

Western Australian Bird Notes

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A GREY HERON *ARDEA CINEREA* IN BUSSELTON, WESTERN AUSTRALIA: FIRST RECORD FOR AUSTRALIA?

Earlier this year, Claire Thorstensen of the Geographe Catchment Council sought my advice concerning the proposed construction of a bird hide on the New River Wetlands, Busselton. I suggested several surveys first be conducted to determine waterbird use of the area. Information gained could be used to decide the best location for a hide and screened access to it.

Claire then approached the Busselton Naturalists Club. Two local members, Jeni Jones and Margaret Hill, volunteered to conduct the surveys. During the next few months, Jeni and Margaret went to the New River location at least once each week and methodically recorded numbers and exact locations of all waterbirds present.

During one of these visits, on Monday 20 May 2002 at about 11:00 am, Margaret observed a bird she had not seen before and drew Jeni's attention to it. It was also new to Jeni. They turned to their Simpson and Day *Field Guide to the Birds of Australia* and were surprised to find that the bird perched in front of them was not in it! Jeni jumped into her car and drove to my office at the Department of Conservation and Land Management in Busselton to ask if I could come and have a look at this mystery bird. When we returned it was still there. Jeni lent

me her zoom binoculars (Tasco 'Sonoma' 8-20 x 50mm) and to my astonishment there, perched on a branch at the water's edge, about 100 m away, in full sun, was a large white and grey heron with distinctive black markings, that I had never before seen in Australia.

We immediately settled down to observe and record its features, concentrating on those I thought would be sufficient for identification. The field notes, called out by me and recorded by Margaret, read as follows.

"All yellow beak. White forehead and crown. Black (from base of beak?) through and above eye to back of head. Many long white plumes hanging from neck. White cheeks. Uniform pale to mid-gray wing coverts. Black shoulders, black flanks, legs brown-gray. Two thin black vertical lines extending from chin to lower neck. Feathers extending one third of way on underside of bill. Light undertail coverts".

During these ten or so minutes of initial observation, this single heron was perched on the dead limb of a *Melaleuca* tree, lying on the ground at the water's edge on the southern shore of the New River wetlands, about 100 metres from the low bund that separates these wetlands from the Vasse River. The bird was brightly illuminated, being bathed in full sunshine and reflected light from the water surface. As it was morning



Grey Heron at Busselton.
*Photograph courtesy Allan
Miller, Busselton-Margaret Times*

and the bird was SSW of us, we were looking at its 'sunny side'. It was perched, unmoving, almost facing us, slightly side on, and on one leg. Its neck was retracted, with head little above shoulders, hence the reference in the field notes to white 'cheeks' rather than head and neck. Its beak was horizontal. Although size can be deceptive, it did appear to be a large heron, larger than the familiar White-faced Heron. A Darter roosting about 10m closer to us provided a comparison. While making the observations I sat on the bund, holding the binoculars with both hands and resting my elbows on my knees, to minimize movement. There was a light, cool breeze from the south west.

Confident that these initial observations would be sufficient to identify the bird to species, Jeni and I went back to my office where I dug out a copy of Cramp (1980) *The Birds of the Western Palearctic* (BWP), and turned to the heron illustrations. And there it was, on Plate 41, a Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*. Next we turned to the *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds* (HANZAB), and were amazed to read "... in spite of persistent rumours of vagrants in n. Australia. (Slater *et al* 1986) no acceptable records in our region"! and "All Aust. records unsubstantiated and unacceptable"! I quickly grabbed a Leica Televid 77 telescope (77mm objective lens) with 20x eyepiece, plus sturdy Slik tripod, and we headed back to the New River to announce the news to Margaret and to study the heron more closely. When we returned, it had flown to a new position, another 10 or so metres further away, but was still in clear view, standing on a pile of dead branches at the water's edge. While Margaret, Jeni and I took turns studying the bird through the telescope I made several telephone calls on my mobile, firstly to Claire Thorstensen and then to John Blyth of Birds Australia WA Group in Perth, and to a local newspaper, which over the years has shown a continuing interest in the waterbirds of the Busselton wetlands.

With the telescope, I was able to see several of the heron's features more clearly. Firstly the black feathers on the head extended from immediately above the rear half of the eye to the back of the head, not *through* the eye as first thought when viewing with hand-held binoculars. These black feathers extended one centimetre or so behind the head, but, as far as I could determine, no further. They did not have the appearance of long plumes. The light grey feathers of the back were, however, elongated and hung loosely over the upper edge of the darker-grey, folded wings. The bird's feet were the same brown-grey colour as the legs. Long, 'shaggy', greyish-white feathers appeared to hang from the upper chest. At one stage the heron preened its upper body feathers. This enabled me to see the sides of its neck, which were white. A second opportunity to gauge the

size of the bird was provided when a Great Egret landed on a branch a few metres away and perched there for several minutes. The heron seemed of comparable size.

Derek Pool, photographer with the *Busselton-Margaret Times* arrived around midday with reporter Allan Miller and took a single photo of the heron with a Nikon D1 digital camera, 80-200 mm zoom lens and 1.4x converter.

Later in the afternoon, Allan made a second visit with a Nikon F4 camera with a 600 mm telephoto lens and 1.4x converter (giving a focal length of 840 mm), borrowed from Derek. The bird was still roosting 120 metres from the bund wall and Allan was able to take a number of photographs with 100 ASA colour negative (print) film. Two of these photos are sufficiently detailed to be able to see the yellow beak, white forehead and crown, widening black stripe extending from eye to back of head, white sides of head and upper neck (the bird was hunched again), black shoulders, white upper and lower chest, lines of black feathers on underside of neck, grey wing coverts, black of folded primaries (and of sides of abdomen?), light undertail and brown legs, in addition to typical heron form and posture. These photographs also record the exact location of the heron. It was perched among a uniquely-arranged pile of dead Melaleuca branches.

Since receiving prints of Allan's photos, I have also received a copy of the single photo taken by Derek Poole.

This photograph shows the bird slightly more side-on than Allan's photographs and is in bright sunshine, whereas Allan's were under cloud. From Derek's photograph it is also possible to see the straight yellow beak, white forehead, widening black stripe from eye to back of head, black shoulders, grey wing coverts, black on sides of abdomen and black of folded primaries. Evident from this photo, but not from Allan's are long, greyish white feathers that appear to hang over the chest. The most central of these feathers reach the abdomen. There is also a small area of white or grey in the right flank area. The light undertail is also more evident. The legs appear more greyish-brown than in Allan's photos. The vertical lines of black feathers on the underside of the neck are not clearly discernible, probably because this part of the photograph is over-exposed. Derek's photograph and one of Allan's have since appeared in colour in the May 30, 2002 issue of the *Busselton-Margaret Times*.

During the early afternoon (I observed the bird until around 3:00 pm on 20 May) it was interesting to see the effect of changing illumination on the heron's bill colour. Late morning the sun was on my side of the bird and its sturdy beak was unambiguously yellow. During the afternoon the



Grey Heron at Busselton.
Photograph courtesy Derek Pool,
Busselton-Margaret Times

sun was on the other side of the bird and when it shone brightly the heron's beak colour changed to an almost-reddish orange colour. This change was presumably due to light passing through blood vessels as opposed to simply reflecting from the surface of the beak.

No vocalizations or other noises were heard from the bird and it seemed to be in good condition. There were no indications of ill health or injury.

The bird was also seen, early afternoon at the same location, by another keen local birdwatcher, Mandy Ferreira. Several years ago Mandy and Jeni Jones participated in a "Waterbird Identification for Absolute Beginners" course I conducted and have maintained an active interest in birdwatching.

This was not the first time I have seen a Grey Heron. In the late 1970s and early 1980s I travelled extensively in the UK and eastern and southern Africa. Though I haven't checked my travel diaries, jottings in my bird field guides of these countries indicate I saw Grey Herons at Leighton Moss in Lancashire, England, in 1978 and Kruger National Park, South Africa, in 1983.

The heron stayed at the New River wetlands until at least 4 pm on Monday 20 May, when it was last observed by Allan Miller. Independent visits the next morning and afternoon, by me, Allan Miller and George and Rita Watkins from Bunbury, failed to produce another sighting. We also checked several other locations around Busselton without success. As far as I am aware, there have been no further sightings in the Busselton area, at least until early August.

With which other species could this heron be confused? The common heron of south-western Australia is the White-faced Heron. Much less common is the White-necked Heron. The observed bird is readily distinguished from both of these species by the black stripe extending from the eye to the back of the head, yellow bill, black shoulders and other features. Herons not found in the south-west, but occurring in other (northern) parts of Australia are the Great-billed Heron and Pied Heron. The first is a grey-brown bird. The second is small, with dark grey wings and body, and white (immature) or dark-capped (adult) head. It is evident from the description and photographs that the observed heron was also not one of these species. The somewhat similar Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*, which also occurs in Europe, Asia and Africa, can similarly be excluded on appearance, as can other herons of the world (Hancock and Kushlan 1984). As BWP states, Grey Herons are "Typical birds unlikely to be misidentified ...".

How old was this bird? Using BWP as a reference, the white forehead and crown, long and loose feathers of the chest, yellow bill and brown legs and feet suggest the bird was an adult, possibly two or more years old. The forehead, crown and streak over eye of juveniles are apparently dark grey and their chest feathers are only slightly elongated. The upperparts of juveniles are also without ornamental feathers. The chest feathers of

immatures are only slightly more elongated than those of juveniles. Subadults still have some grey on forehead and crown, and their bill is dark horn coloured, becoming yellower in the second year. The legs and feet of sub adults are greenish-grey. Adult Grey Herons have two or three long (up to 20 cm) narrow black plumes on the nape. I was unable to see plumes of this description; presumably they had moulted. BWP states that the moult of body feathers may continue into winter (northern), with "plumes on nape sometimes still growing March".

Where did this bird come from? One way of addressing this question is to consider differences in appearance of the species throughout its range. BWP states that *Ardea cinerea* is polytypic. The nominate subspecies *cinerea* occurs in "Eurasia east to Sakhalin, Manchuria, and India, Africa and Comoro Islands", *monicae* is found on islands of Banc d'Arguin in west Africa, *firasa* is found in Madagascar and *jouyi* in Japan, China, Indochina, Malaya, Sumatra and Java. *A. c. jouyi* is said to be "paler on neck and upper wing coverts than nominate *cinerea*"; this variation probably clinal, with wide area of intermediate populations in Asia". *A. c. firasa* is said to have "bill and tarsus longer, bill heavier than *cinerea*. Populations of Java and Sumatra "also tend to heavy bill, especially lower mandible; named *altirostris* Mees, 1971, but difference slight and presumably not sufficient for subspecific recognition". Because all of these differences are relative and apparently small, I don't believe that a firm conclusion can be reached on the basis of appearance, regarding to which subspecies the bird belonged.

A second way of addressing the question is to consider distances that would need to be travelled from different parts of the species' range, and the significance of any barriers to movement such as sea or ocean. The country within *A. cinerea*'s normal range that is closest to Busselton is Indonesia, where it occurs in Java and Sumatra (BWP) and on some smaller islands, of which the closest to Australia are Sumbawa and Sumba (R. Johnstone, pers. comm. 24 May 2002). From Sumbawa and Sumba it is 900 and 700 km respectively across the Indian Ocean / Timor Sea to the Kimberley coast of Australia. The direct line distance from there to Busselton is 2,200 km; following (roughly) the coast the distance is about 2,700 km. Although the total distance is considerable, it is not beyond the capability of the species. According to BWP, *A. c. cineria* is strongly migratory in parts of its range. During autumn it "migrates on a broad front, but some tendency to follow coasts and rivers; seas and mountains now crossed freely". Birds banded in Russia have been recovered in Senegal, Sierra Leone, Guinea and other west African countries; a distance that is considerably greater than (roughly 2x) Indonesia to south-western Australia. Birds from western Europe have been recovered in the Azores, Canary Islands, Madeira and Cape Verde Islands, demonstrating a capacity to travel at least 900 km (Madeira to Azores) and possibly up to 1400 km (Portugal to Azores) over open ocean (Cramp 1980). There are also records of French-ringed individuals being recovered on the other side of the Atlantic, in

Trinidad, Montserrat, Martinique and off Bermuda (Hancock and Kushlan 1984).

The nearest alternative origins for the bird (disregarding Java, Sumatra and Indochina) are Sri Lanka/India and Madagascar. These countries are 4,800 and 6,600 km respectively from Australia's west coast, with very few islands between. Despite *A. c. cineria*'s known ability to travel long distances over open ocean, it does seem much less likely that the bird would have come from one of these countries. At 50 km/hr, a fast speed for a heron, it would take four days of continuous flight from Sri Lanka to North West Cape and five and a half days from Madagascar to Cape Naturaliste, near Busselton. Even if the bird was assisted by strong winds, as often blow from west to east across the southern Indian Ocean, it would take several days to make the journey from southern Africa and it is unlikely that the bird would arrive in the apparently healthy condition in which it was observed at Busselton. That the bird sighted in Busselton came from Indonesia, making its way down the coast in a number of readily-achievable stages, seems more likely.

Could the bird have had an assisted passage? Perhaps it caught a ride on a ship from Africa or Asia and disembarked near Busselton. That this particular, distinctively-marked, bird was apparently not recorded anywhere else in Australia prior to being seen in Busselton does make me wonder. It would be interesting to know if there are records of Grey Herons travelling on ships and

also whether they form close associations with people in any part of their range. On the other hand, this bird showed no signs of tameness while we were observing it.

An escapee from an Australian zoo perhaps? Neil Hamilton, former curator of Birds at Perth Zoo, has advised me that the Grey Heron has not been held in captivity by any Australian zoos. This possibility can therefore be excluded.

Perhaps this bird will be sighted again in coming months. If so, this might give us more clues to the bird's origin.

References

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- Simpson, K. and Day, N. 1996. *Field Guide to the Birds of Australia.* 5th Edition. Penguin Books, Australia.

Jim Lane

Editors' note: See also the article by Brice Wells, later in this issue, describing a subsequent sighting of this species (most likely the same individual) at Geraldton.

This list has been compiled by the Observations

Observations

Committee. Metropolitan suburbs or shires are in parentheses. Please report interesting observations to Frank O'Connor (9386 5694 or preferably sightings@iinet.net.au) or to the BAWA office. Sightings are included on the BAWA web site (<http://birdswa.iinet.net.au>) as soon as possible, and the most interesting are selected for inclusion in the next WABN.

The 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*).

Highlights. This edition contains reports of two new species for Western Australia. A Grey Heron was seen first in Busselton and then (presumably the same individual) a month later in Geraldton. This is a new species for Australia. A Painted Honeyeater was seen in the Kimberley. In addition a Glossy Swiftlet was reported from the Kimberley. This has been reported in WA once or twice before but not fully documented.

The outstanding sightings in the metropolitan area were a Painted Snipe that stayed for a few days at Herdsman Lake, and a Spiny cheeked Honeyeater at Whiteman Park. White-naped Honeyeaters were unusually common on the Swan Coastal Plain. There continued to be some sightings

of interest from Rottnest, and some interesting seabird sightings. There were some unusual raptor sightings in Perth and the south west, and Freckled Duck and Black-tailed Native-hens are always of interest in Perth.

The most noticeable species everywhere in the south west since mid May has been the White-necked Heron. Normally not uncommon singly, this year they have been reported everywhere from Kalbarri to Esperance and often in large numbers. The sighting of Magpie Geese at Lake Indoon is exceptional. Another Rockhopper Penguin was found on the south coast, and there have been unconfirmed third hand reports of a Fiordland Penguin near Albany (apparently shown on GWN) and a Sooty Shearwater near Cape Leeuwin (taken to Busselton for rehabilitation). The Grey Petrel is rarely seen from the coast, and there have been sightings of Freckled Duck, Black-tailed Native-hen and Hooded Plover inland. A Royal Spoonbill was seen at Esperance—this species is rare in the south although it is possibly on the increase after six sightings in Perth during last summer.

The Kimberley and especially Broome have continued to have their share of uncommon species for the region. Black Falcons have been seen at a number of sites including in Broome town. Great Crested Grebe, Chestnut

Teal, Pied Heron, Black-tailed Native-hen, Banded Stilt and Grey Fantail are rare near Broome.

Another Oriental Honey-Buzzard was reported from Christmas Island, and the first bee-eater for the island was seen but not identified. The remains of a White-faced Storm-Petrel found in a booby nest is a new species for the island, and there was an unconfirmed sighting of a prion species seen at sea near Christmas Island.

METROPOLITAN (UBD Street Directory)

Freckled Duck – 4, 27/07/02, Herdsman Lake (Herdsman) – RJ * 8, 29/07/02, Herdsman Lake (Herdsman) – HvW (early sighting and high number for Herdsman)

Hoary-headed Grebe – 2, 04/06/02, Lighthouse Swamp (Rottnest) – WB * 1, 04/06/02, Bulldozer Swamp (Rottnest) – WB

Southern Giant-Petrel – 1 killed Silver Gull, 22/05/02, Thomsons Bay (Rottnest) – GEW * 2 killed Crested Tern, 06/07/02, Fremantle North Mole (North Fremantle) – BAWA

Kerguelen Petrel – 2, 30/06/02, Hillarys pelagic – BAWA (uncommon in WA)

Salvin's Prion – 1, 30/06/02, Hillarys pelagic – BAWA (1st sighting on these trips)

Slender-billed Prion – 9, 30/06/02, Hillarys pelagic – BAWA (high number)

Hutton's Shearwater – 7 (migrating north), 08/05/02, Fremantle North Mole (North Fremantle) – FO, EP

Wilson's Storm-Petrel – 1, 08/05/02, Fremantle North Mole (North Fremantle) – FO, EP

White-faced Storm-Petrel – 2, 30/06/02, Hillarys pelagic – BAWA (unusual in winter)

White-necked Heron – 48, 03/06/02, Kogolup Lake (Beeliar) – MS

Osprey – nesting, 17/07/02, Swan River (Peppermint Grove) – MH

Spotted Harrier – 1, mid 06/02, Rockingham Environment Centre (Rockingham) – BG

Peregrine Falcon – 2 mating, 01/08/02, Commonwealth Bank (Perth) – SG

Nankeen Kestrel – 1, 10/02/02, landed on boat 14 km west of Mindarie Keys – JI (very rare at sea)

Black-tailed Native-hen – 2, 10/06/02, Herdsman Lake (Herdsman) – BR * 2, 07/07/02, Barker Swamp near Burswood Golf Course (Burswood) – BW * 1, 21/07/02, Dulwich Street (Caversham) – WB

Painted Button-quail – 1, 08/05/02, Barker Swamp (Rottnest) – PaB (1st confirmed record for Rottnest – see article in this issue) * 1, 24/07/02 and 29/07/02, Radar Head (Rottnest) – WB

Painted Snipe – 1, 18/05/02, Glendalough Parklands (Herdsman) – EP (5th record for south west)

Banded Lapwing – 3, 28/07/02, Eagle Bay (Rottnest) – WB (unusual near West End)

Pomarine Jaeger – 1, 08/05/02, Fremantle North Mole (North Fremantle) – FO, EP

Arctic Jaeger – 9, 08/05/02, Fremantle North Mole (North Fremantle) – FO, EP

Caspian Tern – 2, 16/04/02, Herdsman Lake (Herdsman) – BR (uncommon at Herdsman)

Roseate Tern – 2 adults and 1 fledgling, 22/05/02, Bathurst Point (Rottnest) – GEW

Whiskered Tern – 1, 20/05/02, Herdsman Lake (Herdsman) – BR (unusual in May)

White-winged Black Tern – 10, 12/05/02, Black Lake (Barragup) – PB (unusual in May)

Common Noddy – 1, 08/05/02, Fremantle North Mole (North Fremantle) – FO (uncommon off Perth)

Common Bronzewing – 1, 03/08/02, Blue Gum Lake (Mt Pleasant) – VH (1st for Blue Gum)

Galah – 1, 28/07/02, Cape Vlamingh (Rottnest) – WB (unusual near West End)

Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo – 1+, 28/07/02, Cape Vlamingh (Rottnest) – WB

Sacred Kingfisher – 1, 28/07/02, Cape Vlamingh (Rottnest) – WB (unusual near West End)

Southern Emu-wren – 1 female, 17/05/02, CSIRO study area (Gooseberry Hill) – MBr (1st record for 19 years at this site)

Western Gerygone – 23, 13/05/02, North Lake (North Lake) – WM (high number – migration?)

Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater – 1, 20/07/02, Whiteman Park (Whiteman) – MB (rare on Swan Coastal Plain)

Chestnut-breasted Mannikin – 20, 02/06/02, Neerabup Lake (Neerabup) – EP

White-backed Swallow – 3, 09/05/02, Blue Gum Lake (Mt Pleasant) – VH * 3, 24/05/02, Herdsman Lake (Herdsman) – RP

Silvereye – 600+, 27/04/02, Herdsman Lake (Herdsman) – BR (high number)

SOUTH-WEST (Shark Bay to Cape Arid)

Magpie Goose – 4, 06/07/02, Lake Indoon (Carnamah) – JF (very rare in south)

Freckled Duck – 10, 06/07/02, Moodiarrup (West Arthur) – JSc

Pink-eared Duck – 1, 09/07/02, Marshall Wetland, South Coast Highway (Albany) – ABG (rare near Albany)

Rockhopper Penguin – 1, 15/06/02, Hopetoun Caravan Park beach (Ravensthorpe) – per PW

Blue Petrel – 1, 03/05/02, Bunker Bay (Busselton) – BR

Grey Petrel – 1, 24/07/02, Cave Point (Albany) – JD

Hutton's Shearwater – 8, 24/07/02, Cape Leeuwin (Augusta Margaret River) – FO (uncommon in July)

Little Shearwater – ~60 (flocks of 10, 20 and 30), 24/07/02, Cape Leeuwin (Augusta) – FO (flocks seldom seen)

Black-faced Cormorant – 3, 22/06/02, Flinders Bay (Augusta Margaret River) – SD (west of normal range)

Grey Heron – 1, 20/05/02, Vasse River (Busselton) – JJ, MHi, JL * 1, 22/06/02, Chapman River mouth (Geraldton) – BW, JB, JA (new species for Australia) (see articles in this issue)

White-necked Heron – 27, 09/06/02, Eckersley Road, Yarloop (Harvey) – BRu * 25, 08/07/02, 2 km west of North Dandalup (Murray) – WM

Cattle Egret – 1, 24/06/02, Murchison House Station (Northampton) – WM

Royal Spoonbill – 1, 09/02/02, Lake Wheatfield (Esperance) – MG (rare on south coast)

Black Kite – 1, 01/06/02, Latham (Three Springs) – MBr * 1, 01/06/02, 30 km east of Perenjori (Perenjori) – MBr (uncommon this far south)

Spotted Harrier – 1, 23/06/02, Cutubury Nature Reserve (Greenough) – BW, JB * 1, 26/06/02, northern sewage ponds (Geraldton) – FO, MC, SD (uncommon near west coast)

Black-tailed Native-hen – 3, 11/06/02, farm in South Stirling (Plantagenet) – AB, ABG * 6, 22/06/02, Boundary Road (Katanning) – DS * 150, 26/06/02, Murchison River bridge (Northampton) – FO, MC, SD

Red-necked Avocet – ~3000, 23/05/02, Vasse Estuary (Busselton) – FO, WM, BR, RJ (high number)

Hooded Plover – 2, 11/06/02, Bennett Farm, Woogenilup (Plantagenet) – RG, AFB

Roseate Tern – 4 adults and 3 fledglings, 26/06/02, Geraldton Boat Harbour (Geraldton) – SD

Rock Parrot – 3, 23/05/02, near Vasse Estuary (Busselton) – FO, WM, BR, RJ (uncommon away from coast)

Pallid Cuckoo – 25+, 27/06/02, Kalbarri district (Northampton) – FO, MC, SD (high number)

Grey Butcherbird – caught Yellow-plumed Honeyeater, 11/05/02, Willies Road (Brookton) – JD, HD

Pied Butcherbird – 1, 11/06/02, farm in South Stirling (Plantagenet) – AB, ABG (southern limit of range)

ARID ZONE

Fork-tailed Swift – 100+, 09/04/02, near Pardoo Roadhouse (East Pilbara) – KC

KIMBERLEY

Orange-footed Scrubfowl – 1, 05/05/02, Naturalists' Island (Wyndham – East Kimberley) – KC

Chestnut Teal – 5, 26/06/02, Roebuck Bay (Broome) – JVD (rare in Broome)

Great Crested Grebe – 1, 10/07/02, Crab Creek (Broome) – AdB (uncommon in Broome)

Pied Heron – 1, 06/02, Roebuck Plains (Broome) – per BBO (uncommon in Broome)

Yellow-billed Spoonbill – 2, 17/07/02, Lake Eda (Broome) – AdB (uncommon in Broome)

Black Falcon – 1, 06/02, sewage ponds (Broome) – per BBO (1st in Broome town)

Black-tailed Native-hen – 1, 02/08/02, Lake Eda (Broome) – AdB (uncommon in Broome)

Asian Dowitcher – 50+, 13/03/02, Roebuck Bay (Broome) – JS (high number)

Banded Stilt – 4, 24/07/02, Crab Creek (Broome) – AdB * 1, 25/07/02, sewage ponds (Broome) – AdB (uncommon in Broome)

Banded Lapwing – 5, 19/06/02, Lake Gregory (Halls Creek) – JS

Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove – 1, 05/05/02, Naturalists' Island (Wyndham – East Kimberley) – KC

Masked Owl – 1, 10/05/02, Mertens Creek (Wyndham – East Kimberley) – JS

Grass Owl – 5, 14/04/02, Kingston Rest Station (Wyndham – East Kimberley) – KC

Glossy Swiftlet – 1, 06/05/02, Bigge Island (Wyndham – East Kimberley) – KC (see article)

Rainbow Pitta – 1, 05/05/02, Naturalists' Island (Wyndham – East Kimberley) – KC

Painted Honeyeater – 1, 16/05/02, Bell Creek, Gibb River Road (Derby – West Kimberley) – JS (1st record for WA; details submitted for publication in *Australian Bird Watcher*)

Yellow Chat – 1000, 06/02, Kidney Bean Lagoon (Broome) – per BBO (high number)

Red-capped Robin – 1 male, 04/07/02, Broome Bird Observatory (Broome) – BBO (mist netted; uncommon in Broome)

Hooded Robin – 2, 04/07/02, Broome Bird Observatory (Broome) – BBO (mist netted)

Grey Fantail – 1, 02/08/02, Lake Eda (Broome) – AdB (uncommon in Broome)

Yellow Wagtail – 1 breeding plumage, 04/07/02, sewage ponds (Broome) – AdB (unusual in July)

Little Grassbird – 1, 27/07/02, Nimilaica Claypan (Broome) – AdB (mist netted; uncommon in Broome)

CHRISTMAS ISLAND

Oriental Honey-Buzzard – 1, 12/05/02, near The Blowholes – DJ (2nd record for Christmas Island; submission to BARC)

White-faced Storm-Petrel – 1 dead in Brown Booby nest, 12/05/02, Christmas Island – DJ (1st record for Christmas Island)

Bee-eater sp. – 1, 12/05/02, settlement – DJ (1st bee-eater for Christmas Island)

COCOS-KEELING ISLANDS

Barn Swallow – 8, 14/03/02, Home Island – KC

OBSERVERS

Since the change of membership renewal dates to a quarterly period instead of as at 1st January for all

AB = Anne Bondin	JL = Jim Lane
ABG = Albany Bird Group	JS = Jonny Schoenjahn
AdB = Adrian Boyle	JSc = John Schinzig
AFB = Anne & Fred Bondin	JVD = Jan van de Kam (Neth)
BARC = BA Rarities Committee	KC = Kevin Coate
BAWA = BAWA Excursion	MB = Mike Bamford
BBO = Broome Bird Observatory	MBr = Michael Brooker
BG = Bob Goodale	MC = Mike Carter (Vic)
BR = Bill Rutherford	MG = Mike Gibbs
Bru = Bill Russell	MH = Michael Hancock
BW = Brice Wells	MHi = Margaret Hill
DJ = David James (Qld)	MS = Marcus Singor
DS = David Secomb	PaB = Paddy Berry
EP = Easy Patterson	PB = Peter Bensted
FO = Frank O'Connor	PW = Peter Wilkins
GEW = Gillian & Eric Wheatley	RG = Ray Garstone
HD = Hazel Darnell	RJ = Rolf Jensen
HvW = Hank van Wees	RP = Ryan Phillips
JA = John Ashford	SD = Sean Dooley (Vic)
JB = John Braid	SG = Stewart Graham
JD = John Darnell	VH = Valerie Hemsley
JF = Joan & Jim Fleming (Qld)	WB = Wes Bancroft
JI = John Ingram	WM = Wynton Maddeford
JJ = Jenni Jones	

Editorial

members, there has been a continuing problem of endeavouring to obtain a current mailing list for subscribers to *WA Bird Notes*.

Following recent discussions with the national office, the BAWA Committee has decided to delay the distribution date of future issues of *WA Bird Notes* to coincide with membership renewal cut-off dates.

You will notice that Coming Events have been listed beyond the usual time span to allow for the later distribution date of the next issue.

The deadline of contributions to WABN for the next issue

is 15 November. Future deadlines will be listed in the next issue.

Finally, a request: please send all material for WABN (except advertisements) to one of the editors (Allan Burbidge and Sue Mather), not to Margaret Philippon. This makes Margaret's job easier and facilitates tracking of content for each issue. Please send advertisements directly to Margaret. Contact details are listed on page 39 of this issue.

Allan Burbidge and Sue Mather
Joint Editors

Dear Editors

Letters to the Editors

We joined BAWA during 2000. Since then, we have endeavoured to attend as many half/full day excursions as possible.

I would like to express our appreciation and thanks to the people responsible for organising these trips and to the leaders who are so helpful and patient to explain what we are looking at, more often something new to us.

Thank you for making us feel welcome.

Cora and Alan Kiel

Dear Editors

The note I am forwarding is certainly not world-clattering, but may have the merit that most observers must be familiar with the strange noise described, and may have an opinion about it. (*See elsewhere in this issue—Editors.*)

I like and admire the drawing of a Western Rosella by Mrs Blyth (*WA Bird Notes* 101:19), and therefore it is with some diffidence that I come with a correction. As far as my

observations go, peppermint seeds are picked with the bill, and held in the bill; the foot is never used to hold them, the seeds are too small for that. The smallest seeds I have seen held in the foot (usually, but not always), are sunflower seeds, on the feeding-table in Busselton. The birds look very cute, holding such a seed in the foot and biting it from the end.

You have received so many words of praise for appearance and contents of the "Bird Notes", with all of which I agree, that I almost hesitate to add more, but I like to mention another, and to me most valuable, aspect: no referees, speedy publication, and a minimum of interference by editors (who in "respectable" publications so often manage to muck up one's text). Reading the preamble in the latest issue of the *Emu*, I could only shiver—probably it is only my unscientific mind that makes me think that authors should be allowed to show some individuality. Anyway, as I have never yet managed to get anything published in a "refereed" periodical, you are my salvation.

G F Mees

ANTARCTIC BIRDS

Book review

A Voyage to Antarctica by Stuart Miller, Nature and Technical Publications, Perth, 2001. (Available from the Fremantle Arts Centre and the WA Museum for \$49.95)

Stuart Miller is a prominent ear, nose and throat surgeon in Perth. But he is also a keen photographer, nature lover and bird observer, interests that have been with him for most of his life. A well researched 24-day voyage to Antarctica has brought together the skills from these diverse life

experiences. This is seen in the eye for precision and detail, an inquiring mind, plus superb photography reflecting the unique and fascinating natural world of the Antarctic. The author describes this world as being like "the moon with oxygen". One certainly gets this sense of life and landforms not experienced anywhere else on this planet.

The ship departed from Hobart, to Macquarie Island where King, Gentoo and Royal Penguins, Elephant Seals and Southern Skuas were photographed. Then on towards the Ross Sea where in crossing the Antarctic convergence with its change in ocean conditions, Antarctic Petrels and Southern Fulmars were seen. The voyage followed the Victoria Land coastline visiting the Coulman Island and Cape Washington Emperor Penguin colonies, then to Cape Hallett with an Adelie Penguin colony. Campbell Island, south of New Zealand, the next destination, is a nesting site of the Royal Albatross. Next stop was Enderby Island with Yellow-eyed Penguin and Auckland Island Teal. And this is only the avian species as seals were also seen and photographed.

This is a book of 64 photographs interspersed with a diary form text. The photographs range from panoramic views of landforms to detailed photos of bird and seal species. Exact illustrations of, for example, an Adelie Penguin jumping from the sea onto an ice edge must have been difficult shots. The conspicuous orange and pink mandibular plate and golden upper breast and auricular patch are shown in both the magnificent photographs of the breeding colony and of an individual King Penguin. The beauty of the sea ice and icebergs, a fascination for most people, with the accompanying senses of danger and ethereal wonder, is captured photographically. The difficulties of these icy conditions, keeping hands and batteries warm, are an

aspect of photography not usually experienced but had to be managed to achieve these wonderful results. Basic technical information is given through the text but detailed information is included in Appendix 2 with a generous sharing of hints on photography in these conditions. The inclusion of clear and simple maps of the voyage is useful.

The recounting of the natural history seen on the voyage is told in the first person, which gives the text a sense of the excitement and wonder at the experience. Interwoven are interesting historical anecdotes and information, for instance a brief description of Macquarie Island with reference to Sir Douglas Mawson's view of it as "like a sign post pointing the way to the frozen lands and seas of the Antarctic region". The feats of the early explorers are acknowledged and the impression is that this is made more pertinent from the comfort of a modern ice-breaking ship. There is fascinating detail on the birds, such as the stone robbing habits of the Adelie Penguins where the author details the behaviour he observed. There can be no doubt in the reader's mind that the author revelled in and loved every minute of this voyage, in fact one wonders if he slept at all with the long Antarctic summer days.

This book is an ideal gift for people interested in the Antarctic and its wildlife. Part of the proceedings from the sales is to go to Birds Australia WA Inc and the Ear, Nose and Throat Foundation of WA.

Suzanne Mather

Birds Australia WA Inc reports

BIRDS AUSTRALIA WA INC. COMMITTEE

We have had several marathon committee meetings recently, which is a reflection of the level of activity of BAWA Inc. There is a lot going on and a lot coming up. Following are some of the major items and events and our agenda.

A BAWA open day is planned for 26 October during Bird Week. We intend to use this open day to launch the Bird Guides into which Allan Jones has put so much effort, and hope to attract members of the public as well as our own membership to Perry House. Other activities are being planned for Bird Week, such as bird walks at favourite locations each day, and the inaugural Perth Birdwatch. See elsewhere in this issue of *WA Bird Notes* for details.

Speaking of Perry House, it is likely that there will be a change in our office accommodation within the next few years, and we have begun meetings to consider our options. It is too early to say where we will end up, but we have put together a wish-list of what we would like. As part of this process, we have held discussions with the WA Naturalists' Club and the Wildflower Society with a view to pooling resources and possibly sharing a facility that incorporates meeting rooms, libraries, a lecture theatre for

group meetings, office space, possibly a shop front; all, of course, in a central location, close to public transport but with nice, bird-friendly gardens! The reality may be different from this, but it's nice to dream. The committee would be delighted to hear from any members with ideas or suggestions regarding accommodation.

Our student grants scheme attracted a good field of applicants and due to healthy finances and donations from members, four of these will be experiencing the delights of Eyre Bird Observatory while attending Stephen Davies' course on field ornithology. Over the last few years, about a dozen students have been assisted to attend this course at Eyre and most of them are now active members of BAWA, including several on the Committee.

July saw the publication of the Hooded Plover Management Plan by Julie Raines and team, and a number of new projects are about to come on line. Cheryl Gole is looking after the Perth Biodiversity Project, which has begun, and is recruiting members for the Living Landscapes Project. The latter requires people to spend a weekend in spring visiting and compiling bird lists for patches of native vegetation in the Wheatbelt. The perfect excuse for a weekend away.

Also in July, John Blyth stepped down from his position as Joint Editor (with Allan Burbidge) of *WA Bird Notes*. He held that position from March 1995, with Issue 73, to Issue 102 of June 2002. Bird Notes fulfils a vital function within BAWA, being a newsletter to keep our members informed of activities, and a recognised forum for the publication of observations. On behalf of the committee and all members of BAWA, I would like to thank John for the effort he has put in for so long, and to wish Sue Mather well as the new joint editor.

Finally, yes, I did get to go on a BAWA bird walk. Yanchep National Park is lovely early in the morning, and a pair of Wedge-tailed Eagles basking in the sun on a dead tree was quite a sight. I've got my sights set on a Wheatbelt weekend next.

Mike Bamford,
Chair

RECENT ADDITIONS TO THE LIBRARY, JUNE 2002

598.723	Bird Observer, April 2002
598.9943	Cape York Peninsular: a natural history
598	Recollections of a birdwatcher (H. Officer)
598.9989	A Voyage to Antarctica
598.996	The Reed Field Guide to New Zealand Birds
598.3	Australian Water Birds
598.9943	Birds of Lamington National Park and Environs
333.72	Conservation of Australian Forest Fauna

These are all donations for which the organisation is most grateful.

BAWA projects

HOODED PLOVER PROJECT – FROM WHENCE IT CAME AND WHERE IT IS GOING

From whence it came

Hooded Plovers had become at risk! In the eastern states, in particular, their range had reduced and they had become extinct in some areas. Their long-term existence was no longer assured.

Concerned Birds Australia – Western Australia members formed a voluntary Hooded Plover Sub-Committee in 1994 and set about the task of documenting the distribution and numbers of the Hooded Plover in Western Australia.

The Sub-Committee, originally comprising Phyllis Bentley, Brenda Newbey, Max Bailey and Allan Jones and later Marcus Singor and David Free, ran and analysed data collected between 1994 and 1999 including five major State-wide surveys in WA. To do this they received some additional financial support from World Wide Fund for Nature and the Threatened Species Network.

From this work four regions were identified as important to Hooded Plovers. These were the wetlands of Yalgorup National Park (for numbers of birds and breeding), the beaches from Margaret River to Augusta (for breeding),

the beaches from Bremer Bay to Hopetoun (for breeding) and the coastal salt lakes near Esperance (for numbers of birds).

With the assistance of Sandra McKenzie, who later joined the Sub-Committee, funding was successfully sought from the Natural Heritage Trust Coast and Clean Seas Program to initiate and conduct management in the four key regions.

Julie Raines joined the team, as Project Officer, to initiate this management process.

