

Western Australian Bird Notes



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



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ISLANDS OF WOODLAND IN AN OCEAN OF FARMLAND: BIRDWATCHING IN DRYANDRA WOODLAND

In a piece of untouched bushland, cut off from the burden of our sophisticated civilisation, we can find that refreshment of spirit that only the wilds of Nature can offer (Serventy 1970).

Introduction

The clearance of much of the native vegetation from the area that is commonly known as the wheatbelt has resulted in most of the remaining areas being very small and patchily distributed. There are only a few large areas and one of these, Dryandra Woodland, managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM), lies approximately 165 km southeast of Perth and 22 km north-west of Narrogin (Figure 1a). This is normally about two hours' drive from Perth.

Although named as one area it actually consists of 17 blocks of land spread over a north-south distance of 50 km.

However, the blocks are close enough together to allow the movement of wildlife, particularly birds, between them (CALM 1995). Parrots and honeyeaters make up about twenty percent of the approximately 100 species of birds that have been recorded there.

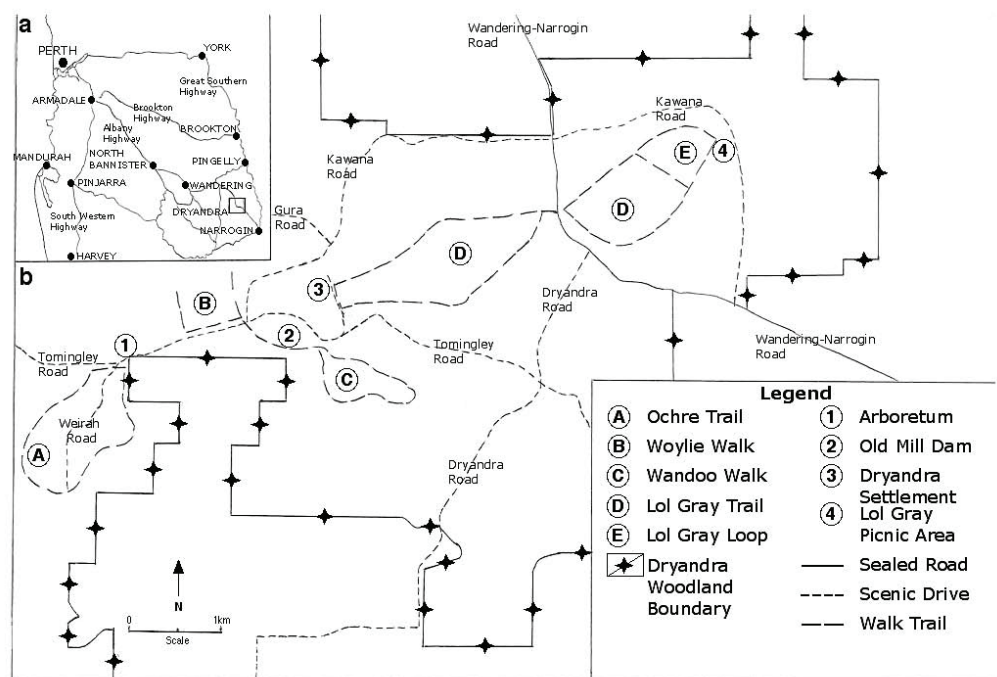


Figure 1. a: Location map of Dryandra Woodland (adapted from CALM undated b), **b:** Roads and tracks within the main block of Dryandra Woodland mentioned in this article (adapted from CALM undated a).

Access to the woodland is by motor vehicle along the Wandering–Narrogin Road from which a number of graded sand and gravel tracks lead to the areas covered in this article (Figure 1b). While there is no public transport to the area, some commercial tour operators do visit the woodland.

