirds seen.

**Claire Gerrish**

### **NORTH HERDSMAN LAKE, 24 June: 2**

On a sunny winter's morning, 21 expectant birders assembled at the car park opposite the pony club. Claire led us alongside the lakes where we saw a good variety of waterfowl. On one particular stretch of water we were able to compare the three Grebes — Crested, Hoary-headed and Australasian in close proximity to each other. Clamorous Reed-Warblers entertained us by popping out of the reeds, giving good views.

There were two highlights for myself, the first being the sighting of Chestnut-breasted Mannikins feeding on the reed seed heads. The second was the sight of a disused dredge that had been taken over by a large mixed colony of cormorants and used as a nesting platform by Great Cormorants. This appeared to be an ideal situation with the dredge buckets, etc, giving a good lookout vantage point. Later on in the walk we were lucky enough to see a flock of the mannikins feeding amongst the grasses, giving everyone ample opportunity to view them.

In all we saw 48 species for the day. Thank you, Claire.

**Coral Lukies**

## BOLD PARK, 15 July

The birds were scarce but the beautiful weather made this walk most enjoyable. Two Atlas surveys were made, netting a total of 26 species. Two new atlasers were signed up and others expressed interest in joining this project. The most common bird seen was the White-cheeked Honeyeater.

Liz Walker celebrated the purchase of a new pair of binoculars by the first sighting of a Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo, which confirmed its presence with its distinctive call. Other good sightings were of a well marked Little Eagle and an unmistakable Brown Goshawk that gave good views of its rounded tail.

The pine plantation within Bold Park was surveyed but only five species were found there, with the Yellow-rumped Thornbill seen there and not in the native bush area. About 12 people attended.

Tom Delaney

## ASHFIELD FLATS, 21 July

Saturday 21 July saw a group assemble at Ashfield Flats, 'wellies' on feet as we had been warned, to accompany Ron on his walk around this area. The river level was high so wet conditions underfoot were to be expected.

We had a noisy beginning, being surrounded by parrots — Australian Ringnecks, Galahs, corellas (both short and long-billed versions) and Rainbow Lorikeets — as well as the murmur of Australian Wood Ducks. Our only raptor of the day was a Black-shouldered Kite seen over the grassy paddocks.

We walked along the banks of a drain whose main purpose seemed to me to breed mosquitoes that constantly attacked. Brown Honeyeaters were in abundance here, their calls a constant background sound. Towards the end of the drain, we had to do some scrub-bashing before clambering onto the boardwalk. A Great Egret was patrolling the waters a few metres away, but I think the most memorable sighting of the day was a male Mistletoebird singing from a branch overhanging the boardwalk. In all we saw 47 species for the day. Thank you, Ron.

Coral Lukies

### GIFTS — CAN'T THINK WHAT TO BUY? WHAT ABOUT AN ITEM FROM BAWA BOOKSHOP? Suggestions

Morcombe, M.

*Field Guide to Australian Birds* \$32.00

Wieneke, J.

*Where to Find Birds in North-East  
Queensland* \$15.00

Nevill, S.

*Travellers Guide to the Parks and Reserves of  
Western Australia* \$30.00

Cassette

*Australian Bird Calls* \$11.00

## Classified ads

This section is for members wishing to buy or sell items relating to birds or birdwatching. Please keep items to less than about four lines. Non-commercial activities only.  
*Editors.*

### WANTED TO BUY

Second-hand binoculars, preferably 10x (25 to 40), but I am also interested in 8x.

Please contact Wes Bancroft on 9380 1493 (wk) or at wes@cyllene.uwa.edu.au.

## Coming events

### Important note re campouts

Members anticipating attending campouts **must** notify the BA Office (9383 7749) of the number in their party and when they will arrive. With this information we will be able to make sure the group will be together and when to expect people.

### Saturday–Sunday 1-2 September — Short-weekend Campout, Jurien Bay

You must book your own accommodation at the Jurien Bay Caravan Park, phone: 9652 1595. There are on-site vans available and plenty of space for caravans and camping.

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

A 2-3 hour boat trip around the off-shore islands may be arranged if sufficient people wish to participate. Cost \$20 per person.

Please advise the Birds Australia Office (9383 7749) if you are attending, and the number in your party who are interested in the boat trip.

We will be at the caravan park on Friday afternoon.

Leaders: Clive and Wendy Napier

### Sunday 9 September — Half-day excursion, Helena Valley, Boya

Meet at 8:30 am at the car park, 600 m beyond the sealed section of Helena Valley Road. (The unsealed section is negotiable for conventional vehicles provided care is taken.) If you wish, park just off the end of the bitumen and walk to the parking area.