Julie's task was to increase the public's awareness of the value of these regions to Hooded Plovers and inspire local people to become involved in the management of their wetlands and beaches for the benefit of the Hooded Plover. Hooded Plover Management Groups formed in all Hooded Plover Management Regions comprising volunteers, CALM and, where appropriate, local Shires, environment centres and the Department of Agriculture.

Julie and the Hooded Plover

Sub-Committee also continued the survey process, but this time an 'Adopt a Beach or Wetland Program' was also developed to encourage observers to record seasonal data so we could better understand how to manage the birds. (For an excellent example of what can be done in this regard, see the article by Brenda Newbey later in this issue.)



Contributors celebrating the local launch of their Hooded Plover Management Plan, Walpole, July 2002.

Photo courtesy Julie Raines

During this project two new areas of importance to Hooded Plovers were identified. These were the beaches north of Margaret River to Cape Naturaliste (this was an extension to the Margaret River to Augusta region that had previously been under sampled) and the beaches between Walpole and Denmark (a new management region). The management project was extended into these areas with a new management team forming in the Walpole–Denmark Hooded Plover Management Region.

In all regions the conservation issues were determined and suitable, practical strategies and actions were developed by the local management groups. After successfully obtaining some additional funding from the NHT Coast and Clean Seas Program, a State Hooded Plover Management Plan was written jointly with these five groups and is gradually being distributed.

In addition, our project resulted in 13 000 brochures being produced, 37 signs of six different designs (to cater for individual needs of the regions), five copies of a slide show on Hooded Plovers and various other materials designed to increase public awareness. With the assistance of Brenda Newbey, Cheryl Gole and Tamra Chapman the Hooded Plover's plight was advertised at numerous spring agricultural shows in the south-west of the State.

Numerous press releases were successfully published in local newspapers in the management regions during the course of this project and Hooded Plovers received recognition and consideration in various Shire and CALM documents and on web sites.

...and where it is going

The regional Hooded Plover Management Groups will continue their surveys and monitoring of breeding and threats. In some regions temporary signs will be placed in areas where birds are breeding to direct people and traffic away from vulnerable eggs or young. Local management groups will continue promoting public awareness. They will support CALM's feral animal baiting program (Western Shield) and in some cases encourage government authorities to adopt cat awareness programs. In the Esperance area the local group will



Contributors celebrating the local launch of their Hooded Plover Management Plan, Margaret River, July 2002.
Photo courtesy Julie Raines

encourage better catchment management of the Lake Gore wetland system.

The work of the Hooded Plover Sub-Committee has essentially comprised three phases. Phase 1, was the broad-scale data collection phase (where we sought to understand the bird's distribution and breeding habits). Phase 2 was the initiation of management phase (where we inspired local groups to help us understand regional conservation issues and to support our work and wrote a management plan).

The emphasis of the project in the future (Phase 3) is three-fold. Firstly, we will continue collecting and analysing broad-scale data (State surveys) and localised

management data (through the 'Adopt a Beach or Wetland Survey Program'). Secondly, we will encourage and support the regions where they request assistance and, thirdly, we will consider what specific management research needs to be done.

Research questions of interest include: How and when do Hooded Plovers use specific management areas? Are the same birds always using those areas? What influences their distribution? Which are the greatest threats to Hooded Plovers and do our management actions alleviate the problems? It would also be useful to know more about how they breed (variation in clutch size, incubation time, hatching success, fledging success). Some work has recently started on the first two questions. Thanks to the assistance of Mike Bamford eight Hooded Plovers have recently been colour banded in Yalgorup National Park and he hopes to extend this work over the next year. Please look out for colour banded Hooded Plovers.

Become a member of the Hooded Plover Sub-Committee!

Expressions of interest are now sought from people interested in joining our Sub-Committee and inspired to help carry on our project into the future.

The current Hooded Plover Sub-Committee comprises Marcus Singor (Chairperson), Phyllis Bentley, David Free, Julie Raines and Raquel Carter (WWF representative replacing Sandra McKenzie who has gone to greener pastures). We will be glad to hear from you.

If you would like to join our merry little band, please contact Marcus (9362 2742, <msingor@iprimus.com.au>). If you would like a copy of the Hooded Plover Management Plan, please contact Julie (9306 5819, <austecol@cygnus.uwa.edu.au>).



BA member Michael Burbidge beside a new Hooded Plover information sign at Redgate Beach, Leeuwin-Naturaliste NP.
Photo courtesy Julie Raines

Julie Raines and Marcus Singor

BANDED HOODED PLOVERS—A FIRST RESIGHTING AND A PLEA FOR HELP

One of my greatest regrets was not colour-banding the one hundred Hooded Plovers I caught at Lake Gore in 1995. At the time, I had only limited resources and colour-combinations, and was not to know that the focus on Hooded Plovers in WA would continue for years. That, combined with the theft of many of my colour bands early in my trip (much of my field gear had been stolen from my car), meant I had become content with merely using the standard metal bands before releasing the birds.

At the time, using a telescope and binoculars, we saw many metal-banded birds after their release in the flock at Lake Gore. In a note to WA Bird Notes in 1995 (No 74, pp 1-2), I mentioned that if anybody saw a metal banded bird they should be in touch, because to the best of my knowledge, there had not been any Hooded Plovers banded in WA before then. However, no reports were received, presumably because nobody had seen a metal band on Hooded Plovers. That is until now – Julie Raines detected a metal banded bird at Lake Benje Benjenup near Esperance. This represented a movement from Lake Gore, a distance of some 35 km. The bird was detected using a telescope on the 14th of March 2002, some seven years after it had been banded. Julie is to be congratulated on her patience and skill.

Determining if a Hooded Plover is wearing a metal band is a very difficult task, one best carried out using a telescope if at all possible. However, it can be done using binoculars, and I have seen many eastern Hooded Plovers wearing only metal bands. A 'scope makes life much easier, and we have achieved some amazing skills among some Hooded Plover watchers in the east. The highest level of achievement is related to the story of a Kangaroo Island (SA) bird that was wearing colour-bands. The local bander, Terry Dennis, thought the bird must be from Victoria, as his birds had long lost colour bands, and a Victorian bird had been fitted with the colour-combination far more recently. Two Threatened Bird Network volunteers, Steve Paton and Ian Hance, tested whether they could read the numbers on a metal banded Hooded Plover using a telescope. They were successful in reading the last three digits, but on their visit to Kangaroo Island could not find the bird in question. Later, Terry Dennis used this technique to establish that the Kangaroo Island bird in fact had been banded there, not in Victoria. Terry continues to see metal-banded Hooded Plovers around Kangaroo Island.

The telescope technique requires two people and enormous patience. One person gently coaxes the banded bird towards the hidden observer, while the other keeps watching, focussing and recording. This technique is not necessary in WA, as the mere presence of metal bands narrows down the location and the approximate date of banding.

The Hooded Plovers banded at Lake Gore will have bands that are dull – merely the effect of time, salt and sun. Nevertheless, they can still be detected if care is taken to

observe each and every leg.

I want to ask all Hooded Plover watchers in WA to check every Hooded Plover they see for a metal band (left or right leg, on the tarsus). Some Hooded Plovers have now been colour-banded in WA – eight have been banded by Mike Bamford and the Mandurah Birdwatchers at Yalgorup. These birds will begin to lose their colour bands in a few years, until they remain with only metal bands (based on the experience in Victoria and SA). Within a few years we cannot be sure where a metal-banded Hooded Plover was banded (Yalgorup or Lake Gore). For the next three or more years, we can be reasonably confident that they originated from Lake Gore in 1995. The clock is ticking, and I need your help. Please report any metal-banded birds, their location and the date they were seen, to the Hooded Plover Project Coordinator or a member of the Hooded Plover Subcommittee. Alternatively, you can report them to me at <m.weston@birdsaustralia.com.au>, and I will pass the information back to the relevant people. Please include all details available, including date and location.

So, please keep an eye out for metal-banded birds from Lake Gore, and colour banded birds from Yalgorup. Happy spotting!

Michael Weston
Threatened Bird Network, Birds Australia

Please Join Our Merry Little Band

The Hooded Plover Committee is looking for new members who are interested in participating in our Hooded Plover Project.

If you have been reading WA Bird Notes you will be aware of our ventures. Please see the article 'Hooded Plover Project – from whence it came and where it is going' this issue.

The present Hooded Plover Committee consists of five friendly members (everyone is equal).

The Hooded Plover Committee meets on average every two months at "Perry House" and the meetings last about two hours.

We are involved in a wide range of activities like: arranging State surveys, collecting and analysing data, keeping minutes, writing articles, raising funds, providing support to volunteers in the five key Hooded Plover Management Regions, and initiating research on Hooded Plovers.

Julie Raines has just completed the Hooded Plover Management Plan for Western Australia and we are keen to put the recommendations in place.

If you would like to become part of this dynamic group please let me know and I will be in touch.

Remember other committee members will show you the ropes and assist.

Please send your expression of interest to "Perry House".

Marcus Singor

Table 1: Mid-summer wader count, February 2002 — Carnarvon to Kanidal Beach

Table 1.	MID-SUMMER WADER COUNT FEB 2002 - CARNARVON TO KANIDAL BEACH																				
Species	Sites																				
	Port	Nicol	Carnarvon	Kalbarri	Leeman	Rottnest	Wdms	SEMP	Metro	Peel	Lake	Yalg	Lesc	Vasse	Aug to	Wilson	Albany		Inland	Sth Cst	Kanidal
	Hedland	Bay	5 sites		Cervantes	Island	P Peron		Lakes	Inlet	McLarty	N.P	Inlet	Wonn	Gdr R	Inlet	Royal	Oyster	Lakes	Esperance	Beach
No of species	13	10	20	6	11	18	5	10	9	16	0	6	13	7	8	12	13	15	12	8	4
Black-tailed Godw it	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0
Bar-tailed Godw it	24	306	239	0	1	14	0	6	0	51	0	0	32	0	0	2	5	15	0	0	0
Whimbrel	2	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eastern Curlew	0	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Marsh Sandpiper	4	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Common Greenshank	2	4	2	3	8	0	0	13	9	15	0	0	19	5	1	133	20	23	14	0	0
Wood Sandpiper	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Terek Sandpiper	0	20	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Common Sandpiper	0	0	23	0	3	2	0	1	5	17	0	0	4	3	2	0	1	1	5	0	0
Grey-tailed Tattler	0	85	12	0	7	11	1	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	0
Ruddy Turnstone	0	0	0	10	8	402	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	28	0	0	0	0
Gret Knot	0	13	80	0	0	0	0	38	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	195	160	0	0	0
Red Knot	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	45	40	0	0	0
Sanderling	0	0	0	0	0	121	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	60	0	0	0	0	400	0
Red-necked Stint	1800	0	651	8	6	1423	4	39	105	7	0	430	25	0	21	1861	450	450	1	2	7
Long-toed Stint	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Pectoral Sandpiper	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	63	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	10	1	0	0
Curlew Sandpiper	230	9	0	0	0	64	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	2		235	0	0	0
Pied Oustercatcher	0	0	3	0	1	7	2	64	0	7	0	0	7	0	4	0	5	25	0	4	1
Sooty Oystercatcher	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	1	1	0	2	10
Black-w inged Stilt	1	0	34	0	2	6	0	36	730	501	0	100	85	1360	0	121	0	0	464	0	0
Banded Stilt	220	0	0	0	0	5090	0	0	42	22	0	119	0	1000	0	187	0	0	1226	9	0
Red-necked Avocet	5	0	1	0	0	13	0	0	702	20	0	3	34	300	8	360	0	0	213	4	0
Pacific Golden Plover	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	36	0	0	0	0
Grey Plover	0	0	3	2	4	15	5	11	0	25	0	0	47	0	0	4	30	110	0	0	0
Red-capped Plover	143	52	25	6	35	161	10	19	130	57	0	120	27	22	25	456	2	25	16	8	64
Lesser Sand Plover	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Greater Sand Plover	0	4	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	12	0	0	0
Black-fronted Dotterel	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	6	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	0	0
Hooded Plover	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	9	0	0	0	4	10	0
Red-kneed Dotterel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Banded Lapw ing	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Red-necked Phalarope	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oriental Pratincole	6000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Beach Stone-curlew	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Broad-billed Sandpiper	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unidentified w aders			450											100		40					
Location totals	8444	496	1580	37	77	7339	38	239	1731	802	0	793	307	2796	143	3177	821	1109	1976	439	82

MID SUMMER WADER COUNT, 2002

The good news story regarding the mid-summer wader count is that our observer base increased for the 2002 count. Let's hope the trend will continue for the 2003 count, which will be held on Sunday 9 February.

The Broome count at Roebuck Bay and the Eighty Mile Beach was brought forward to avoid the wet season and is not included with the data in Table 1.

Now to our reports from around the State.

From the 'top end' at Napier Broome Bay, Simon Wilson had his wader count enlivened by a very large crocodile he had thought to be a log. Simon is moving to Shark Bay, so I will miss his reports from exotic locations such as Winanji Beach, Crocodile Bar, Pago Beach, and Marra Jarra Mudflats. The good news is that we can expect Shark Bay to be added to our list in 2003.

Moving down the coast, Jan Lewis has added Wyndham to the data base with a report from the Parry Flood Plain. Thanks Jan.

After digesting the report sheets last year we found the south-west of the State almost matching the Kimberley in wader numbers. We knew there had been a hitch in the Broome counting procedure that year, however, decided to go to print with the data we had, even if it was with tongue in cheek. Well, the Broome observers have gone to work with a vengeance and put me in my place. They have possibly given me an inferiority complex when it comes to tallying wader numbers. The overall results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Results of wader counts near Broome

Site	Species	Waders
Town Beach Broome	20	4604
Roebuck Bay	23	41 907
Eighty Mile Beach	27	472 443

I must acknowledge the sterling work of Adrian Boyle and Chris Hassell. However, rubbing it in by adding to their impressive list of non-wader species with a final laconic sighting of three bustards at a cliff top location, drew a rather uncharitable response from me regarding this last sighting!

Our next report comes from Phil Brace at Port Hedland. Phil's disturbing news is that he had to submit to an alcohol and drug test before obtaining access to his site. (Before you panic, dear readers, I am not suggesting we adopt these measures). Phil also monitored two sites at Nicol Bay without these indignities.

Carnarvon has been added to our location list with the valuable contributions of Les Georges. Les visited three sites to compile his report.

Pam and George Allen surveyed the Kalbarri beach areas and reported bird disturbance due to people and dogs; sadly, this is a problem reported from a number of locations.

Cheryl and Martin Gole included five sites between Leeman and Cervantes during an intensive 'Atlasing' trip. They also monitored a number of inland lakes for the wader survey. Many thanks Cheryl and Martin.

The Swan Estuary Marine Park was ably surveyed by Peel Howden, Les Harris and Kate Creed. Acknowledgements also to Valerie Hemsley, Margery Clegg, Brian Barrett, David James, Peter Wilmont, Jan Knight, Helen and Kel Fredericksen, Toni Webster and Marcus Singor for additional sites in and around the metropolitan area.

Once again the Mandurah Birders' valuable contributions at Peel Inlet, Point Roberts, and Goegrup Lakes is very much appreciated.

Lake McLarty was one of the dried out lakes that were visited, the first time a zero has been reported at this site.

Bill Russell's ever-reliable Hooded Plovers were present at the Yalgorup NP locations, showing what a valuable habitat it is for this species.

George and Rita Watkins visited ten sites around the shores of the Leschenault Inlet to report 13 species and a total of 307 waders.

Two separate surveys were made at the Wonnerup wetlands by Jane Snee and Logan Anderson, resulting in a combined count of seven species and 2796 waders. A great effort by two first time contributors.

The areas between Cape Leeuwin and Black Point were covered by Gwen and Graham Goodreid and Sue and Robert Mather surveyed the Gordon Inlet further down the coastline.

Anne Bondin was faced with the task of surveying Wilson Inlet, the location previously monitored by Tim Hunt. Anne has made a great job at this important site and we hope she can continue the good work for the 2003 wader count.

Vic Smith and Margaret Nash monitored sites at Albany with an impressive combined count from a variety of locations around Princess Royal Harbour and Oyster Harbour.

South coast observers were busy between Beaufort Inlet and Esperance. 200 Red-necked Avocets were among the birds reported at Pallinup by Rob and Sue Mather. Not to be out done, Allan Rose turned up 400 Sanderlings at Yokinup Bay.

To complete the coastal sites Helen and Paul Evans, our hard working wardens at Eyre Bird Observatory, drove out to Kanidal Beach to tally up the birds.

Finally, I must mention one of the true stalwarts of the mid summer wader count, those observers who visit inland lakes that are invariably dried out and lucky to support the odd bewildered Red-necked Plover. David Secomb visited a number of lakes, finally arriving at the Katanning sewage treatment plant where he was rewarded for his perseverance with a sighting of a Long-toed Stint. This bird is becoming quite a rarity in WA. David's was the only report of this species during the count.

Wader numbers are almost the same as the 2001 count. Numbers of trans-equatorial species have fluctuated depending on the species. Lack of inland water has found resident waders present at some coastal sites. There is a concern for Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and Curlew Sandpipers, as there are indications that these species are becoming harder to find.

The results from all locations can be obtained from Tables 1 and 2.

Many thanks to all involved in the 2002 count. We look forward to your participation in next years count. This will be held Sunday 9 February 2003 so put this date aside and polish up the binos, folks.

Each year in early February, as part of the mid-summer wader count program the wader study group holds a campout at Rottnest. As the birding is great, the weather is great, the company is great and the charges are very reasonable, it is always well patronised. For the 2003 campout we are going to provide opportunities for new members with an interest in waders to join in the count. As the Rottnest birds are used to people, close up sightings can be gained. With experienced members on hand to help with identification, it is a good chance to become acquainted with this group of birds. Accommodation is limited and will be made on a 'first come first served' basis. Those interested should contact Colin Davis on 9330 1482 a/hrs.

Colin Davis

WESTERN GROUND PARROT PROJECT

Last spring a Western Ground Parrot project was run in the Waychinicup National Park area. The main objective was to find out whether breeding was occurring in that population, but the major pre-occupation became finding the parrots. They proved to be fewer in number and more restricted in distribution than they had been in spring 1998. As to whether breeding was occurring: the answer was an inconclusive yes'.

A follow-up project is planned for this spring and autumn 2003. This time an application has been made for funding.

HOODED PLOVER MANAGEMENT PLAN

The "Hooded Plover Management Plan (2002-2012) Western Australia" has been published as Supplement No 7 to WA Bird Notes. It will be distributed gradually to all participants in the project.

However, if for some reason you missed out, or you didn't participate but are interested in Hooded Plovers and would like a copy, please contact Phyllis Bentley at Perry House and a copy will be sent to you.

One objective is to again determine location and numbers of Western Ground Parrots in the Waychinicup area for comparison with the findings of 1998 and 2001. Another objective is to find out as much as possible about how the parrots are using the area. It is of particular interest to determine if they are breeding. Any of these findings will help with CALM's task of managing the area and will also help the South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team to define the recovery strategy for this species.

Censussing of Western Ground Parrots is labour intensive as it is best done by listening for calls. The most reliable calling periods are at either end of the day: well before sunrise and after sunset. These are inconvenient times for humans who mostly prefer to be asleep for the morning call session, and preparing or eating their evening meal during the evening call time. However, there are compensations!

Waychinicup is a beautiful area with Noisy Scrub-Birds, Western Bristlebirds and many other species all being much easier to find than Ground Parrots. A bonus is that most of the census team can have plenty of free time. Another bonus, although it comes at a price, is that the 'base-camp' will be the Cheyne Beach Caravan Park where there are plenty of compensatory comforts.