Even though the first areas of what is now Dryandra Woodland were set aside in 1924, this protection was for the growing and harvesting of Brown Mallet (*Eucalyptus astringens*), the bark of which was important to the tanning industry. Since the collapse of that industry in the early 1960s the tenure of the various blocks of land has been reassessed twice resulting in the current reserve. As it is one of the few places in the wheatbelt where most of the original flora and fauna still exist, it has major conservation significance. Located within the catchment areas of the Murray and Blackwood Rivers, the woodland covers an area of 28 066 ha and lies on the Yilgarn Block, an ancient plateau composed mainly of granite capped with laterite. The landscape has weathered over time to *produce a gently undulating countryside featuring distinct breakaway slopes* (CALM 1995). It is in the same climatic region as Perth but has more noticeable seasonal changes and temperature extremes. Due to its position on the inland side of the south-west forests it receives less rainfall (annual average 499.6 mm), which ranges from 88.9 mm in June to 12.1 mm in January. The average maximum temperatures follow the seasons with the coolest being in July, 14.8°C, and the hottest in January, 30.9°C (Bureau of Meteorology 2004). The figures given are for the nearby township of Narrogin.

Features

Despite its use for forestry and being surrounded by farmland, much of Dryandra Woodland has remained relatively undamaged and this is one of its main attractions. Others are the scenery, both within the woodland and outward across the neighbouring farmland, peacefulness, flora and fauna and its Aboriginal and European history.

Dryandra's flora and fauna is quite diverse and species from both the drier agricultural areas to the east and the wetter forests of the west/south-west can be found there. The vegetation is classified as open woodland and is comprised mainly of Wandoo (*Eucalyptus wandoo*) and Powderbark Wandoo (*E. accedens*) with small areas of Marri (*Corymbia calophylla*), Sheoak (*Allocasuarina spp.*), Brown

Mallet, York Gum (*E. loxophleba*), Jam (*Acacia acuminata*), dryandra shrublands and low kwongan. The size of the woodland enables it to support a number of animal species, particularly mammals, that are no longer found in the agricultural areas. A programme to reintroduce other species that were once found there is currently active.

Reminders of the area's Aboriginal heritage can be found within the woodland. Some such as the ochre pit on the Ochre Trail (Figure 1b) are well known and easily accessed, while other sites are still being recorded. Historical sites relevant to the European history of the area include the Dryandra Settlement (Figure 1b), house sites, fire towers and a number of dams. The dams attract a few species of waterbird in fairly low numbers.

Birdwatching

There are many good birding sites in Dryandra Woodland but for the purposes of this article three readily accessible ones in the main block will be covered. They are:

- Arboretum—woodland to the west and south-west at the start of the Ochre Trail,
- Old Mill Dam and its immediate surroundings, and
- Lol Gray picnic area and its immediate surroundings.



Figure 2. The Old Mill Dam near Dryandra Settlement.

Photo courtesy Peter Sandilands

All can be accessed on foot or by vehicle from the Dryandra Settlement as shown in Figure 1b. Other tracks and trails lead to more distant parts of Dryandra Woodland. A recent summer visit has been used as a basis for the following commentary.

As the vehicle slows and turns into the car park, the plume of orange gravel dust that had been thrown up by its movement flows over it and dissipates along the track. Here, near the Arboretum on

Tomingley Road, is one of

the many good birdwatching sites within Dryandra Woodland. Although there are still some open areas, most traces of the fire that burnt the area in mid-1991 have now gone. Many species of shrub, including pea flowers, have regrown providing habitat for birds such as Blue-breasted Fairy-wrens, White-browed Scrubwrens and Western Thornbills that like thicker, low growing cover. Woylies also like resting in such areas during the day and can be startled by the observer's movement. The 'tsit, tsit, tsit' calls of Rufous Treecreepers draw attention to their foraging amongst fallen timber and on nearby



Figure 3. Dusky Woodswallow feeding two fledglings on a fallen branch near the Old Mill Dam.
Photo courtesy Peter Sandilands

tree trunks. After moving away from the initial disturbance, they re-appear on other tree trunks and logs to watch the observer. Brown and Brown-headed Honeyeaters are foraging in the young saplings of Jarrah, Marri and Wandoo along with some Weebills while other species of honeyeater—Singing, Yellow-plumed and Western Spinebill—are attracted by the flowering of the larger, older trees that survived the fire.