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

Leader: Wendy Napier

**Saturday 15 September — Full day excursion, Flynn Road**

Meet at 9:00 am on the corner of Flynn Road and Great Eastern Highway, about one kilometre on the Perth side of 'The Lakes' turnoff, ie, the York Road turnoff.

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

Leader: Bryan Barrett

**Thursday 20 September — Mid-week walk, Alfred Cove**

Meet at 8:30 am at the car park in Troy Park (by the radio mast), off Burke Drive, Attadale. We hope to look for any waders that have arrived early, and also see the many bushbirds in the area.

We may go on later to Kogolup Lake to look for the crakes that inhabit the reeds around this lake.

Leader: Les Harris

**Sunday 23 September — Half-day excursion, Three Wren Search, South Bold Park**

Meet at 8:30 am at the end of Fortview Road at the side of the Christ Church playing fields for a two-hour walk.

In this small area, at the southern end of Bold Park, three species of wrens have been seen. White-winged Fairy-wren, Splendid Fairy-wren and the Variegated Fairy-wren will be looked for in the low coastal scrub.

Leader: Sue Abbotts

**Monday 24 September Meeting — State Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm**

John Blyth will speak on "Recovery of Threatened Birds in WA". Through his work with CALM, John has considerable experience assessing the status of threatened birds and assisting their recovery.

**Friday–Monday, 28 September to 1 October — Campout at Dryandra State Forest**

A cottage has been booked which can accommodate 12 people in two separate rooms. Cost will be \$16.50 per night per person. Please book early with the Birds Australia Office — 9383 7749.

No camping is permitted in the forest, but sites for tents, caravans, etc, will be available at the camping ground that is located off the York–Williams Road, past the most southerly entrance to Dryandra. A small fee will be charged here.

Spotlight, scopes, etc, could be useful. Remember, it will still be cold at night!

Leader: Clive Napier

**Hooded Plover Survey, Yalgorup, 29 September**

We are carrying out our third survey of the Yalgorup lakes on 29 September. The aim is to survey the whole lake system to determine how many Hooded Plovers use the system at this time of year.

The area to be searched is large, so we need volunteers to walk different sections of lake shore and count Hooded Plovers. It was great fun last time, so do join us again. Some people will probably camp at Waters Edge Caravan Park on the Friday night and possibly also Saturday night.

If you are interested in surveying, please phone Dick Rule on 9581 1894, or Julie Raines on 9306 5819.

**Saturday 6 October — Half-day excursion, Denis de Young Reserve, Banjup**

Meet at 8.30 am at the end of Oxley Road that goes east off Liddelow Road, at the south-eastern corner of the Reserve. To reach the Reserve from the north, come down Liddelow Road that goes south off Armadale Road (Map 493 of the 2001 Street Smart Directory). David will lead the walk through the banksia and paperbark woodland which is an excellent birding area for at least six species of honeyeater and lots of other bushbirds.

Leader: David James

**Sunday 14 October—Half-day excursion, Ellis Brook Reserve, Gosnells**

Meet at 8.00 am at the corner of Gosnells Road and Bygum Lane, Martin. A chance to see this interesting site in the spring when the wildflowers should be attracting many bird species.

Leader: Les Harris

**Thursday 18 October—Mid-week walk, Garvey Park, Ascot**

Meet at 8.30 am in the car park (next to the rowing club) at the western end of Fauntleroy Avenue, off Great Eastern Highway. This area has only been visited by the group once before and has a good variety of birds. Since 1997 Hank has recorded 67 species, including Buff-banded Rail, Spotless Crake and Mistletoebird.

Leader: Hank van Wees

**Saturday 20 October—Half-day excursion, Bungendore Nature Reserve, Bedfordale**

Meet at 8.30 am at the entrance to the Reserve on Admiral Road (off Albany Hwy), just past the entrance to the Emmaus Christian School on the right-hand side going towards Wungong Dam.

Birds not common on the coastal plain can be seen here, such as Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos, Rufous Treecreepers and Western Yellow Robins.

Due to trouble at previous walks when cars parked outside were broken into, John will let us through the gate, which will be locked at 8.45 am before we start the walk, and cars will be parked well out of sight of the road.

Leader: John Start

**Monday 22 October Meeting — State Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm**

Sarah Comer (CALM Albany) and Allan Burbidge (CALM Science Division) will provide an "Update on Western Bristlebird Recovery". Sarah and Allan will

describe recent censusing and monitoring work following severe wildfires at Two Peoples Bay and at Walpole, where birds had been translocated in the last two years.