Survey dates

* 27 August to 2 September. This will proceed whether or not the funding application is successful.

By the time WABN is distributed, the outcome of the funding application should be known. If it is successful the rest of the survey program will go ahead. Survey dates are:

- * 18 September
- * 24 - 31 October.

A ten-day survey will also be held in April 2003 at a date to be finalised.

Untried Ground Parrot census persons will be as welcome as experienced people, though it should be noted that fairly good hearing is a prerequisite. Training will be provided. Time is flexible: come for any time between a day and a week. However it will be necessary for you to let someone know that you would like to be involved, just for you to make sure that the project has been funded and is proceeding as planned.

Contacts

- Brenda Newbey (Project organiser) Phone: 9337 5673 Email: <sfryc@iinet.net.au>
- Sarah Comer (Department of Conservation and Land Management, Albany) Phone: 9842 4500 Email: <sarahc@calm.wa.gov.au>
- Jon Pridham (Friends of the Western Ground Parrot) Phone: 9841 7763 Email: <pridham@albanyis.com.au>

Brenda Newbey

THE WA BIRD RESEARCH FORUM, 18 MAY 2002

The inaugural Western Australian Bird Research Forum was held on Saturday 18 May 2002.

The Forum was initiated in response to the observation that the networking and communication between Western Australian birders had been grinding to a halt. The main aim of the Forum was to attract as many bird researchers, both professional and private, to the one place at the one time and have them present (as casually as possible) an overview of their current projects or interests.

The day was a fantastic success, with over 50 people attending and nearly 40 presentations. We had three sessions, each between one and one and a half hours long, separated by tea and lunch breaks. Each speaker had four or five minutes to present themselves, their work, their interests and their questions. The Forum was relaxed, informal and generated much conversation over the tea and lunch breaks (so much so that the food and coffee came a distant second!).

By morning tea time I was already in discussion about the time, place and format of a second Forum. Throughout the day many more people expressed their appreciation for the Forum and their desire to see a similar event held in the not too distant future. Hence, we finished the day with a 'Where to from here?' discussion with all attendees. The organising committee will reconvene in a couple of months to discuss the outcomes and possibilities.

I think I can speak for most people when I say that the Forum made us aware of new projects, people and ideas and was an excellent 'networking' experience. If you didn't register for the forum, a list of some of the participants, and their project topics can be found at:

www.birdswa.iinet.net.au/birdforum/index.htm

The organising committee would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who attended, particularly those who travelled from regional towns, and those who contributed to the Forum and welcomes further input for future meetings.

The Forum was supported by BAWA, Western Banders Association, CALM, UWA and Edith Cowan Universities.

Wes Bancroft



Fledgling Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo
Photo courtesy R Dawson

CARNABY'S BLACK-COCKATOO PROJECT

The first year of the NHT-funded Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Project has already drawn to a close and the second is in full swing.

One of the main aims of the first year was to select a short-list of key Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo breeding sites. I was well armed with breeding site information gained from the public survey conducted by Cheryl Gole and Tamra Chapman in the second part of 2000 as well as information from the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Team members (who are from CALM, CSIRO, WA Museum and Birds Australia).

During the 2001 breeding season I visited quite a number of areas, from Coorow to Watheroo, Newdegate and Mt Barker, to find out more about the habits of the cockatoos observed there. As a result six breeding sites were selected, five in the northern Wheatbelt and one in the southern Wheatbelt.

Recovery actions aimed at stabilising the breeding populations of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos at these sites will start being implemented from now on. Recovery actions will vary depending on the specific needs of each site but could include such actions as fencing off remnant vegetation or planting new habitats used either for feeding or breeding by the cockatoos, controlling competitors for breeding hollows such as Galahs, corellas and feral bees and repairing existing breeding hollows.

In the 2002 breeding season (which begins as early as July in the northern part of the birds breeding range and can continue all the way though to December in the south) the key sites will be monitored to gather as much information as possible about the current conditions under which the birds breed. The sites will continue to be monitored after the recovery actions are implemented in order to gauge how successful they are.

Many people assisted me in the first year of the project and I owe them a big thanks. On my trips out to the Wheatbelt, farming families took the time to show me their cockatoos and also offered me their hospitality at one of the busiest times of the year for them. Birds Australia volunteers helped me out at rural shows and took me around their districts in pursuit of breeding Carnaby's. Back in Perth I had the invaluable assistance of the Recovery Team members, in particular Peter Mawson, Cheryl Gole and John Blyth and Birds Australia members, especially Liz Walker and Allan Burbidge. Thanks to the office volunteers and Ruth Greble and Robyn Pickering especially for their assistance with the database.

Anybody wanting to become involved in the project is welcome to call and discuss it with me. I will need assistance with field work (such as monitoring of breeding sites in the current breeding season) as well as office work (databasing information, newsletter mailouts). I may be contacted on 9287 2448 or 0438 678 492.

Leonie McMahon

Members' contributions

BILL-CLATTERING OF WATTLEBIRDS (*ANTHOCHAERA*)

Both species of wattlebird occurring in Western Australia, the Red Wattlebird (*Anthochaera carunculata*) and the Little Wattlebird (*Anthochaera chrysoptera*), may make, together with their calls, a most peculiar mechanical sound. It is a short rattle or clatter, produced by rapidly opening and closing the bill about six times, the usual procedure being as follows: perched on a branch, the bird stretches, throws its head backward, the bill vertically upward, and clatters, this being almost immediately followed by its familiar loud advertising call, more or less two-syllabled in the Red Wattlebird ("kro-ok"), one-syllabled in the Little Wattlebird. Sometimes the clatter comes at different points in the song.

Although the clatter is highly distinctive, its treatment in the literature is uneven. It is in particular the poor treatment in HANZAB Vol. 5 (Higgins *et al*, 2001) that has induced me to draw renewed attention to bill-clattering.

In this volume (pp.473-474), the voice of the Red Wattlebird seems at first sight comprehensively treated.

There is even a special subsection entitled "Non-vocal sounds", but it is short and refers only to "bill-snapping", that "sometimes accompanies swooping of person approaching young and may be employed against other species ... also while bathing. ... claimed that often precedes a duet". There is nothing here recognisable as the commonly-heard and highly characteristic bill-clattering.

Continuing with the Handbook, the Little Wattlebird has been divided into two species (following recent typologists). Of the western form (*lunulata*) is said: "Bill-snapping is used in early part of song". This might refer to bill-clattering but is not really clear. Finally, under the eastern form (*chrysoptera*) we find a more comprehensive description: "very rapid, and quite loud, clattering of mandibles often occurs before or after calling". Interesting as this description is, it would have been more meaningful if the compiler had been aware that this same clattering is uttered in western as well as in eastern Australia, and by both the Red Wattlebird and the Little Wattlebird. There is no mention of any mechanical sound made by the Tasmanian Yellow Wattlebird (*A. paradoxa*).

As mentioned above, treatment of bill-clattering in the literature has been generally poor. I have had to confine a search for more information to my limited private library,

and found that Officer (1964), whose book contains several interesting little observations, does not mention it. It surprised me to find that in the book by Serventy and Whittell (1976), the Red Wattlebird has no voice at all; only under the next species, the Little Wattlebird, there is an indirect reference, as it is said that: "There is a 'family resemblance' between the calls of this and the preceding species, but the notes of the Little Wattlebird are quite distinctive".

On the other hand, Kloot and McCulloch (1970) give excellent descriptions of bill-clattering (or rattling as they prefer to call it), of both Red and Little Wattlebird (in

Victoria). Apparently this book was overlooked by the compiler of the Handbook, as in the extensive bibliographies of the two species, which contain many items of trivial importance, it is lacking.

Kloot and McCulloch not only describe the clattering, but also speculate about its possible significance or meaning. They believe it to be aggressive, against which it may be argued that, whereas clattering is quite loud for a mechanical sound (to the human ear it is audible to a distance of perhaps 25 to

30 m), the clattering is usually immediately followed by the loud call, which would easily carry five or six times as far. Frequently two or three birds clatter in each other's vicinity, well within hearing range, and I have never seen clattering followed by deeds of aggression like chasing. On the contrary, clattering birds tend to stay put for some time. The suggestion by Kloot and McCulloch that it might be confined to the breeding season is contradicted by my observations, most of which were in the months March to May, when breeding, if occurring at all, would be at its lowest ebb. There are also many occasions when one would expect the birds to clatter, and they do not. It seems that the Yellow Wattlebird has not been recorded clattering, although it is likely that it does. In summary: almost everything about this strange noise remains unexplained and deserves further study.

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Red Wattlebird

Photo courtesy G F Mees

Serventy, D.L. & H.M. Whittell, 1976. *Birds of Western Australia*. University of Western Australia Press, Perth.

G F Mees

MORE ON FORK-TAILED SWIFTS IN THE WA GOLDFIELDS

The interesting contribution by Cheryl and Martin Gole on Fork-tailed Swifts in the Goldfields (*WA Bird Notes* Vol. 102 June 2002) caused me to consult my records. I lived in Kalgoorlie from January 1983 to January 1986 and watched birds on a regular basis. Most of my observations were in the north-eastern Goldfields, but I also counted waders at the Kalgoorlie, Boulder and Kambalda sewage plants, and during various holidays to the south coast.

During that time I recorded Fork-tailed Swifts on only two occasions. The first was of several birds along the Munglinup Beach Road, about 100 km west of Esperance on 1 February 1984, but no other detail was recorded. The second was at the Boulder Sewage Farm on the morning of 13 January 1985, where a single bird was recorded. It drank twice on the wing and departed.

My suspicion is that with aerial birds such as Fork-tailed Swifts, which are presumably uncommon visitors to the Goldfields, it is a matter of being in the right place at the right time, and looking up!

John Brooke

SOME OBSERVATIONS ALONG THE KIMBERLEY COAST

During May 2002 with Chris Done (Conservation and Land Management's manager for the Kimberley), as lecturer/naturalists aboard the luxury charter boat *Coral Princess*, I was able to revisit many locations where I first recorded birds in the early 1980-90s.

At the Lacepede Islands there was a very large and obvious increase in the Silver Gull population. We estimated from 1500-2000 on this visit, compared to 20-30 in those earlier years. They seemed to be breeding on the eastern end of West Island. I first noticed this difference while on a *Landscape Expedition* to the Lacepede Islands in 1996 and commented on their increase, having observed rafts of them on the water all the way to Broome (*Landscape Expedition Report No 15*, CALM, Perth, WA). During the intervening years it appears there has been a marked increase in numbers, which may be attributed to several factors - all detrimental to the large breeding colonies of other seabirds on these islands eg. Brown Booby. More human influence along the Dampier Peninsular, expansion of settlement and garbage, could be a major reason for the increase. With gulls attracted to food sources from places as far away as Broome, the off shore islands of the Lacepede group are an attractive place to breed.

An increasing number of charter boats now visit the islands during the seabird breeding season. Unless the operator is aware of the vulnerability of breeding seabirds

to predation and take steps accordingly, this can provide an opportunity for gulls to feed their young on eggs and chicks from other species that are disturbed from their nests. However it is not only human interference - Silver Gulls are past masters at egg stealing and on occasions several will connive to distract, say, a Booby, allowing an opportunity for one to dart in and snatch an egg. So the build up of such numbers in a major seabird breeding area is of concern.

On the Lacepede Islands, about five Buff-banded Rails were seen as well as one Masked Booby - a bird being recorded more frequently in the vicinity of these islands.

A flock of about fifty Black-winged Stilts were seen on the edge of mangroves at the bottom end of Doubtful Bay, and another flock of five were perched on debris being carried by the tide down the Prince Regent River - both unusual locations for these birds.

It was also unusual to see Australasian Grebes in the tidal reaches of Talbot Bay, Prince Regent River, Hunter River and King George River—sometimes close to small flocks of Grey Teal.

The upper reaches of the Hunter River are always good places to see birds as well as the occasional large crocodile. This visit was no exception, with Great-billed Heron, Chestnut Rail, Black-necked Stork, Pied Imperial Pigeon and Red-headed Honeyeater to name but a few.

"Naturalists' Island" in Prince Frederick Harbour, despite its use as a helicopter pad ferrying sight-seers to Mitchell Falls, is still a good source of rainforest birds and we identified Rainbow Pitta, Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove and Orange-footed Scrubfowl.

Perhaps the most exciting bird on the trip was a Glossy Swiftlet, in company with about nine Fairy Martins, feeding on insects just above mangroves at Wary Bay on Bigge Island. Glossy Swiftlets have been recorded a number of times in the Kimberley and although I had seen them many times on Christmas Island, this was the first time I had seen one in the Kimberley.

Kevin Coate

LITTLE FRIARBIRD FEEDING ON POINCIANA LOOPERS

In April 2002 while in Broome, I was intrigued to notice Poinciana trees in one of the newer suburbs and near the Bali Hai Resort, being denuded of foliage by infestations of caterpillars. The caterpillar (*Pericyma cruegeri*) is known as the "Poinciana Looper", although it is not a true Looper.

I was not surprised to see Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes seeking them out as a food source, but was surprised to find a Little Friarbird doing the same. I observed one Little Friarbird searching meticulously along the almost defoliated branches, wrenching off caterpillars. It ended up eating eight before being satisfied.

Kevin Coate

THE SHELL MIDDENS OF PENGUIN ISLAND, ROCKINGHAM

Sedgwick (1940) listed the bird-life of Penguin Island in Shoalwater Bay and described two middens, the shells of which he identified to species and noted that they appeared very old and that none had been deposited recently. He wasn't prepared to speculate on what species of bird had made the middens even though he knew that such were often attributed to the Pacific Gull. It is now accepted that this gull does make such aggregations of shell (Dortch *et al.* 1984, Johnstone and Storr 1998). Archaeologists however refer to these bird-made aggregations as pseudo-middens and apply the term midden only to those made by people.

Thus it is reasonable to assume that the aggregations on the island are pseudo-middens made by this gull, and the absence of fresh, recently deposited shells accords with the gull's decline and near elimination locally. There are a few records of the gull at Cape Peron and the Dawesville Cut in recent times, so some birds at least have continued to frequent the area.

However, genuine middens have been recorded on the Western Australian coast, including 15 between Geraldton and Fremantle and another at Rockingham. What might that imply? The local Aborigines ceased to eat marine molluscs well before European settlement in 1829, apparently shifting their focus from marine resources to those of the estuaries. So, again, there wouldn't have been any fresh or recently deposited shells. Further, Sedgwick commented that *Turbo intercostalis* was well represented in the middens, but was seldom obtainable close inshore, even as a dead shell. He supposed that those in the middens must have come from the offshore reefs, which perhaps again suggests Aboriginal predation. But, Sedgwick also observed shell scattered on some of the other islets and rocks in Shoalwater Bay, which again suggests this gull as the culprit.

Middens or pseudo-middens? Aborigines or Pacific Gulls? I would welcome a resolution because Penguin Island is within a study area of mine. And there were avian resources on the island too: Fairy Penguins and their eggs and young, terns' eggs and young, roosting cormorants, eggs and young of Pied Cormorants occasionally, and other species of birds and their eggs and young. Also, the King Skink was present, its present population density being 100 skinks per hectare. Many questions are thus posed by the naturalist and the origin of the middens is also of great interest to the archaeologist.

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Robert Stranger

A RAIL IN MY GARDEN

For more than six months I was aware that a strange bird lived in, or visited the overgrown bushes next to our house in the Perth suburb of Wanneroo.

We live on an ordinary quarter-acre block near Lake Joondalup. Our block is 80% open lawn with some fruit trees and a slightly more than average number of fishbone ferns growing where they like, but on the western side there is a 'no go' area about 3 m by 7 m. Here, there is a 4 m high dead native bush thickly covered by some sort of creeper creating a dense and damp area. Three times in the last few years I have started to clear that area but as soon as any branch was cut wasps would come out and sting me, so it became a little 'no go' area for humans and it was left for nature to take care of itself. Our block has abundant bird life being only 140 m from a reedy pond, 240 m from the Lake Joondalup reed beds and 300 m from the lake water's edge.

Starting about six months ago, I became aware of the bird after opening the front door and seeing a brown bird flash along the ground into the 'no go' area. Periodic concentrated efforts at identification only confirmed a brown bird, magpie size, either ground dwelling or unable to fly due to injury and extremely shy. Visitors and other family members also gave similar reports without identifying it.

Saturday, 22 June this year was an unusual day for Perth with 100% thick cloud cover for 100% of the day. The temperature at Wanneroo did not rise about 15 degrees for the whole day and it was these unusual conditions that may have contributed to identifying the bird.

At 10:00 am my wife came in from the back yard and said that she had just seen that strange bird on the open lawn near a grapefruit tree with some doves but it disappeared into the 'no go' area in a flash when it saw her. I left it for about 10 minutes before I ventured out myself and there walking on the roof was what appeared to be a Buff-banded Rail, but on seeing me it flashed into the 'no go' area at roof height.

Twenty minutes later I was in our kitchen and looked out the rear window and 15 m away, fossicking on the open lawn, was the rail. It would appear that it could not see me because of outside reflections on the kitchen window. My wife and I observed the bird for ten minutes with binoculars and confirmed it was a Buff-banded Rail. We could clearly see the buff band, long white brow, chestnut eye streak, grey throat and heavy underside barring and it was identical to the Buff-banded Rail as it appears in Michael Morcombe's *Field Guide to Australian Birds*.

Ian W A Davis

"PETIT YUM"

While camping at the Ocean Beach camping ground in Denmark in late April 2002, I was disturbed one morning by a strange clattering. I discovered an Australian Raven was playing (or so I thought) with a small plastic yoghurt container high in a peppermint tree. On closer observation, I noticed that it seemed to be trying to wedge the container in a horizontal fork, unsuccessfully. However, not to be deterred, it tried several other forks of different sizes, holding the edge of the container in its bill, and helping with a foot. Eventually it returned to the original fork and managed to secure the container. It then proceeded to clean out as much yoghurt as it could. When finally the empty container fell to the ground the raven made no attempt to retrieve it.

John Brooke

WHERE DO ALL THESE BIRDS COME FROM?

It seems to me that very little time goes by without someone observing a bird that is a definite rarity or new to WA. This is a bit of a mystery to me, now aged 62, because my peers and the older generation were very keen and intent birders, too. But we never saw all the rarities that the birders of today observe and record with such nonchalant ease. How do you do that?

Equally mysterious is why the "shoot first, identify it later" attitude of some of the older generations didn't reveal as much as the plaid attitudes of observers today. We came a long way during the 20th century. I suppose that the younger birders of today would simply claim that they are a lot better than the older generations, including myself. But I am not completely convinced of that. It is in fact a tad biased because these days the younger ones have or have access to a variety of field guides and other books, some with superb and detailed drawings and photographs. All we had was the written descriptions of Serventy and Whittell (which, even so, caused a revolution in local birdwatching), a scientific checklist of Western Australian birds, so outdated now, and Leach and Cayley, the latter two better than nothing but lacking the detail necessary for much birdwatching.

Other factors that allow us some grace were that there were a lot fewer of us then, and we didn't have the mobility and time that the younger generations seem to have today. The good old-fashioned expeditions to the back and beyond by the professionals of yester-year, are now done quite routinely by the birders of today, and they cover a much greater area. Neither did we have the support and facilities of today.