Purple-crowned Lorikeets are still nesting, the adults keeping watch from the entrance to their nest holes and, when disturbed, fly off with their characteristic 'zit, zit, zit' calls. The incessant calling of juvenile Australian Ringnecks enable them to be located easily today while the quieter Red-capped Parrot takes a bit more time. A pair of Western Gerygones squeak excitedly as they dive-bomb a Grey Shrike-thrush that has got too close to their nest, quite a performance for such a delicate bird, but they achieve their goal and drive the intruder away. Amongst the thickets of Parrot Bush (*Dryandra sessilis*), New Holland Honeyeaters, Western Spinebills and Silvereyes move from bush to bush attempting to get every drop of nectar from the small flowers. Overhead, Tree Martins and Dusky Woodswallows hawk for insects, occasionally alighting on high branches to rest and preen while a Wedge-tailed Eagle soars, seemingly effortlessly, above the woodland.

Apart from the occasional vehicle moving along Tomingley Road or a light plane overhead, there is little to interrupt the search for more species and time passes quickly. Keep an eye out for Elegant Parrot, Sacred Kingfisher and Rainbow Bee-eater.

Lunchtime approaches and a good place to enjoy this is at the Arboretum where there are some picnic tables and an abundance of shade. The chatter of people sometimes attracts inquisitive species and it isn't long before a Rufous Whistler makes its

appearance, skirting around the group as it moves through the trees. The warning calls of the honeyeaters tell of an approaching raptor just seconds before the shadow of a Brown Goshawk passes across the ground near the picnic table. It banks to see what is happening below, notices the movement of people, then it is gone from view.

After lunch it's time to move to another good birdwatching site at the Old Mill Dam (Figure 1b), not far from Dryandra Settlement. Sometimes, Australian Wood Duck or an Australasian Grebe can be seen on the dam (Figure 2), while the open woodland immediately surrounding it contains a number of resident species plus a few migratory ones such as Sacred Kingfisher and Rainbow Bee-eater. From the vegetation around the edge of the dam, the sleepy call of a Western Gerygone can be heard on the light breeze along with the tinny reels of Splendid Fairy-wrens and the chatter of Brown-headed Honeyeaters.

Beyond the dam wall the ever-watchful Rufous Treecreepers forage amongst the fallen timber while Brown Honeyeaters, Rufous Whistlers, Grey Shrike-thrushes, Grey Fantails and Silvereyes are busy higher up. In the foliage at the top of the trees, Striated Pardalotes, White-naped and Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters can be heard and then seen. The latter is particularly characteristic of this type of woodland, as is the Numbat, one of the few diurnal native mammals. Sometimes all that can be seen is its bushy tail as it moves along the opposite side of a fallen log but on occasion, if there is little noise, they can be observed in more open areas for brief periods. Further away from the dam, small groups of Painted Button-quail can sometimes be found and will attempt to outpace observers before bursting into flight and quickly disappearing into thicker vegetation. This can also happen with Common Bronzewings. Rainbow Bee-eaters attract attention as they sally through the trees after insects,



Figure 4. View over Dryandra Woodland from Lol Gray.
Photo courtesy Peter Sandilands

No.	Arboretum	Old Mill Dam	Lol Gray
1	Striated Pardalote	Striated Pardalote	Striated Pardalote
2	Australian Ringneck	Rufous Treecreeper	Western Gerygone
3	Yellow-plumed Honeyeater	Rainbow Bee-eater	Rufous Treecreeper
4	Rufous Treecreeper	Australian Ringneck	Weebill
5	Dusky Woodswallow	Tree Martin	White-cheeked Honeyeater
6	Tree Martin	Western Gerygone	Brown Honeyeater
7	Grey Shrike-thrush	Weebill	Grey Fantail
8	Red-capped Parrot	Yellow-plumed Honeyeater	Silvereye
9	Brown Honeyeater	Dusky Woodswallow	Western Spinebill
10	Weebill	Willie Wagtail	Brown-headed Honeyeater
11	Willie Wagtail	Common Bronzewing	Tree Martin
12	New Holland Honeyeater	Grey Shrike-thrush	Yellow-plumed Honeyeater
13	Grey Currawong	Rufous Whistler	Australian Ringneck
14	Blue-breasted Fairy-wren	Blue-breasted Fairy-wren	Blue-breasted Fairy-wren
15	Singing Honeyeater	Brown Honeyeater	Tawny-crowned Honeyeater
16	Purple-crowned Lorikeet	Yellow-rumped Thornbill	White-browed Scrubwren
17	Golden Whistler	Grey Fantail	Inland Thornbill
18	Western Gerygone	Splendid Fairy-wren	Grey Shrike-thrush
19	Silvereye	Australian Magpie	Western Thornbill
20	Western Spinebill	Grey Currawong	Golden Whistler