**Sunday 28 October—Half-day excursion, Whiteman Park**

Meet at 8.30 am at the gate 5 km north of the Marshall-Beechboro Road intersection (NOT at the main gate). Look for the Birds Australia signs. The gate will be locked at 8:45 am so be punctual. Michael will take us into an area of the park (closed to the public) that he has studied.

Leader: Michael Brooker

**Saturday 3 November—Full day excursion, Karakin Lake and Doopiter Swamp**

Meet at 9:00 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 will spend a short time looking at the honeyeaters here and look for wrens.

We will then proceed further along KW Road to Lake Karakin which, when wet, can hold many species of duck, waders, etc, some of which breed in the area. After an early lunch here we will drive on to Doopiter Swamp. (*Dupetor* has been used as the genus name for Black Bittern — perhaps the names are connected — we have not yet seen bittern in the area). Spoonbills breed here and several wader species are often sighted. We recommend you wear long trousers, boots/wellingtons, and take insect repellent and drinking water.

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

Leader: Bryan Barrett

**Special General Meeting, Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre, Monday 5 November, 8:00 pm**

**Note:** *Venue and date different from monthly general meetings.*

Dr Libby Robin, author of the Birds Australia Centenary history, *The Flight of the Emu*, will introduce the book in Western Australia as part of the BA Centenary celebrations. Libby is an accomplished historian, has a wealth of anecdotes about people and events in the RAOU / Birds Australia, and this should prove an interesting and entertaining talk.

**Wednesday 7 November—Mid-week walk, Waterford Conservation Area**

Meet at 8:30 am at the parking area next to the Curtin boat shed on the corner of Elderfield Road and Fairview Crescent, Salter Point. The South Perth Council has been working on the area for some years to save the foreshore. There is good access for wheel chairs.

Leader: Tom Delaney

**Sunday 11 November—Full day excursion, Lake Chittering**

Meet at 8:30 am in the grounds of the small church near the corner of the Great Northern Highway and Chittering Road. This lake has not been visited by Birds Australia for

a number of years and it is hoped that some members may like to look at the lake in canoes.. Anyone interested in doing this should contact Brice direct on 9255 3717 so that arrangements can be made. Freckled Duck and many other waterbirds have been seen here.

Others may wish to walk round the lake that is mostly surrounded by overhanging melaleucas, but it is hoped we can get access to the lake from nearby properties.

Leader: Brice Wells

**Friday-Sunday 16-18 November—Short weekend Campout at ‘Clare’ SE of Darkan**

‘Clare’ is a 103 hectare bush block of mixed wandoo woodland and sandplain heath recently purchased by Bernie Masters and his wife who are keen for us to visit and count the birds on the property.

There is an excellent campsite available but participants would need to be entirely self-sufficient, including water. No fires are allowed in the summer.

Members interested should ring the office (9383 7749) so that a map and directions to the site can be forwarded. Please leave your name, address, and number of people in your party.

A warning from Bernie — there will probably be ticks in the area at this time!

Leaders: Bernie and Carolina Masters

**Sunday 25 November — Evening walk, Ray Marshall Park (Blackadder Creek), Viveash**

Meet at 5:30 pm in the car park of the Ray Marshall Park. Go to the end of First Avenue, off Great Eastern Highway, just east of the Governor Stirling Senior High School.

Bring a light meal (sorry, no BBQ available) and we will eat early before walking along the John George Trail beside the Swan River. On most of the walks in this area we have seen several night birds — Barn Owl, Tawny Frogmouths — so we thought that an evening walk in the area might be worthwhile. Strong torches/spotlights, as well as insect repellent, would be a good idea.

Leader: Jan Rogers

**Monday 26 November Meeting — State Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm**

Kevin Coate will speak on “Birdlife of Lord Howe Island”.

**Saturday 1 December — Full day excursion, Amarillo Pool, Baldavis**

Meet at 9:00 am at the entrance to Amarillo Farm on the Serpentine River. Travel south on Mandurah Road, turning left into Paganoni Road. Travel several kilometres then turn right into Vine Road. Look for the BA sign.

Please be punctual as the gate will be locked after us!

We will look for waders along the mudflats of the river. Long-toed Stints and Wood Sandpipers are usually seen here, as well as plenty of waterbirds. Long trousers and boots/wellingtons are recommended as snakes have been seen in the area. Hat, insect repellent and water should be carried. Bring your lunch.