Another factor that worked against us was the "Dr. Serventy factor". If you saw something that wasn't quite right you didn't think of it as something rare or new to WA. Instead, you tried to put it in a 'pigeon hole' and made it into something that was known to occur in the area or something that could occur there.

For instance, if you visited Pelican Point, a favourite place of Dr Serventy, and saw a Dunlin there you wouldn't rush with all haste to his home or laboratory and enthusiastically gush out what you had seen. Oh, no! You would tell him that you had seen a Curlew Sandpiper with a somewhat unusual plumage and bill. And if he considered you to be a competent birder he would accompany you to the point to see it for himself. The English ornithologist Ron Job, who was familiar with the Dunlin in England, did in fact claim to have seen the species at the point, but no one would believe him. Today he probably would have his observation accepted.

And so in those days, unless you were a particularly competent birder, you didn't look for or see rarities—they were a bit of an embarrassment actually—and you only saw birds whose records were acceptable. And I think that the Dr Serventy factor was passed on, not only to me but anyone who would listen to Him or consider His words to be Law. We did of course have problem observations, things that weren't right, but about which we delayed or postponed judgement. And all the time we received reports of some mystery from less experienced observers. For instance, during a Birds Australia (ex-RAOU) fieldtrip to Muchea one lady claimed to have seen, from the train, a Brush Bronzewing on the Nullarbor Plain. She became a little upset when he wouldn't accept her claim, but which he did very politely, as usual. At other times he dismissed less obvious claims by saying "That's interesting", but at the same time he seemed to stutter a little bit more than usual.

Overall however I would still like to know where all these rarities are coming from. Were we comparatively blind? Or have all these birds waited until now before visiting us and being identified by the birders of today? Or perhaps is there some simple biological or geological process, such as the amelioration of the climate behind it all? I am however very impressed by the birdwatchers of today and what they are claiming to see, and in case I never have the chance again, I say unto them: a) record everything and b) publish as much as possible.

Robert H Stranger

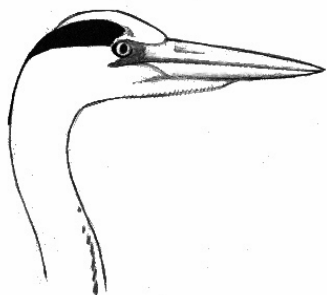
GREY HERON

On the weekend of 22-23 June, I was in Geraldton at the request of the Supervisors of the Chapman Regional Wildlife Corridor Project. They were looking for someone to lead a series of bird surveys in their project area, and also help set up an active bird group in the district. I was also there to promote Birds Australia and the continuing Atlas Project.

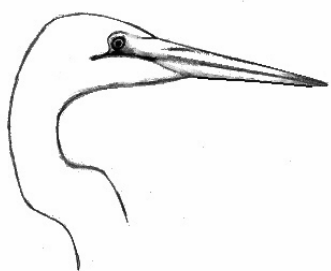
During the afternoon of Saturday 22, we had arranged a bird walk for children and their parents, at the mouth of the Chapman River. Six of us, Jenna Brooker and John Braid, Supervisors of the CRWCP, Tony Brooker, Hamid Mohsenzadeh, John Ashford and myself were there early, preparing for the arrival of our expected participants.

During a preliminary scan of the area, I noticed a heron, that I recognised as a Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*). I had seen this bird often on trips to SE Asia.

Because it was standing with a Great Egret, at a range of about 30 m, it was very easy to make useful comparisons. Standing upright the heron was marginally shorter, but definitely heavier in the body. Its bill was roughly the same length, but much more robust. Bill colour was yellow with



Grey Heron (above)
and Great Egret (below)
Drawings by Sarah Crook



a pale orange tinge. Feathering of the chin came further along the lower bill, and produced something of a 'double' chin effect. The streamers started at the back of the eye, with little or no eyebrow. They ran down the neck to about chin level.

There was evidence of free flying streamers. In front of the very bright yellow eye, there was a dull, black smudge. It lacked shine, but was very distinct through the spotting 'scope. There were dotted lines down the white throat, that were similar to those found on the White-necked Heron (*Ardea pacifica*). However they didn't go nearly as far

down. There was a short, but definite bar across the top of the wing and a thin black, lower edge, the length of the wing. The wings themselves were a strong grey, perhaps one or two shades deeper than the White-faced Heron. The legs were a creamy-yellow, with knobbly knees. When the bird perched in dead branches overhanging the river it was almost comically knock-kneed. There were no grey or black tones on the legs.

When the bird was disturbed by the children, who were excited by the proximity of it, and other birds, it flew into the dead tree across the river, perhaps 70 m away. The whiter plumes in its upper wings became very noticeable in flight, like a series of shimmering white lines across the wings. Once the bird landed, it assumed a hunched posture, which completely changed its appearance, making it look even bulkier, and more like a bittern. We were at the site for two and a quarter hours. The bird remained in the area the entire period.

Brice Wells

Editors' note: This appears to be only the second adequately documented record of this species in Australia. See page 1 of this issue for the first.

FREQUENCY OF WATERBIRD COUNTS

The importance of individual wetlands for bird life is usually judged by undertaking bird counts that record the number of water birds and the number of each species utilising a wetland. It is common practice for these counts to be performed at quarterly intervals. This raises the question of whether the effort of doing more frequent counts would make worthwhile gains in estimates of both the abundance and diversity of bird life at wetlands.

To explore this issue further we embarked upon a program of weekly counting at North Lake, the northern-most wetland in the City of Cockburn. This was an initiative of the Wetlands Conservation Society which has maintained a keen interest in the wetland over many years. North Lake covers about 25 ha and has a maximum depth of approximately 2 m depending on the time of year, but very rarely becomes dry.

We conducted 51 consecutive weekly counts from April 2000 to April 2001, each starting at about 8:30 am with observations made from several vantage points around the perimeter. The results have been reported to Birds Australia as an Atlas Record.

During our survey, the water level in the lake increased from 12.81 m AHD in mid April 2000 to 13.67 m AHD in September, then falling to 12.41 m AHD in April the following year. At this point water depth at the deepest part seemed to be about 0.3 m, as judged by wader activity. Substantial areas of mud flats were exposed by then, reducing the open water surface to about half that observed in September.

Total birds counted

The total water birds counted declined from 690 in April 2000 to 28 in June. Numbers then remained at less than 130 until November, increasing progressively to 970 in February 2001, followed by a decline to 300 in April. These results indicate a general seasonal trend of increased water bird usage of North Lake in the warmer, drier months.

Weekly results were compared with monthly and quarterly counts, in order to determine the accuracy of less frequent observations. Results from the counts undertaken in the first week of each month were shown to closely match the seasonal pattern of total bird numbers, as depicted in weekly counts. The same seasonal similarity was evident for bird numbers counted only on the last week of each month. Evidently, weekly counts provided an estimate of total waterbird numbers at North Lake that was only marginally superior to monthly counts.

A large increase in bird numbers occurred in February and March when the counts were double those for January. This seasonal increase would not have been detected from quarterly counts that commenced in the first week of April or May. However with quarterly counts from the first week of June the total bird numbers reasonably matched the pattern seen from weekly counts. Quarterly counts therefore appear to have the drawback of not necessarily

identifying short term variation in bird numbers, within the time span of one or two months

Number of Species

In all, 38 species were observed at North Lake during the survey period. The greatest number counted on any one occasion was 22, and the least was seven. There was a trend for the greatest number of species to be associated with highest total number of waterbirds.

The species most frequently observed were Black Swan, Pacific Black Duck, Purple Swamphen, Australian Shelduck, White-faced Heron, Australasian Grebe, Australian White Ibis and Clamorous Reed-Warbler. These were recorded on 38 or more occasions during the 51 weekly counts. The species seen on less than five occasions were Little Egret, Pink-eared Duck, Darter, Red-necked Avocet, Buff-banded Rail, Spotless Crane, Great Crested Grebe and Osprey.

As shown in the table, data from counts made on the first week of each month yielded a total of 36 species, while monthly counts from the last week gave 33 species for the year, compared to 38 from weekly counts.

Quarterly data were evaluated using the counts obtained during the first weeks of the relevant four months. With counts commencing in May, a total of 26 species were recorded for the year. Starting in June yielded 32 species while for a July start-up the total was 24 species.

Conclusions

Undertaking weekly bird counts at North Lake resulted in the highest waterbird count for any time of the year and also the greatest number of species observed using the wetland. Monthly counts depicted seasonal changes in total number of waterbirds very nearly as well as weekly counts. However, counting monthly might not be as reliable as weekly counts for species totals, depending on the degree of natural variation between weeks. The significance of data reliability in this context would seem to depend on the importance attached to recording those species observed less frequently.

Whether quarterly counts reasonably depicted the abundance of water birds at North Lake depended on the month of commencement. Counting in June, September, December and March, fairly well depicted the seasonal pattern of bird numbers observed from weekly counts. At other times we considered the counts were misleading in this respect.

Quarterly counts of the number of species, commencing in any month, were a poor substitute for weekly counts. Commencing in July, for example, these counts produced only 63% of the total species recorded from weekly counts. The comparable figure for starting in June was 84%.

These data relate to one lake and one particular year. Obviously, the extent to which our conclusions might apply to other lakes would be a matter for confirmation. Further, since waterbirds move readily between lakes, the significance of quarterly counts at any particular lake should not be considered in isolation from observations at

other sites in the same region. In this context our data would suggest that where quarterly counts are conducted they should take place simultaneously for associated wetlands, such as those of the Beeliar chain south of Perth.

However, we feel that any information on waterbird activity at wetlands has some value and evidently the greater the frequency of observations the more informative they become. The cost of allocating resources to increased frequencies of bird counts would need to be considered carefully in relation to the information obtained and its end use.

Table

The number of waterbird species counted at various intervals at North Lake from April 2000 to April 2001.

Counting frequency	No. species counted
Weekly	38
Monthly (1 st week)	36
Monthly (last week)	33
Quarterly, commencing -	
1 st week in May	26
1 st week in June	32
1 st week in July	24

Norm Godfrey and Jennifer Higbid

THE ANCIENT MAGPIE SWOOP

Spring goes hand in hand with the Western Magpie's swooping season. Venture too close to their nest and you are likely to elicit an aggressive response.

The Bibbulmun dreaming story that follows, confirms what we already know about Australia's indigenous people. They were completely in tune with their surroundings and expert observers.

The dreaming story recalls known aspects of Western Magpie behaviour such as flocking and swooping.

Groups of magpie form territorial units. The birds reside permanently in their territory and every bird (male, female, adult and immature) take part in its defence (Serventy, 1976). In spring you often see flocks of Western Magpies chasing out intruders or settling boundary disputes not unlike the Coolbards who were pursuing the evil spirit.

I don't know how far back in time the dreaming story goes but one thing is certain—the Western Magpie has been swooping since time immemorial.

Next time you are out bush, staring into your campfire or up at the night sky, you may wish to consider the dreaming story ...

Marcus Singor

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BIBBULMUM DREAMING STORY

Long before the Nyitting (cold times) there lived a giant Charnnock (evil spirit) woman named Woor-Jall-Luk who went from Kallep to Kallep (camp fires) stealing Koolungahs (children).

She had very long, white hair and was taller than the Karri and Jarrah trees. She stole children to feed her man, Mulchin-Jal-Lak. (His cave is known as Bates Cave.)

She used her hair as a net to place the spirit children, leaving her hands free to gather more.

The spirit people of the south-west of Western Australia were worried their children were disappearing. One night they set a trap to observe what was stealing the children. They tried to stop the evil woman but they could not get close enough to kill her.

One day the spirit people turned themselves into a totem of the Magpie (Coolbarides). They knew that the only way to get close to her was by flying at her in a flock and that this way they had a better chance of freeing the Koolungahs.

But on seeing the attack, Woor-Jall-Luk grabbed a big fire stick to beat the Coolbardies. But it did not stop the Coolbardies from swooping to free the children and a great fight followed all over the Bibbulmum nation. The spirit children who fell to the ground and turned to stone are called Bwia-Ee-Koolungah-Nyinna (the stone where the little babies fell).

As Woor-Jall-Luk was hurled into the sky by jumping on Gnadies-Darange-E-Noo (Wave Rock) and made our Bibbee-Goor-Ee (Milky Way) a great many children fell out of her hair and fell back to mother earth.

They made the first Bwia-Ee-Koolungah's-Nyinna place which we know as Hippo's Yawn. The five stars (Hyades Star cluster) represents her kallep (they are like an upside down 'V' and located halfway between the three Women Elders (Orions Belt) and the Pleiades Star Cluster (Seven Sisters). The star Aldebaran on the bottom right side of the Hyades group is her camp fire and it is always burning brightly.

The task complete, the spirit people were as one with their indigenous totems and a profound phenomenon then took place.

Mother earth at Moojabing (where a sacred rock is placed) produced the first people (of flesh) in the Bibbulmum nation.

This sacred area of the people Nyoongali (Man), Yorga (Women), Koolungah, is called Kartakoort.

They inherited the land and were told the laws laid down by the spirit ancestors of the Dreamtime.

The Magpie totems today still swoop on little children to let them know that the giant Charnnock woman is still up there looking and planning around her fire.

This story can be found on a brass plaque in Victoria Park in East Perth.

The Western Magpie is known by its indigenous names: Coolbardie (Katanning); Kulbardie (Pallingup River); Gurbal, Toorakee, Crowbardy (Broomehill); Curabarty (Beverley); Goore-bat, Gurbat, Gurbal, Gooraba (Perth). (Serventy, 1976).

LETTER-WINGED KITES *ELANUS SCRIPTUS* STILL AT LAKE GREGORY

I visited Lake Gregory in June 2002 with the intention to check whether the Letter-winged Kites found by Suzanne Mather in June 2000 were still there (see cover story of *Western Australian Bird Notes*, 101: 1-2). Mather recorded six birds at Lera Yard within a two kilometre distance: two pairs had been sitting on nests, one pair had been engaged with nest building activities.

On 19 June I found five birds at Lera Yard, roosting in trees within 500 m of each other. None of the three roosting trees had a nest on it. I did not observe any nesting or breeding activity. However there was some moderately aggressive behaviour between the two pairs and between the pairs and the single bird, and against other birds of prey coming too close to the roosting tree of a pair.

Clearly there were two pairs and one single male. Each pair was roosting in one tree, the two members of a pair sitting close together. The roosting trees of the two pairs were about 200 m apart. The single male roosted in a tree approximately 300 m away. I made camp so that I could see both pairs, but I could not see the single fifth bird on its roosting tree.

The sexual differences were recognisable in the field, best when the birds were roosting close together. In general, the male has lighter grey upperparts and is slightly smaller. The darker grey upperparts and back of the female, extending to the crown, give the female a different, capped appearance compared to the male (see Marchant and Higgins (1993) and Slater *et al.* (1984)).

I noted, among others, the following details, for both sexes. Cere, grey. Bill, dark grey. The terminal downward hook at the tip of the bill extended well below the lower mandible; it appeared to me to be longer than the corresponding hook of the Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus axillaris*. The gape extended as far back as the centre of the eye. Legs, dull yellow to almost white or light-grey.

The birds were mostly quiet and silent during the day. On one occasion the male of one of the pairs briefly chased a Whistling Kite that flew close by, but it seemed to be only moderate aggression. One hour before sunset, both pairs started preening. Then a Spotted Harrier came close as well but it was only cackled at. After finishing with preening the two pairs waited motionless until approximately 40 minutes after sunset. Then each pair left silently, the members of a pair staying close together. While inside my tent I heard one bird calling at 8:30 pm and then nothing any more until about 20 minutes before sunrise when both pairs were flying about. They would perch for a short while here and there to finally settle in on their daytime roosting tree. During this period the birds were calling from time to time, the calls being answered by a member of the other pair. The single male bird came over for a visit but was chased away by one of the females. In general it was the females who sorted out brief neighbourhood disputes on the wing.

The question raised by Mather as to whether the Letter-winged Kite has extended its breeding area into Western

Australia may not be answerable with ease. First, this species is easily overlooked. I visited Lera Yard in November 1999 (see *Western Australian Bird Notes*, 93: 3 and 17-18) and did not notice the Letter-winged Kites although they may well have been there. In November 2000 George Swann visited Lera Yard (see *Western Australian Bird Notes*, 98: 7) and presumably did not record the species either, although one could assume now that the birds would have been there. Second, there are vast areas, not only in Western Australia, which are little visited by anybody in general and bird enthusiasts in particular. For example, how much do we know about the present bird life at Lake Mackay, not to mention the history of the bird life at Lake Mackay? Third, the Letter-winged Kite is known for its irruptive movements. Thus they form colonies from time to time in suitable habitat and breed when opportunity arises for one or more years. They may do so in Western Australia as anywhere else, and may have long done so in Western Australia, not only in the recent past, unnoticed by us.

I would be interested to learn whether the Letter-winged Kites are or were present at Lake Gregory all year round, and whether they will breed again there in the near future. It would be desirable if information could be made available within a useful period of time.

Please note that one should ask permission from Mulan Community before visiting Lake Gregory. Mulan Community can be contacted by telephone on (08) 9168 8939, or by fax on (08) 9168 8984, or by writing to Mulan Community, PMB 14, Halls Creek WA 6770.

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Jonny Schoenjahn

WADER STUDY GROUP ACTIVITIES

- ❖ Lake McLarty, Sun 1 Dec 2002 (see Coming Events for more details)
- ❖ Mid Summer Wader Count at coastal and inland wetlands wader/waterbird habitat, Sun 9 Feb 03 (a week either side of this date for more remote locations)
- ❖ Mid Winter Count, 24-26 Jun 03 at the above locations

EXCEPTIONAL SIZED GRIT CONSUMED BY AN AUSTRALIAN MAGPIE

On 2 May 2000 in the Perth suburb of Kensington I observed an adult male magpie (*Gymnorhina tibicen*) from a distance of less than 1 m. The bird appeared normal in physical condition and behaviour until it regurgitated three stones. The stones consisted of blue-metal road base and measured (maximum length x maximum width in mm) 14.4 x 11.2, 14.1 x 8.5 and 9.4 x 5.1 mm and weighed 1.4, 0.7 and 0.2 g respectively.

Grit is often recorded in the crops and guts of gallinaceous birds and occasionally from species with broader diets (Barker and Vestjens 1990), where its function is to aid in the physical break-down of seeds. Measurements are seldom provided on the size range of grit, but the average is usually less than 6 mm in maximum dimensions even in the larger species such as corvids (Best and Gionfriddo 1991). What value, if any, such large stones as those reported here might have provided to the magpie is unknown. The fact that the bird in question was an adult reduces the likelihood that the stones were ingested inadvertently.

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Peter Mawson

HOODED PLOVER BREEDING AT LAKE PRESTON OVER TWO SEASONS

Breeding of Hooded Plovers at south-west Lake Preston has been recorded more diligently than ever before over the past two years, thanks to a team of local observers.

These observers, though not Birds Australia WA Inc. members, have contributed to the current Hooded Plover project. They have all become intrigued by the Hooded Plover and have developed a strong interest in furthering knowledge about this wader as well as conserving its habitat in their area. The most constant observers were Tony France, Margaret and Neville Jones and Margaret Symmonds.

Lake Preston is the largest and most southerly of a series of saline lakes on the coastal plain, north of Myalup and within the Yalgorup National Park. South-west Lake Preston is a relatively convenient location for the study of Hooded Plovers. A road runs alongside the lake, which is readily accessible by a short walk. Occasionally observations can be made from one's vehicle. Road access is unrestricted for the first seven kilometres; it continues thereafter but is in private property. Nest sites are spread along the lake margin at distances ranging between 500 m and approximately two kilometres apart.