Table 1. The twenty most commonly seen bird species at each of three sites in Dryandra Woodland in summer.

Season	Summer	Autumn	Winter	Spring
Average no. of species	38	34	39	38

Table 2. The average number of species likely to be seen in each season at Dryandra Woodland.

No.	Endemic species	No.	Less common species
1	Carnaby's (Short-billed) Black-Cockatoo	1	Malleefowl
2	Western Rosella	2	Square-tailed Kite
3	Red-capped Parrot	3	Painted Button-quail
4	Western Thornbill	4	Bush Stone-Curlew
5	Western Wattlebird	5	Hooded Robin
6	Western Spinebill	6	Crested Shrike-tit

Table 3. Species endemic to the south-west of Western Australia likely to be seen in Dryandra Woodland and some less common species that have been recorded there.

alighting to consume their catch. Strong winds the previous night have blown a Dusky Woodswallow nest out of the tree it was in and the two fledglings are being fed on a piece of fallen branch by their parents while keeping an eye out for danger (Figure 3).

A cloud of dust created by a passing vehicle causes some species to move away from the track towards the dam, including a Willie Wagtail, Yellow-rumped Thornbills, Singing Honeyeaters and a couple of Australian Ringnecks. Although a popular area with more traffic around it, this site can provide a large part of your bird list—the twenty most often seen are listed in Table 1. On the way back to the car park a small group of Varied Sittellas can be seen moving up and down the tree trunks in search of food.

To get to the third site from here you drive west along Tomingley Road from the Old Mill Dam, turn right into Kawana Road and then follow that across the Wandering-Narrogin Road to the Lol Gray picnic area and lookout. From this site there are good views over the surrounding woodland (Figure 4) and farmland as well as tables where you can have afternoon tea. This is one of those times when few birds are calling or moving about, so it is possible to sit at one of the tables and have afternoon tea while enjoying the peace. After a while a flock of Australian Ringnecks arrives in the nearby trees and disturbs that peace with their noisy calling and boisterous behaviour. And so to birding! The nearby kwongan thickets are a haven for honeyeaters including Western Spinebill, Tawny-crowned, White-cheeked, New Holland and Brown Honeyeaters plus White-browed Scrubwren, Blue-breasted Fairy-wren and Silvereye. Western Grey Kangaroos sometimes rest here although human presence usually causes them to move to a different location.

Striated Pardalotes call from the treetops, they seem to be the most abundant species today, while Tree Martins move effortlessly through the air on the light breeze pursuing unseen insects. A pair of Jacky Winter actively pursue prey from their perches alongside one of the tracks but that rustling in the leaf litter is worrying. Relief, it is not a snake after all but a Short-beaked Echidna foraging (Figure 5). On the way back to the vehicle, an Elegant Parrot that had been perching quietly in a nearby tree speeds off in a blur of mustard yellow.



Figure 5. Short-beaked Echidna near the Lol Gray picnic area

Photo courtesy Peter Sandilands

Statistics

The statistics used in this article have been taken from over 15 years of regular visits to Dryandra Woodland.

The average numbers of species one might expect to see in each season are listed in Table 2. Obviously, this number depends upon the length of stay and the weather conditions at the time.

A number of species endemic to the south-west of Western Australia that may be seen in Dryandra

Woodland are listed in Table 3 along with some less common species that have been recorded there.