Leader: Les Harris



**Wednesday 5 December—Mid-week walk, Market Garden Swamps, Spearwood**

Meet at 9:00 am on the corner of Pennlake Drive and Brenzi Court (under the power lines), on the edge of Market Garden Swamps. Chris Beaton, Environmental Officer for the City of Cockburn, will meet the group and open a gate into the reserve to allow cars to be parked off the road. Chris will then join us to walk around this quite large lake and swamp to look for waterbirds and bushbirds. Over 30 species have already been seen here.

Leader: Brenda Newbey

**Saturday 8 December—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. An excellent site for Red-eared Firetails, White-breasted Robins and Red-winged Fairy-wrens. Over 90 different species have been recorded here.

Leader: Bill McRoberts

**Sunday 16 December—Half-day excursion, Alfred Cove**

Meet at 8:00 am at the car park in Troy Park (by the radio mast), off Burke Drive, Attadale. There should be plenty of waders here, and there are also many bushbirds in the area. Please bring telescopes if you have them.

Leader: Les Harris

**Note: no meeting in December.**

**Sunday 30 December—Half-day excursion, Thomsons Lake, Beeliar**

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park off Russell Road, between Pearse and Hammond Roads. A good area for bushbirds, waders and waterbirds.

Leader: Brice Wells

*Wildflower Society*  
of WESTERN AUSTRALIA (Inc.)



# Spring Fling

Celebrating the beginning of spring

- ❖ Demonstrations & Displays
  - Growing plants from seed
  - Know what soil is in your backyard
  - Floral Displays
- ❖ Childrens Activities
  - Make gum nut toys
  - Paint sand picture
- ❖ Plants & Seeds for Sale
  - Local wildflower seeds
  - Some unusual plants
- ❖ Cut Wildflowers for Sale
  - Banksia, Geraldton Wax, Dryandra, Verticordia & more
- ❖ Souvenirs for Sale
  - Calenders, books, fridge magnets, posters etc
- ❖ Wildflower & Bird Spotting Walks
  - A walk every half hour
- ❖ Tea Towels, Shopping Bags, Aprons
- ❖ Light Refreshments



Actinotus superbus

**Sunday, 10th September, 2000**  
**9:30am — 4:00pm**  
**Perry House, 71 Oceanic Drive, Floreat Park**  
All enquiries to the Wildflower Society of W.A. (Inc.) Ph 9383 7979  
After Hours: Sybil Speak Ph 9444 1495

**Chris Hassell & Adrian Boyle  
Of Broome are NOW!!**



## **TURNSTONE NATURE DISCOVERY**

**Running a regular  
full and half-day tour  
programme throughout  
the year, you will have  
the opportunity to share  
their enthusiasm and intimate  
knowledge of the birds of  
the Broome area.**

Join Chris and Adrian for some  
exciting birdwatching experiences

- ♦ On the Bay
- ♦ In the pindan woodlands
- ♦ At the wetlands

Chris and Adrian are also  
available for private charters and  
have devised some excellent short  
itineraries out of Broome.

*Contact them for more details:*

**Tel: (08) 9192 8585**

**E-mail: turnstone@wn.com.au**

**PO Box 3089, Broome, WA, 6725**

**We look forward to hearing from you.**

## **Crossword Answers No 26**

### **Across**

1 spangled, 3 lilac, 7 palms, 10 Pintail, 12 avocet, 14 din,  
15 error, 17 still, 18 glossy, 21 scratch, 22 vigilant,  
24 weed, 25 preen, 26 wingbar, 27 mask, 28 gular,  
29 Muir

### **Down**

2 pipe, 4 into, 5 colonial, 6 filter, 8 live, 9 society,  
11 sting, 13 terrestrial, 14 dowitcher, 16 congress,  
19 silent, 20 trigger, 23 odour, 24 warm

## **SILENT GROVE COTTAGE**

- ♦ Spacious, self-contained  
2 bedroom cottage — everything  
supplied
- ♦ 2 hectare bushland fringing Princess  
Royal Harbour
- ♦ Over 30 birds visit including Red-  
eared Firetail, Red-capped Parrot,  
Western Spinebill, Golden Whistler
- ♦ Adjacent to National Park, walk trails
- ♦ Adult accommodation, private and  
secluded
- ♦ Discount for members

*Contact Marilyn & Ron Dorn*

### **Silent Grove Cottage**

PO Box 5226 (612 Frenchman's Bay Rd)  
Albany WA 6332

**Tel: (08) 9844 4950**

**Mobile: 0438 844 950**

**Email: merron@iinet.net.au**

Printed by Executive Press: Tel (08) 9275 8044