The main breeding activity in this area appears to be from November to March (Table 1). This is similar to the

situation found on the more northern lakes of Yalgorup National Park between 1996 and 1999 when eggs were recorded in November and January and runners from December to April (Singor 1999). The lakes are mostly fed from underground water flows and are normally at their peak in September or October each year, three months after the maximum rainfall period (Rosen *et al.* 1996). Breeding occurs as the water level falls from its peak.

In 2000/2001, six breeding sites were found over a distance of 6.5 km northwards from the southern tip of the lake. Each site was used once only. Five pairs produced a total of nine runners. Eggs were found from December to January (though an early December runner must have been from a November egg); and runners from December to February. All runners were from the first known nest attempt. Eggs were lost from one nest, but no further nest attempt was made nearby. Five of six breeding attempts produced runners. Of the nine runners, five definitely fledged.

In the 2001/2002 season, water level in the lake was much lower than the previous season. However short-lived water upsurges occasionally occurred, probably due to pressure from underground flows.

In 2001/2002, eight breeding sites were located over a distance of 10 km northward from the southern tip of Lake Preston, in which a total of 14 breeding attempts were made. Eggs were found from December to February, and runners from February to March. Four pairs produced a total of six runners. It is very likely that not all clutches were found before being lost. Two pairs were successful on their first recorded attempt, one pair produced two on its second nesting attempt and a third pair produced one on third attempt. When a new clutch was laid, it was always in a different nest, and has been within 30 to 250 m of the last.

Marchant and Higgins (1993) noted replacement clutches being laid within 11 to 15 days though there is no mention of three successive nesting attempts. The narrowest replacement gap recorded this year was when one egg (presumably an incomplete clutch) was found to be missing on 18 December after being seen on 14 December. Two eggs were found in a new nest nearby on 27 December, a maximum of 13 days replacement time. Two of the six runners definitely fledged and during April were recorded several times in sites 4 and 7 respectively (Table 1).

The 2001/2002 season was more arduous for the birds with most birds losing their first, and some their second, clutch. One pair apparently made three unsuccessful nesting attempts in a site where breeding had been successful in 2000/2001. It is not known if the same pair was occupying the same territory for two successive years.

Two more breeding pairs were found this season than last, but only four of 14 nesting attempts produced runners. Five chicks were known to fledge in 2000/2001; two in 2001/2002.

Week 2 of December has in both years been an important time for first nests (Table 1).

The observers have noted foxes, ravens and Silver Gulls in the vicinity of nests, with probably an increase of gulls this year. One nest is known to have been lost to an upsurge of lake water. Another nest came to be close to the waterline following a water upsurge. As the waterline is a focus for feeding gulls, this made the plover nest more vulnerable.

The Hooded Plovers were not marked in any way. It is only assumed that a pair nesting near a nest where eggs have been lost, is the same pair. Next breeding season, it is hoped that some of these birds can be colour-banded, so that individual birds can be identified.

The bigger picture

Using the information shown in Table 1, a comparison may be made with past studies of Hooded Plover breeding success in Victoria and South Australia. Marchant and Higgins (1993) cite two hatching success rates: 29% and 17%. Table 1 shows a total of 33 eggs from 9 pairs whose nests were found. Seven eggs (21%) are known to have hatched. Of these seven runners, at least five (15%) fledged. This is a much higher rate of success than the examples in Marchant and Higgins (1993) in which, due to high tides and human interference, the highest rate of success cited is 12 pairs raising one fledgling.

The human population around Myalup is gradually increasing. It will be an on-going challenge to maintain a successfully breeding Hooded Plover population there.

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Brenda Newbey

Editors' note: This article illustrates how co-operative efforts involving BAWA and local communities are providing information of direct relevance for management of rare birds.

It is also worth noting that the database maintained by the Hooded Plover Sub-committee includes Hooded Plover breeding records (eggs or runners) from the Yalgorup lakes for every month of the year except June and July. Taking the State as a whole, either eggs or runners have been recorded in every month of the year. Winter records are not common, but a major reason for this is that people rarely look for breeding outside spring and summer. Breeding seasons are likely to vary between sites and between years, so observers are encouraged to look for breeding at all times of year. This will assist in understanding what influences breeding, and hence assist management of this rare species.

Table 1. Hooded Plover breeding at south-west Lake Preston in 2000/2001 and 2001/2002.**Table legend**

Sites with the same number are the same site i.e. five of the sites used for breeding in 200/2001 were again used in 2001/2002.

E2 = 2 eggs; E(2) = bird incubating, egg number confirmed by subsequent observation or hatching; (Eu) = an unknown number of eggs in a nest that was not found (laying dates calculated from presence of runners and known length of incubation period); E1,2 = nest with one egg found; later in the week, another egg was present; E(?2) = eggs not counted but likely to be the same number as when previously counted.

R2 = 2 runners; R(2) = runner observed; subsequent sightings indicate that 2 runners were present; ?J3 = three runners, possibly capable of flight (ie juveniles)

J1 = One juvenile; (J1) = one young juvenile, not observed but assumed to be present but concealed if parent bird/s present and if there is a subsequent sighting of the juvenile bird, in association with one or two adult birds at the same site; J(3) = 1 or 2 young juveniles sighted; from subsequent sightings, apparent that the family group of three juveniles was still complete.

X = eggs lost

Nov. 2 = second week of November

Month, week	2000/2001						2001/2002								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	7	8	9	
Nov. 2	(Eu)														
Nov. 3	(Eu)														
Nov. 4	(Eu)														
Dec. 1	(Eu)														
Dec. 2	R1	(Eu)	(Eu)	E2,3	(Eu)		E2			E1			E3		
Dec. 3	R1	(Eu)	(Eu)	E(3)	(Eu)		X			X			X		
Dec. 4	R1	(Eu)	(Eu)	E(3)	(Eu)	E3				E2					
Jan. 1	R1	(Eu)	(Eu)	E(3)	(Eu)	X		E2		X	E1,2	E3			
Jan. 2	R1	R1	R(2)	R(3)	R2		E3	E2			X	E3			
Jan. 3	J1	R1	R2	R3			X	X				X			
Jan. 4	(J1)	R1		R3			E1,3		E1						
Feb. 1	J1	R1		R3			X		E1			E3		(Eu)	
Feb. 2		R1		R3				E(u)	E(1)	E2		E(?3)		(Eu)	
Feb. 3		R1		?J3				X	E(1)	E(?2)		E(?3)		(Eu)	
Feb. 4		(J1)		(J3)					R1	R1		E(?3)		(Eu)	
Mar. 1		J1		J(3)						R1		R2		R(2)	
Mar. 2				(J3)						R1		R1		R2	
Mar. 3				J3						R1		R1		R1	
Mar. 4				J2						?J1		R1			

AUSTRALIAN MAGPIE CACHING FOOD

At Heathcote in Applecross on 13 May 2002 on an overcast and drizzly cold day I observed an Australian Magpie feeding on something. I was able to get close to the male magpie and noticed it was eating a rather bedraggled and wet looking mouse. It continued to feed by holding the mouse with a foot and tearing away bits of meat.

Judging by the state of the mouse, it appeared the mouse had not recently been caught. This however may have been due to the wet conditions and the magpie may have been feeding for some time before I saw it. After about five minutes the magpie stopped eating by which time only about two thirds had been consumed. It then picked up the

remains of the mouse and walked directly about 20 m to a garden bed where it deposited the mouse under the long leaves of a plant. It then departed.

I went to the spot and took a couple of minutes to find the remains, as it had been expertly placed under a long leaf.

I have previously noted an Australian Raven caching food, but this is the first time I have seen an Australian Magpie caching prey. It would appear that considering the time of year, late autumn, and the poor weather conditions at the time, this would be the prime reason for this behaviour as potential food sources would be at a low compared with the rest of the year.

Wynton Maddeford

WADDI FARM RESORT

During the first weekend of June we had a 'birding weekend' on our own at Waddi Farm Resort just south of Badgingarra.

On the property we walked through the bush bordering the dry creek and saw about 19 birds including both the Golden and Rufous Whistlers. Some wildflowers were in bloom, promising great colours for later in the year.

A walk through the Badgingarra National Park was disappointing as far as the bird life was concerned but we did see a Tawny-crowned as well as a White-cheeked Honeyeater.

Just east of the town we found Phoebe's Reserve which is rich in the history of early droving days and where the remains of trenches used by the army during WWII can be seen next to the circular path. We had a splendid sighting of a Red-capped Robin in this area and then found a magnificent eagle's nest (empty, we think) in a medium-sized tree on the edge of the path.

Returning via the Dandaragan Road we stopped to look at the dam near Aggie's Cottage. This is rich in bird life with most species of duck including the Pink-eared. A few Black-tailed Native-Hens were scurrying near the water's edge.

Waddi Farm Resort would make a great place for a short weekend camp. It caters for camping and caravans as well as having comfortable chalets and a very good restaurant. The proprietors are keen to have an official bird list for their property. Probably August/September would be the best time as the wildflowers would be in full bloom.

Molly and Barry Angus



Wedge-tailed Eagle's nest, Phoebe's Reserve,
2 June 2002

Photo courtesy Molly Angus

PAINTED BUTTON-QUAIL AT ROTTNEST ISLAND

On Wednesday 8 May 2002, N. Halse and I observed a single adult female Painted Button-quail (*Turnix varia*) trapped against the Quokka exclusion fence approximately 200 metres WNW of Barker Swamp, Rottnest Island. We were close enough to catch the bird, so had an excellent view of it. As I have bred this species in captivity, I am familiar with it, and was

easily able to identify it.

The area where the bird was seen was burnt in 1997 and is now well vegetated as a result of replanting and regrowth (particularly of *Acacia rostellifera*), and with the exclusion of Quokkas.

This is the first record of Painted Button-quail at Rottnest Island.

In recent years, the species has been common in Bold Park, where it has bred (we have caught chicks during surveys by the Western Australian Museum). Perhaps it is increasing in numbers on the Swan Coastal Plain.

Paddy Berry

Editors' note: The Observations section of WABN 101 (March 2002) included a report of an unidentified quail from Cape Vlamingh at Rottnest Island by Wes Bancroft in November 2001. This was considered likely to have been a Stubble Quail based on the habitat and the lack of platelets. In the Observations section of this WABN, Wes reports seeing a Painted Button-quail twice at Radar Head in July 2002. There was also a report of a quail species by some of the participants of the wader count at Rottnest Island in February of this year. Further careful observations are warranted—the above report indicates that the Painted Button-quail occurs on Rottnest, but it could be that the Stubble Quail also occurs there occasionally. It would be worth listening for calls in spring—the booming of the Painted Button-quail is very different from the clear 'pippy-wheat' call of the Stubble Quail.

The mystery of the missing Hooded Plovers!

Recently Mike Bamford and local bird watchers resident near Yalgorup National Park colour banded eight Hooded Plovers. Whilst some plovers stayed for a while they eventually all disappeared. Please help us find them. There are also many Hooded Plovers that were banded with a single metal band at Lake Gore some years ago. The first was found in March this year at Benje Benjenup Lake during our State count. The bands are hard to see but can be detected with care.

Please let Marcus (9362 2742,
msingor@iprimus.com.au)

or Julie (9306 5819,
austecol@cygnus.uwa.edu.au)

know of any finds.

POSITION VACANT

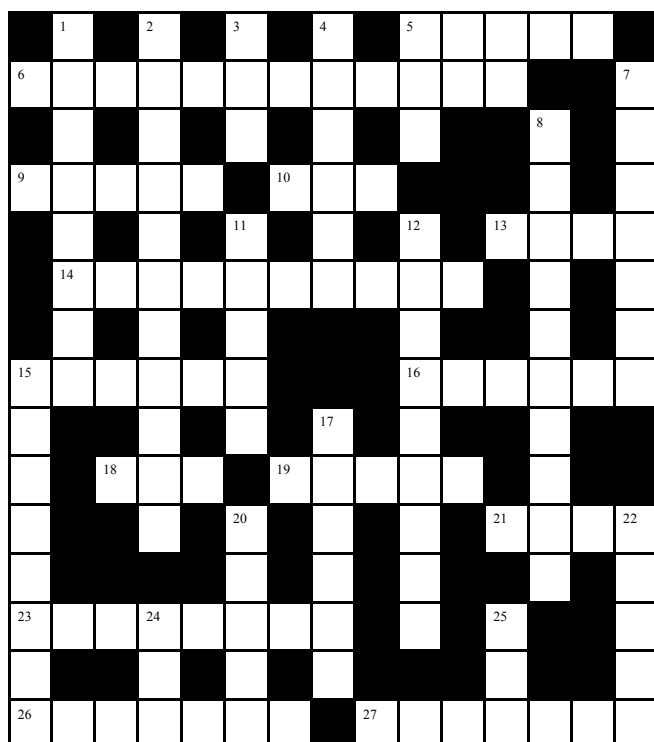
BAWA Inc. LIBRARY and BOOKSALES

This voluntary job needs a fortnightly trip to the office to keep both the Library and Booksales up to date, but it does not need a lot of time. The Library collection has been classified in accord with the system used by the State Library and is easy to follow. I am happy to help with the selection of new resources when finances are available for this.

If you would like to help the organisation by taking over this responsibility please contact Sue Mather, phone 9389 6416.

Crossword no 30

by Pam Agar



CLUES ACROSS

5. Common haunt of Rock Parrots.
6. Providers of information for Bird Notes.
9. Nature of a crake.
10. Mud and mosquitoes may put you...
13. Often necessary for success.
14. Feathers covering the 'armpit' area.
15. Account of results.
16. Diving bird of southern coast.
18. Birds Australia journal.
19. This bird is a scavenger.
21. Direction.
23. Pool, excursion site.
26. Provide information.
27. Tiny bird.

CLUES DOWN

1. To suggest for committee.
2. Biological order which includes owls.
3. Upper breast marking.
4. Zone to provide greater protection.
5. Dove's call.
7. Remaining part.
8. Native-hens and moorhens.
11. Back colour of thornbill species.
12. Petrel, seen off-shore in winter.
15. Provide with a new home.
17. May be useful for field-work records.
20. Most common nightjar.
22. Testing of plan.
24. Definitely not on the local bird list.
25. A nesting material.

Notices

PAINTED SNIPE SURVEY, 5-6 October

The Painted Snipe is a striking but poorly known inhabitant of inland wetlands. The well-defined race (possibly a full species?) endemic to Australia seems a rare and unpredictable bird; occasionally it turns up at a wetland where it will stay for a few weeks, or days, or hours, before disappearing again. Sightings of Painted Snipes are exciting events, not least because a review of past records (Lane and Rogers 2000) has shown that the bird is declining and should now probably be classified as endangered.

The Threatened Bird Network and Australasian Wader Studies Group have launched a joint study of the Painted Snipe, with the broad aims of finding out where the strongholds are, what the exact habitat preferences are, and why they are declining. Accordingly we are interested in hearing about any records of Painted Snipes made at any time. In addition, we have had a couple of surveys to drum

up more records. The next survey is scheduled for the weekend of 5-6 October. Participating is simple: contact us so we know where you intend to search and can send out survey forms: go to likely-looking wetlands in your patch, search for Painted Snipes there and let us know how it goes.

Searching for Painted Snipes is fun—it gives one an opportunity to go birdwatching in nice places. If there is one drawback to the process, it is that the chances of actually seeing a Painted Snipe are quite slim! The birds are rare, cryptic, and unpredictable. However, even a negative result is useful to us, as it gives us some insight to the kinds of wetland habitats that are not used by Painted Snipes. And there are reasons to believe that there are some Painted Snipes in Western Australia: there appears to be a rare but resident population in the Kimberley (Hassell and Rogers, 2002), there have been occasional records in the Pilbara, and a recent sighting at Herdsman's Lake (only the 5th from south-western Australia in the last century)

inspires hopes that the bird is not yet extinct in the south-west.

People interested in participating in Painted Snipe surveys should contact any one of the following:

- Steve Paton or Ian Hance: Birds Australia, 415 Riversdale Road, Hawthorn East, Victoria 3123; Email s.paton@birdsaustralia.com.au; ph (W): 03-9882-2622
- Chris Tzaros (same address and phone number as above; Email c.tzaros@birdsaustralia.com.au).
- Danny Rogers (340 Nink's Road, St Andrews, Victoria 3761, Email: drogers@melbpc.org.au)

References

- C.J. Hassell and D.I. Rogers. 2002. Painted Snipe nesting at Taylor's Lagoon near Broome, North-western Australia. *Stilt* 41: 14-21.
- Lane, B.A. and D.I. Rogers. 2000. The Australian Painted Snipe *Rostratula (benghalensis) australis*: an endangered species? *Stilt* 36: 26-34.

NEW MEMBERS

The following people joined Birds Australia between 1 May and 31 July 2002. We look forward to meeting you at our excursions and general meetings.

M Armstrong, G Brophy, E Dabbs, M Davis, B Daw, R & R Dibbens, K Godwin, J Harman, R Hindmarsh, D L Hooper, R House, M Larke, R McLellan, N Macdonald, I Malecki, P Marty, B Mearns, V Pianta, V Power, W Rutherford, A P Squelch, J M Squelch, Z Stewart, A G Thomson, R Watson, J M Wildy, R Wroth, B & S Wynne, S Wynne

Christmas cards!

Our bookshop has a range of Christmas cards with beautiful drawings of birds.

Only \$1.00 each including envelope

Call in to Perry House and choose from the wide selection

or phone on 9383 7749.

BIRDS AUSTRALIA WA OPEN DAY

An Open Day has been planned to coincide with Bird Week in October. The day will also be open to the public, so we can show others what we do, and maybe inspire some new members! The Open Day will launch the birding brochures, and will feature a number of displays, talks, walks and competitions, with the opportunity to spend time at Perry House. Lunches or teas will be available.

Place: Perry House, 71 Oceanic Drive, Floreat.

Date: 26th October 2002

Time: 10am – 3pm

Write the date in your diary and come along! Bring your friends! More information will be available in the office closer to the date.

Malleefowl Preservation Group Inc.

PO Box 29, Ongerup WA 6336

Ph: (08) 828.. 2007 Fax: (08) 9828 2018

Email: [<malleefowl.wa@wn.com.au>](mailto:malleefowl.wa@wn.com.au)



MALLEEFOWL
Preservation Group Inc.

Ongerup Malleefowl muster

When: 23rd September–4th October

Activity: Bush walking five reserves for Annual Malleefowl mound monitoring

Bring: Own sleeping bag, pillow, food, back pack, water bottle, binoculars, good hiking boots, long sleeve shirts, hat, sunburn cream and ... good sense of humour ...

Assistance: Free accommodation and some travel assistance available for 'early bird' volunteers

Qualification: Willingness to be a team player, interest in environment, reasonable degree of fitness

Volunteer Registration form: available from the website:

[<www.malleefowl.com.au>](http://www.malleefowl.com.au)

Booking deadline: Friday 16th September



Wildlife & Natural History Tours

George Swann,
Kimberley Birdwatching
P O Box 220, Broome, W A 6725
Email: kimbird@tpg.com.au
Ph/Fax: (08) 9192 1246
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Plus more exciting trips for 2002/2003**

Country groups

ALBANY BIRD GROUP

Pelagic trip, July

Anne Bondin organised a pelagic trip on King George Sound for 4 July, but unfortunately the forecast was appalling, so it was postponed till the next day, when 12 of us had a very successful trip in reasonable weather.

We saw many birds at very close quarters. It was fantastic to see Australian Gannets diving, and also swimming in rafts very close to the boat, as well as Yellow-nosed Albatross and a few skuas. We also saw Caspian and Crested Terns, and a sea-eagle. We were also lucky enough to see large groups of New Zealand Fur Seals and Sea Lions.

On the way home we saw dolphins and a pod of Humpback Whales.

Altogether we saw 19 species of birds. A thoroughly enjoyable morning.

Charlie Davies

Excursion, 11 June

Nine people responded to a request for a survey of the birds using the revegetated and remnant areas on M Easton's Palmdale Road property east of Albany.

We were greeted by the Eastons and taken to the areas to be surveyed. Some great conservation work has taken place on that property. Forty-six species were seen on or nearby at Lake Chillinup where we had lunch.

We then returned to Albany via Kamballup where we had a short stay. Bird life there is usually productive but it was very quiet.

An unusual sighting on the Easton property was a Pied Butcherbird seen by most of the group. We witnessed a Peregrine Falcon pressing a flock of Grey Teal we had disturbed. The falcon managed to hit one bird but it recovered enough to escape. The ducks quickly returned to the lake.

Another rewarding day with satisfaction for the Eastons and the Albany Bird Group. The results of our findings will be sent on to the Easton's.

Vivian McCormick

Excursion, 9 July

We were lucky with the weather on 9 July. Twelve of us met at Lake Powell in the Torbay area. We hope to be able to organise a hide to be built overlooking the lake, which is difficult to access, but often has numerous birds on it.

Driving around Lake Powell on Elleker Road, on the way to our next site, we were amazed to see five White-necked Herons in a paddock.

We then went on to a new wetland—Marshall's wetland—recently developed by the Torbay Catchment Group on Philip Marshall's farm on the South Coast Highway. It has only recently been finished, but we were lucky enough to find a Pink-eared Duck there, a species not often seen in this area. At least 20 Richard's Pipits greeted us as we arrived, and quite a large group of White-fronted Chats.

We then proceeded to the Torbay Hall area, which is always rewarding for birds. Altogether we had 54 species for the day.

Charlie Davies

Excursion reports

CANNING RIVER REGIONAL PARK, 5 May

On a mild autumn day 29 bird watchers gathered at Kent Street Weir—along with a large number of Athletic Association runners. With that level of activity the Buff-banded Rail observed two weeks earlier in the open at the weir, stayed well out of sight.

With such a large crowd the group divided and headed around the reserve in opposite directions. George Agar ably assisted one group and David Secomb the other, for which Richard and I, as inexperienced leaders, were extremely grateful.

A total of 58 bird species were seen as well as a selection of hybrid ducks. Highlights were good views of Spotless Crake, Nankeen Night Heron, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Hoary-headed Grebes (less common than the Australasian Grebe on the Canning River) and fleeting glimpses of Mistletoebirds, often heard but less often seen. Birds of prey were elusive with only the Brown Goshawk, Collared Sparrowhawk and Black-shouldered Kite briefly sighted.

Lorraine Chyne

OBSERVERS WANTED

Spring birdwatching in the central wheatbelt

In Spring 2002, between September and late November, Birds Australia WA will be doing bird surveys in the Avon catchment in the central wheatbelt. We'll be helping the Living Landscapes project, Greening WA and landowners in four rural subcatchments find out more about the birds in some of the remnants in this area. Most of the remnants are on farms. Information from the project will also contribute to the Bird Atlas and the Birds Australia WA group database.

We will compile bird lists from 80 remnants in Morbinning (east of Beverley), Konongorring (near Wongan Hills), Tammin and Dowerin. This is a good opportunity to explore bushland not usually accessible to the public. We expect to find a variety of drier country birds including Redthroat, Blue-breasted Fairy-wren, Jacky Winter and Crested Bellbird.

What do we need from you?

- Birdwatching skills
- Willingness to help us look at a variety of remnants from very small to large
- Willingness to go birdwatching in small groups
- An interest in accessing bush on private land
- An interest in WA's wonderful wheatbelt birds.

What do we provide?

- Some accommodation
- Some transport
- Probable BBQ get togethers
- Existing bird lists for most sites; maps and directions on how to get there

Group excursions to the Tammin and Morbinning areas are being organised (for details see Coming events column in this issue). Small groups will be organised at other times. You may join another group, or take your own. We plan that groups will be small enough to be flexible and make birdwatching enjoyable.

Join us!

Contact: Cheryl Gole
Tel/Fax 9293 4958
Email: <gole@starwon.com.au>
Or, write to: Birds Australia WA
71 Oceanic Drive, Floreat WA 6014

BOLD PARK, 16 May

One of the birders who enjoyed the walk in Bold Park on Thursday 16 May remarked that the park could be renamed as 'Wattle Bird City'. It could just as aptly be termed 'Lorikeet Lodge' or 'Ringneck Retreat' as these three species were present in very large and noisy numbers.

Other birds were also present although less conspicuously. The White-cheeked Honeyeaters were enjoying the prolific flowering of the banksia and Weebills were fluttering high in the canopy of the eucalypts. Kookaburras laughed at us, a Rufous Whistler was heard and then seen, and an Australian Hobby was spied high in a tree near the car park. Silhouetted against the steel grey ocean Rainbow Lorikeets were seen nesting in the hollow of a dead tree.

However, the sighting of the morning was two magnificent Australian Shelducks—one entering and leaving a hollow in a dead branch and the second standing guard nearby. Their copper-coloured breasts and white collars glistened in the winter sunshine—a splendid sight. One of the members was concerned about the fate of future ducklings—a long drop to the ground followed by a longer walk to nearby Perry Lakes. Experienced members assured her that 'Mother Shelduck' knows her business.

A pleasant morning with 23 species sighted. Thank you to Tom Delaney for his friendly leadership.

Molly Angus

BIBRA LAKE, 19 May

On a crisp morning that promised a golden day, and delivered, 24 keen members gathered to search out the birds on Bibra Lake. In 87 previous surveys a total of 119 species had been recorded. We hoped to add to that list, or at the very worst, see some of the more rarely recorded birds.

After four hours of endeavour, we came up with 64 species. Considering the state of the lake and its surrounding habitat, that was probably a very good result. This included two new birds for this site in BAWA's Database of WA Birds. The first was a Peregrine Falcon that pursued a Rock Dove right across the lake, but failed

to make a kill. The second was a White-necked Heron that surprisingly hadn't been recorded here before.

In addition, we saw seven other species that had been seen less than six times previously. These were Short-billed Black-Cockatoo, White-bellied Sea-Eagle (immature), Brown Goshawk, Australian Hobby, Spotted Pardalote, Weebill and White-naped Honeyeater.

All up we saw seven raptor species, which must be considered a very good total in the metropolitan area.

On the downside, exotic species like mallards and feral geese were an unwanted distraction, as were the Rainbow Lorikeets and Laughing Kookaburra. In this day of increased awareness we are still seeing alien birds being introduced into our environment.

Brice Wells

LOCHADA CAMPOUT, 1-3 June

The drought broke as the last few intrepid birdwatchers were packing up to leave on Tuesday morning. Forty-three members camping near the shearing shed on Lochada Station over the Foundation Day long week-end had by then seen 66 species, including a White-necked Heron that stopped to rest in a tree near the camp as many campers were leaving on Monday morning.

Lochada Station, which covers about 118 000 hectares, has recently been acquired by CALM and destocked. It is about 50 km east of Morawa, and was as dry as a chip.

There was plenty of room for camping near the old shearing shed, and campers spread out over a large area. We were able to gather around a good camp fire every night for the bird call. One night a CALM officer from Geraldton gave us short talk about the station.

The group was a large one to organise, but Clive Napier divided us into four groups, and to ensure that as few cars as possible were on the roads, made sure every car was full. Thanks are due to the three other leaders, George Agar, Dee Smith and Trevor Stoneman, who, with Clive, led the groups in different directions to map where the birds were on the station. This meant that a total of 40 locations were covered in the week-end.

Unusual and exciting sightings included White-browed Tree-creeper, Pied Honeyeater, Major Mitchell's Cockatoo, Bourke's Parrot, and Pallid and Black-eared Cuckoos. The most commonly spotted bird was the Red-capped Robin, which seemed to appear at almost every location.

Clive will never live down being late for the bird call on Sunday evening. The campfire was lit and birdwatchers were gathering at the campfire in front of the Napier caravan, but there was no sign of Clive and Wendy—or Ed and Alison Paull! The men had become separated from Wendy and Alison, who spent an anxious 40 minutes on the road wondering what had happened to their husbands. The lights of a few others returning late directed Clive and Ed to the road, and they eventually met up with their wives, by which time it was quite dark and beginning to rain. Eventually the bird call took place - even if it had to be moved to the kitchen as light rain had begun to fall - the first since September last year.

A very enjoyable campout.

Charlie Davies

ENJOY A STAY in Wubin

WUBIN WILDFLOWER SHOW

September 12, 13, 14, 15

Accomm: Showground—vans, tents, campers—
motel Wubin,
Daily showers (hot), toilets

**Diaroma, Members' Table
and Birding Display**

Rostered times on stall

Spend time visiting reserves for birds and
wildflowers

Ring Brice Wells: 9255 3710
or Liz Walker: 9383 7749

Advise which days you can attend

Sponsored by



PINNAROO, 23 June

Last year's BAWAG outing to Pinnaroo was attended by only two of us (the early morning was a downpour!) so it was a pleasant surprise to have 23 seeking out the avian pleasures in June this year. We checked a variety of habitats (ponds, gardens, forest, heath and expanses of lawn) during our time there. 43 species (including 5 introduced) were recorded.

In the late morning there were good views overhead of White-necked Herons, a Brown Goshawk and a Little Eagle—perhaps more of the latter were in a group also seen by one observer.

The forested area close to Whitfords Avenue produced only the few larger and noisier types. By moving to other habitats, especially amongst the gardens which hosted flowering native plants, we could readily find many of the smaller species. When this issue of Bird Notes arrives it will be an ideal time to visit Pinnaroo.

Rod Smith

KALAMUNDA NATIONAL PARK, PIESSE BROOK, 27 July

It was a cool, sunny day preceded by days of rain, with muddy puddles on the track, but most people seemed to have waterproof boots.

Some 17 people took the track through the national park, and were rewarded by the sight of a Brown Goshawk perched on the top of a leafy eucalypt, followed later by a speedy Australian Hobby hurrying somewhere, and then a Peregrine Falcon sitting in the sun on a dead tree. The honeyeaters took advantage of some flowering eucalypts, and we probably saw more Weebills than any other species. Both Rufous and Golden Whistlers (males)

showed themselves, as did family parties of Red-winged and Splendid Fairy-wrens.

But it was disappointing that the usual Scarlet Robin that lives in the area failed to appear.

Although only 27 species were seen and heard, it was a pleasant walk in good conditions with enough birds to make it interesting.

At the end we met a young couple of newly-arrived American birdwatchers who were at once encouraged to make use of the WA Group's facilities.

Brian Wilson

Observatory reports

BROOME BIRD OBSERVATORY

With the arrival of the first waders came our first baby (and first observatory baby). Her name is Carlia Grace Blunt and she was born 24 July 2:00 pm. So far some nights are good, other nights not so good. You can always listen for night birds during this time anyway—not that we've heard any yet.



The waders are starting to return with Common Sandpipers the most obvious, with a few Wood Sandpipers turning up as well. Other species are also dribbling in. Some good sightings of late are several Black Falcons (at various locations), a Long-toed Stint, Pink-eared Duck, Green Pygmy-geese and numerous Yellow Chats.

The observatory has been super busy with the camp ground three times as busy as last year. We've had many satisfied customers who've enjoyed the positive outlook demonstrated by our staff who really make the place happen. Renovations to the shadehouse, front of, and inside of the shop, and the campsite have added to the experience. The maintenance shed is also immaculate thanks to Wendy's dad Athol, who has also assisted with the construction of the new battery shed. We would like to thank, in particular, Jim and Verna Howell for assisting us in keeping the campsite area sane during the rush of July. Jim has also been instrumental in the solar battery shed construction, meaning the new batteries can be installed in the next few weeks. They leave at the end of this month and hopefully they'll be back next year.

We also farewell Chris Hicks who has been an assistant warden for the last three months. On short notice Chris agreed to come and help us out and has left his mark by embedding several hundred scanned photos on our computer. These will be used to produce a new CD about the observatory and Roebuck Bay. It should hopefully be finished by the time he leaves. We've also brought the Bird Log into the next millennium by setting it up on an Excel Spreadsheet. This has been done so to be able to

extrapolate data on any bird with the press of a few buttons. This includes a commonality or presence index for each species at locations surveyed around the Broome area, quantity of numbers seen, and graphical information relating to seasonal occurrence of species. So next time you're here, ask what your chance of seeing a particular species is and we can hopefully give you all the answers of when and where at the press of a button.

Dan and Wendy Blunt

Migration Watch 2002

Editors' note: The following article was inadvertently omitted from the June issue of WABN. We regret any inconvenience caused.

Well it's migration time again at Broome Bird Observatory (BBO). Every year between March and May BBO staff and visitors trot eagerly down to the beach carrying 'scopes and binos for the daily 4 pm migration watch. Why? To count the number of each migratory wader species flying overhead on their way north. Our biggest wader, the Eastern Curlew, leads the way early in March. The smaller birds follow them, with Grey-tailed Tattlers lagging behind until May.

What's it all about? Broome Bird Observatory was established by Birds Australia as a centre for research and education. Over 150 000 waders of 49 different species visit Roebuck Bay each year. Migration Watch allows us to gather important information about each wader species migrating north. These data help us gain a greater insight into migration patterns. Each year we learn more about flock sizes, behaviour, how weather patterns affect migration and much more. To conserve and protect these birds, we need to understand their ecology and behaviour.

We had a fantastic 'Wave the Waders Goodbye' week as course participants learnt about shorebird identification, behaviour and ecology. Some great birds were seen, including twitching favourites Common Redshank and

Asian Dowitcher. For me, sitting on the edge of beautiful Roebuck Bay watching hundreds of godwits fly overhead just before sunset will be a memory I'll keep going back to. But you'll just have to come and see for yourselves, won't you?

For those who are interested (as you all must be!), we have a 'Welcome Back the Waders' course running in September/October. This is when the waders arrive back in Australia and start feeding in earnest, ready for next year's long journey. Great views are to be had of these birds still decked out in their wonderful breeding plumage. If September's too soon, make a note in your diary for next year's courses. Hope you can join us!

Jenny Lewis, Assistant Warden

EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY

As Relief Wardens, we found the Eyre Bird Observatory "something of a culture shock—a totally unexpected experience".



The various trials due to its isolation in the sand dunes at Eyre's Patch, all the wonderful birds appearing daily at the water baths surrounding the 100 year old homestead, sighting whales close in and a sea lion sunning on the beach, searching for Western Piggy Possums and the excitement of seeing Malleefowl working a mound make the Eyre Bird Observatory a must. You will never regret the trip.

Our four weeks in residence included two groups of people doing 'dune revegetation courses'; these are projects to stabilise the mobile dunes that are threatening to overrun the telegraph station. The camaraderie of the volunteers was wonderful. They collected seaweed from the beach in the well-used trailer and then carried it up the dunes on the all terrain 8-legged transporter (a bed-frame and four people!) to be spread across the selected areas and finally seeded. So much expertise applied to all the technical difficulties of the job and its equipment led to lively conversations and lots of fun.

In all we catered for 98 guest-days and at least 40 day-visitors and ourselves which seemed like a lot of meals! Ordering everything weekly for delivery by the magic Sands Freight Lines truck to Cocklebidy at first looked impossible but now we think it's easier than frequent trips to the super market—at least you don't have to queue at the checkout. Pauline and Terry and their staff at the roadhouse make it really simple and they helped us enormously.

Don't run over the Malleefowl on your way in! Leaf litter was being slowly drawn across the track from the opposite side to the swelling mound when we left in late July. One guest and a warden were astonished to see a PAIR of birds on the mound, in no hurry to rush away when our noisy motor drew up alongside. Why would they choose this site just a metre from the track?

How would you make the ideal Piggy Possum nesting box? Several of our guests spent a lot of time locating quite a number of the previous models, which were sadly derelict although the best still showed signs of recent occupation. Some lively suggestions over dinner included hollow logs, ice cream buckets, and the favourite—capped off PVC pipes. Technical difficulties with cat-proof doorways, observation lids or windows, 'weatherability' and insulation efficiency seemed insurmountable after mulling our wine for a while in front of the roaring log fire....

Pick up one of the many wardens' diaries while you are there and you are transported back to the daily trials of the renovation of the track and the telegraph station building, the slow refurbishment of the rooms, the tricky installation of the solar power unit and the trauma of the days when this was not performing. The ambience of the building is wonderful, a cosy oasis especially on the coldest nights, a shady relief on the hottest days, a trip back to another lifestyle in some ways, an escape from your normal routine. Eyre even has its own time zone!

Everyone is drawn to the library of course. There are enough technical books to answer most questions, reports of recent findings to whet your appetite, reference books and dictionaries to help with crosswords if you like... and many novels to relax with. One guest wanted more detail about the plants, so out came the Herbarium! This is a beautiful collection of the local flora carefully mounted and catalogued.

The weather reporting sets some time constraints, especially getting up at 6:30 in the morning. We were lucky that it didn't rain for our thrice-daily trips to the 'meteorology station' to read the several thermometers, check the rain gauge and try to determine the type of cloud. (Not always easy in the dark!) We are proud to have reported the coldest night at -4.2 degrees one day, and a *record* 17.4 degrees at 7 am two days later! The computer knew instantly, they are clever! We had quite a few days with 0 cloud, 0 rain and 0 wind during our stay. The weather was really beautiful, fine warm sunny days and clear nights full of stars.

Now for the weekly excitement—the Beach Count! Everyone into the 'beach buggy' and off along the 14 km of Kanidal Beach to count the birds seen in each kilometre. We tried this much too close to high tide once but managed to turn round in time; on another we nearly ran over a pretty sea lion basking in the sun. We twice saw Southern Right Whales, one mother and calf quite near to the beach, and were surprised to see a mob of White-faced Herons and some seagoing Musk Ducks. This count may be more important when there are migrants on the beach but is great fun at any time.

Bea Myers and Ian Tarbin will be taking over as the new Wardens from mid August—we would like to extend to them our very best wishes and we hope they have as much excitement as we did during our short guardianship.

Colin and Linda Andrews
– with thanks to Shapelle and George!

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 will know when to expect people.

Sunday 1 September—Full day excursion, Flynn Road, The Lakes

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, i.e. the York Road turnoff.

We will look at several areas of Wandoo woodland where three species of robin are usually seen and, with luck, Crested Shrike-tits could also be sighted.

Leader: Bryan Barrett

Sunday 8 September Spring Fling, Perry House/Bold Park, 9:30 am to 4:00 pm

Hosted by the Wildflower Society—lots of beautiful native plants for sale. Wildflower and bird walks throughout the day.

Saturday-Sunday 7-8 September—Short Weekend Campout, Boyagin Rock Nature Reserve

This Reserve (Western Australian Traveller's Atlas Map 55, ref. C4) contains impressive stands of Powderbark Wandoo and has a species list of about 73 birds. There are moderate to easy walks, with some more strenuous ones around the Rock. We should also find orchids at this time of the year, and several numbats were seen on our last visit.

To reach the camp site at the base of Boyagin Rock, travel along the Brookton Highway to the intersection of the York-Williams Road, turn south and proceed to Boyagin

Road and turn left. The road to the Rock will be sign-posted. There is a bush toilet but please be self-sufficient as regards water, food, tents, etc. If you wish you may come for a day trip on either day – a round trip of about 250 km.

I will be on site late on Friday afternoon.

Please advise the Birds Australia office (9383 7749) if you wish to attend.

Leader: Clive Napier

Saturday 14 September—Half-day excursion, Ray Marshall Park, (Blackadder Creek), Viveash

Meet at 8:30 am 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.

A morning's walk along the John George Trail that runs beside the Swan River, crossing Blackadder Creek.

Leader: Jan Rogers

Thursday 19 September—Mid-week excursion, The Spectacles, Kwinana

Meet in the main car park on McLaughlan Road at 8:30 am. Proceed along the Kwinana Freeway to the Anketell Road crossroad, some 30 km south of Perth. Travel about 2 km, then turn left into McLaughlan Road. Over 100 species of birds have been sighted here.

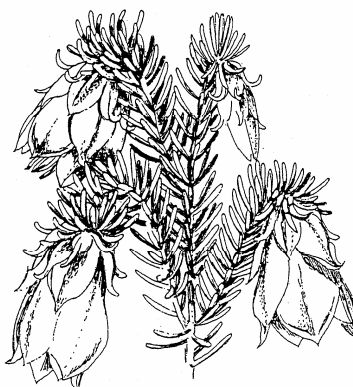
Leader: Bryan Barrett

Wildflower Society
of Western Australia (Inc.)

Spring Fling

CELEBRATION OF THE BEGINNING OF SPRING

- * Demonstrations & Displays
Know what soil is in your backyard
Floral displays
- * Childrens Activities
Make gum nut toys
Paint sand pictures
- * Plants for Sale
Some unusual plants
- * Cut Wildflowers for Sale
Banksia, Geraldton Wax
Dryandra, Verticordia & more
- * Souvenirs for Sale
Calendars, books, fridge
magnets, posters etc.
- * Light Refreshments
- * Wildflowers & Birds Spotting Walks
A walk every half hour
- * Aprons, Tea Towels, Shopping Bags etc



SUNDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2002

9.30 am - 4.00 pm

PERRY HOUSE 71 OCEANIC DRIVE FLOREAT PARK

ALL ENQUIRIES TO WILDFLOWER SOCIETY OF WA (INC)
e-mail: wildflowers@ozemail.com.au

PH 9383 7979

After hours: SYBIL SPEAK PH 9444 1495.

Sunday 22 September—Full day walk from Nanga Bridge along the Murray River

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

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

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

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

Leader: Sue Abbotts (9444 1607)

Monday 23 September meeting—State Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm

Stuart Miller, wildlife photographer, will speak on “Voyage to Antarctica, including Sub-Antarctic Islands”.

Saturday–Monday 28–30 September—Campout at Chiddarcooping Reserve, Shire of Westonia

Bookings for this Campout have now closed as numbers are limited. Anyone wishing to be placed on the waiting list should contact the Office (9383 7749).

Saturday–Monday 28–30 September—Long weekend campout, Tammin area (plus extended excursion until Thursday 3 Sept)

We will explore bushland remnants on shire reserves and private property in this central wheatbelt area. The area includes a number of habitat types and we should see drier country species such as Rufous Fieldwren, Southern Scrub-robin and White-browed Babbler. Hopefully, the spring wildflowers will also be interesting. While the main excursion will cover the period of the long weekend, if you wish you may stay for an additional few days (until Thursday 3 September) and take part in bird surveys of other bushland remnants in the Tammin area. This is a good opportunity to visit bushland not usually accessible to the public.

For the main excursion period, accommodation is available at the Tammin Alcoa Landcare and Education Centre. Full kitchen facilities and basic bedding (pillow and 2 blankets) provided. Bring own food, linen and extra bedding. Cost = \$15/person/night. I will be on site on Friday 27 September. Travel into the township of Tammin on the Great Eastern Highway and turn right into Station St (opposite the Tammin–Wyalkatchem Rd). Cross the railway line and immediately turn right into Barracks Rd. The Landcare Centre is on the left hand side as you travel along Barracks Rd.

Those wishing to use camper trailers and caravans will be accommodated at a local farmhouse. Basic kitchen and bathroom facilities are available. Some beds are available at the farmhouse for those staying on after Monday 30 and caravans and camper trailers are welcome. Numbers are limited for this additional period.

A BBQ will be provided for all excursion participants on the evening of Saturday 28. Meat, salad and bread will be provided. Please BYO drinks and nibbles.

Please advise the Birds Australia WA office (9383 7749) and leave your name, telephone number and address; please also advise if you are staying on after Monday 30. If you are staying at the farmhouse, a mud map will be sent to you in mid September.

For Saturday’s excursion activities, be prepared to leave the Landcare Centre in Barracks Rd at 10:30 am on Saturday 28.

Leader: Cheryl Gole (enquiries 9293 4958)

Sunday 6 October—Half-day excursion, Thomsons Lake, Beeliar

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

Leader: Dee Smith

Saturday–Sunday 12–13 October—Short weekend campout, east of Beverley (plus extended excursion until Thursday 17 October)

We will explore bushland on private properties in the Morbining and Yenyenning Lakes area east of Beverley. The area includes a number of habitat types inhabited by drier country bird species. A number of bushland remnants will be visited and birdlists submitted to the local Living Landscapes project for the Morbining landcare group and Greening WA. This is a good opportunity to visit bushland not usually accessible to the public. While the main excursion will cover the weekend period, if you wish you may stay for an additional few days (until Thursday 17 October) and participate in bird surveys of other bushland remnants in the area.

For the main excursion period, accommodation will be available at the Quairading Barracks. This sleeps 16 people in 8 rooms (2 single beds in each); basic kitchen facilities. Cost = \$16.50/person/night. Camper trailers and caravans may use the grounds (price available later). Additional accommodation is available at the Quairading Motel (Tel: 9645 1054; 6 units available; please make your own arrangements). Someone will be on site on Friday 11 October. Travel into the townsite of Quairading on the York–Quairading Rd. Turn right into the Corrigin Rd (signposted Corrigin). The Barracks are almost immediately on the left hand side of the Corrigin Rd.

After the weekend period, those staying on until Thursday 17 October will be accommodated free of charge at a local

farmhouse (some beds, kitchen and bathroom facilities, camper trailers and caravans welcome in grounds). Numbers will be limited.

For Saturday's excursion activities, be prepared to leave the Barracks in Quairading at 10.30 am on Saturday 12.

A BBQ will be provided for all excursion participants on the evening of Saturday 12 October. Meat, salad and bread will be provided. Please BYO drinks and nibbles.

Please advise the Birds Australia WA office (9383 7749) and leave your name, telephone number and address; please also advise the type of accommodation you require.

Leaders: Michael Brooker and Colin Davis (enquiries to Cheryl Gole 9293 4958).

Sunday 13 October—Full day excursion, Wambyn Nature Reserve, Shire of York

Meet at 9:00 am at the junction of York Road and Great Eastern Highway (i.e. "The Lakes" service station). The reserve is approximately 35 km beyond the junction. It has good stands of Wandoo and breakaways, etc. where birding could be interesting.

Leader: John Ashford

Saturday 19 October—Half-day excursion, Jandakot Regional Park, Forrestdale

Meet at 8:00 am at the corner of Ranford Road and Hale Road, next to the poultry farm. Debbie will show us round areas where she sees Scarlet Robins, Golden Whistlers and lots of honeyeaters. Several raptors are also seen here.

Leader: Debbie Walker

NATIONAL BIRD WEEK

To celebrate Bird Week this year we have decided to have a series of morning walks from 21 October to 26 October, culminating in an Open Day at Bold Park. This will feature a launch of the new bird brochures, and a variety of special events, including bird walks for kids as well as adults. We would like to see as many of our members as possible attending these walks. Members of the general public will also be invited. Plan to celebrate Bird Week in style this year. Go walking, finishing up at Perry House for a great day on Saturday.

Monday 21 October—Morning walk, Lake Carine

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park off Beach Road, Carine. Up to 100 species have been recorded here, including the three ibis, Buff-banded Rail, Freckled Duck and several raptors. Bring a telescope if you have one.

Leader: Michael Hancock

Tuesday 22 October—Morning walk, Lake Joondalup

Meet at 8:00 am at Neil Hawkins Park, in the car park at the end of Boas Avenue. Lots of waterbirds and bushbirds can be seen on and around this large lake.

Leader: Tom Delaney

Wednesday 23 October—Morning walk, Pelican Point Crawley

Meet at 8:00 am at the gazebo opposite the Mounts Bay Sailing Club at the end of Australia II Drive, off Hackett Drive, Crawley. We will look for waders that inhabit this area each summer, and for the Variegated Fairy-wrens that can sometimes be seen in the adjacent bush.

Leader: Max Bailey

Thursday 24 October—Morning walk, Kings Park

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park at the northern end of Forrest Drive opposite the Botanic Gardens near the junction with Lovekin Drive. There should be plenty of bushbirds in the area, and some species may be nesting.

Leader: Frank O'Connor

Friday 25 October—Morning walk, Alfred Cove, Attadale

Meet at 8:00 am at the car park in Troy Park (by the radio mast), off Burke Drive, Attadale. We will look for waders around the river and should also see plenty of bushbirds. Buff-banded Rails are often seen in the area.

Leader: Les Harris

Saturday 26 October—Morning Walk, Bold Park

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park on Reabold Hill Scenic Drive for a walk in Bold Park. This is a pleasant and interesting walk close to Birds Australia's back door.

Leader: Brice Wells

Monday 28 October meeting—State Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm

Evelyn Meek, birdwatcher, will speak on "Birds of Sweden, Norway and Finland" Part 1. Many of the waders will be in summer plumage in contrast to the largely winter plumage of migrants to Australia.

Sunday 3 November—Full Day excursion, Udumung Reserve and Wannamal Lake, Shire of Chittering

Meet at 9:30 am at Udumung Reserve, about 100 m along Hay Flat Road — the point will be signposted.

We will be looking at the reserve first, then travelling on to Lake Wannamal.

Leader: Clive Napier

Saturday-Sunday 9-10 November—Campout, Cherry Tree Pool, near Kojonup

From Perth, travel south on the Albany Highway and turn left into Cherry Tree Pool Road, which is about 15 km north of Kojonup. You should see a sign that points to “Camp”, but there will be Birds Australia signs as well. Follow these signs for about 15 km until you arrive at the camp.

We have booked dormitory-style accommodation at the Youth Camp, which includes toilets, hot showers, kitchen and fridges. You will need to be self-sufficient as there are no shops nearby. Bring your own sleeping bag and pillow. Power is available for caravans and there is plenty of room for tents, etc.

People will be welcome from Friday night onwards. A charge of \$10 per person for the campout will be made to defray the costs involved.

Please advise the Office (9383 7749) of your intention to attend the camp, the number in your party, and when you will arrive.

About 130 species of birds have been recorded in the area and there should be lots of birds nesting at this time of year. Wayne has proved to be an expert at finding nests on our previous visits here.

Leaders: Wayne Zadow and Sue Abbotts

Thursday 14 November—Mid-week walk, Blackwall Reach, Bicton

Meet at 8:30 am at the junction of Kent Street and Blackwall Reach Parade. A new area to look for waders and bushbirds along the Swan River.

Leader: Eric Pyatt

Saturday 16 November—Half-day excursion, Ellis Brook Reserve, Gosnells

Meet at 8:00 am at the corner of Gosnells Road and Bygum Lane, Martin. A popular area where a variety of bushbirds may be seen — some of them not often seen near Perth. There could also be some species still nesting.

Leader: Les Harris

Sunday 24 November—Full day excursion, Coodanup, Mandurah

Meet at 9:00 am in the car park at the southern end of Wanjeep Street, Coodanup, on the shores of Peel Inlet. From Perth, follow the Fremantle-Mandurah Road and turn left onto Pinjarra Road. Travel about 1 km until you reach the Wanjeep Street turnoff on your right. The return distance from Perth is about 180 km.

Don't forget a hat, insect repellent, old shoes/wellies, and lunch. Bring your telescope and come and learn more about waders.

Leader: Frank Pridham

Monday 25 November meeting—State Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm

Evelyn Meek will present Part 2 of her talk and slides.

Sunday 1 December—Full day excursion, Lake McLarty, Pinjarra

Meet at 7:30 am at the gate into the Lake McLarty Reserve — look for the BA sign. Travel on the South West Highway through Pinjarra, turning right along the Old Bunbury Road (5 km south of Pinjarra), then right into Mills Road (fourth road). Continue along Mills Road for approximately 10 km until you see the BA sign.

Take your lunch, Wellington boots/old shoes, sun hats, insect repellent, water and telescopes. There should be a variety of waders at the lake, as well as many waterbirds and bushbirds.

Leader: Colin Davis

Wednesday 4 December—Mid-week walk, Garvey Park, Ascot

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park (next to the rowing club) at the western end of Fauntleroy Avenue, off Great Eastern Highway. This area has a good variety of waterbirds and bushbirds. Since 1997 Hank has recorded 67 species, including Buff-banded Rail, Spotless Crake and Mistletoebird.

Leader: Hank van Wees

Saturday 7 December—Half-day excursion, Waterford Conservation Area, Salter Point

Meet at 8:00 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 wheelchairs.

Leader: Karl Edwards

Sunday 15 December—Half-day/Full day excursion, Woodman Point, Kogolup Swamp

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park at Woodman Point on Jervoise Bay. This is now a bitumen road. Turn off Cockburn Road, south of the caravan park, along O'Kane Court, turning left towards the entrance to the Jervoise Bay Sailing Club, then left to the car park. We will walk along the beach to Wapet Groyne to look for waders and sea birds. Bring your telescopes.

Later, we will travel to Kogolup Swamp on Beeliar Drive to look for the many crakes and rails that have been seen here in the Typha. There should also be plenty of waterbirds and perhaps some waders.

Those wishing to bring their lunch could go to nearby Yangebup Lake where there is car park and nearby grassed

area, which would be a pleasant lunch stop. There should also be lots of waterbirds on this large lake.

Leader: Les Harris

Sunday 15 December— Christmas function, Perry House

A barbecue will be held on Sunday 15 December at Perry House commencing 6:30 pm. BYO meat and drinks— all members welcome!

No general meetings held in December

Saturday 28 December—Half-day excursion, Alfred Cove, Attadale

Meet at 8:00 am at the car park in Troy Park (by the radio mast), off Burke Drive, Attadale. We will look for waders round the river, and for bushbirds. Buff-banded Rails are also often seen in the area.

Leader: Les Harris

Saturday 4 January 2003—Half-day excursion, Ascot Waters, Belmont

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park at the end of Tidewater Way. To reach the area from Great Eastern Highway, turn into Stoneham Street, then into Resolution Drive, and left into Tidewater Way. Continue through two roundabouts, over the bridge and up to the car park at the top of the rise.

Lots of Buff-banded Rails were seen here last year, and several raptors are often seen.

Leader: John Stewart

Sunday 12 January—Half-day excursion, Canning River Regional Park, Wilson

Meet at 7:30 am at the Kent Street Weir car park, near the Canning River, to explore the varied bird life of the Canning Wetlands.

Leader: Clive Napier

Wednesday 15 January—Mid-week excursion, Manning Lake, Spearwood

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park, Azelia Road, opposite the Azelia Ley Homestead Museum, on the western side of the Lake. A semi-permanent wetland, with a fringe of paperbark trees, noted for its waterbirds. Bushbirds are also plentiful in the reserve and in bush to the west.

Leader: Bryan Barrett

Saturday 18 January—Half-day excursion, Wellard Wetlands, Baldvis

Meet at 7:30 am at the entrance to Wellard Wetlands on the northern side of Zigzag Road, 1 km from St Alban's Road, Baldvis. There should be plenty of waterbirds,

bushbirds, and perhaps some waders. Several species of raptors are also often seen here.

Leader: Bryan Barrett

Saturday-Monday 25-27 January—Australia Day Campout at Augusta

More information about this campout will be given in the next issue of *WA Bird Notes*, or contact the office (9383 7749) closer to the date.

Please book your own campsite at the Flinders Bay Caravan Park, Albany Terrace, Augusta, on 9758 1380. Only caravan and camping sites, some with power, are available.

If you wish to participate in this campout, please notify the office of the number in your party and when you will arrive.

Leader: Chris Wilder

Sunday 2 February 2003—Full day excursion, Boat Trip to Carnac Island

The charter ferry 'Supercat' will leave 'B' Shed, Victoria Quay, Fremantle Harbour, at 10:30 am and return at 3:00 pm for a trip to Carnac Island to view seabirds breeding on the island.

Numbers are limited and bookings will be strictly on a 'first come first served' basis. The cost will be \$65 per person and will include a buffet lunch, free tea and coffee, a guided beach nature walk with a marine biologist, and use of snorkelling gear. Birds that could be seen include Little Penguin, Wedge-tailed Shearwater, Pied Cormorant, Pied Oystercatcher, Fairy, Caspian, Crested and Bridled Terns and Silver Gull. It is also an important habitat for the Australian Sea-lion.

Casual clothing and footwear is recommended. The beach walk involves a transfer by small watercraft directly onto the beach and your feet will get wet. Bathers, towel and sunscreen lotion are recommended for those wishing to swim/snorkel.

Please notify the office (9383 7749) no later than Friday 10 January if you wish to participate. Booking is essential! Payment must be made to the office (71 Oceanic Drive, Floreat, 6014), either by cash or cheque (no credit cards) at least 2 weeks prior to the date, ie, by Friday 17 January. There will be no refunds!

Leader: Brice Wells

Sunday 9 February 2003—Mid-summer wader count
(see pages 13 and 14 for more detail; if you wish to participate please contact Colin Davis on 9330 1482)

Monday 24 February 2003—Annual General Meeting, State Tennis Centre, Burswood, 8:00 pm

Guest speaker to be advised in next issue.

NOTE: Nominations are invited for positions on the Committee for the coming year.

Christmas barbecue!

We hope to see you at the BAWA Christmas barbecue at Perry House on Sunday 15 December from 6:30 pm.

Birds Australia Western Australia Inc

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71 Oceanic Drive, Floreat WA 6014

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Notes for Contributors

The Editors request contributors to note:

- WABN publishes material of interest to the WA Group
- contributions should be written or typed with **double spacing**—a copy on disk or emailed would assist, especially if in MSWord as a document **without** styles.
- WABN uses Birds Australia recommended English names
- except for Observations, contributions will be published unless the contributor is informed to the contrary.
- Full Editorial Policy is stated in WABN 74:10-12

Deadline for the December 2002 Issue

15 November 2002 at Perry House

Advertising Rates

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

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We look forward to hearing from you.

Crossword Answers No 30

ACROSS

5 coast, 6 contributors, 9 timid, 10 off, 13 plan, 14
axillaries, 15 report, 16 gannet, 18 Emu, 19 Raven, 21
west, 23 Amarillo, 26 educate, 27 Weebill.

DOWN

1 nominate, 2 strigiforms, 3 bib, 4 buffer, 5 coo, 7
remnant, 8 gallinules, 11 slate or slaty, 12 Kerguelen, 15
relocate, 17 laptop, 20 owlet, 22 trial, 24 roc, 25 web

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