Only two introduced species of bird have been recorded in the woodland, of which one, the Laughing Kookaburra, is well established and breeds there. The Laughing Turtle-Dove is seen occasionally.

Thirty-five years ago Vincent Serventy wrote the words used at the beginning of this article.

They are as relevant

today as they were then. He also said: *Perhaps we may be able to hold the web of life secure by having Dryandra made into a national park for the pleasure and study of future generations* (Serventy 1970). This is yet to happen.

References

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- Serventy, V. (1970). *Dryandra: The Story of an Australian Forest*. A.H. and A.W. Reed, Sydney.

Peter Sandilands



Obituary



FAITH CARNEY

Sadly, Faith died on 22 February. She had been very courageous during months of an increasingly debilitating illness.

Faith, a comparative newcomer to Birds Australia, was so

enthusiastic about, and interested in birds and bird life.

Apart from being in her garden, being in the bush with Peter and joining BAWA 'campouts' was a favourite pastime.

Sincere sympathy is extended to Faith's husband, Peter, and to her children and grandchildren.

Stella Stewart-Wynne



Letters to the Editors



Dear Editors

HITCH HIKING BEE-EATERS—A SEQUEL

I was interested to read Kevin Coate's article in *Western Australian Bird Notes* No 115 describing bee-eaters taking refuge on boats during migration. This reminded me of a little known poem written by "Banjo" Paterson, which I came across years ago. It is called *Why the Jackass Laughs* and was first published in a volume called *The Animals Noah Forgot* in 1933. In this poem the bee-eaters outdo the "boastful crow" with stories of their non-stop flight to

Japan. The kookaburra laughs at the plight of the crow. In a footnote Paterson notes that he has seen: *Eastern steamers green with the migrating bee-eaters*. It would seem that bee-eaters are inveterate hitchhikers!

In conjunction with the editors I sought permission to enclose a copy of the poem for the interest of readers. Unfortunately the current holders of the copyright would only give permission for an unwarranted fee!

John Brooke



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9—18 August 2006

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This list has been compiled by the Observations Committee. Metropolitan suburbs or shires are in parentheses. Please report interesting observations to Frank O'Connor (9386 5694 or preferably <sightings@birdswa.com.au>) or to the BAWA office (9383 7749). Sightings are included on the BAWA web site <birdswa.com.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 period has been relatively quiet. A first year Wandering Albatross was seen at Rottnest Island and then two days later at Woodman Point. A Franklin's Gull was seen at Cape Le Grande NP on the south coast. This species has been recorded at least once a year somewhere in WA for quite some time. A Barn Swallow was seen at Lake McLarty. This species is rarely reported in the south of the state, and the buff wash on the underparts indicated that this sighting was of the sub species *tytleri*, which has rarely been sighted in Australia.

In the metropolitan area, an immature Spotted Harrier was photographed in Bayswater. There have been very few reports of crakes in the metropolitan area during the last summer. Many waterbirds such as Grey Teal, Australasian Shoveler, Hoary-headed Grebe and Black-winged Stilt have mostly departed the metropolitan area since the heavy rain through much of the south-west at the end of January.

In the south-west, another Inland Dotterel was seen near Katanning. A Fluttering Shearwater was found beach washed near Albany. A Little Curlew was seen near Gregory north of Geraldton, along with a good sized flock of Fork-tailed Swifts.

The series of major cyclones in the Kimberley and Pilbara failed to produce any sightings of rarities.

METROPOLITAN (UBD Street Directory)

Wandering Albatross – 1 juvenile, 15/02/06, Stark Bay (Rottnest Island) – SM * 1 juvenile, 17/02/06, Woodman Point (Munster) – JG (rare inshore; photographs)

Spotted Harrier – immature, 28/03/06, Eric Singleton Nature Reserve (Bayswater) – JV (unusual in the metropolitan area; see photograph in this issue)



Immature Spotted Harrier at Eric Singleton Nature Reserve.
Photo courtesy John Vogel

Regent Parrot – 3, 23/02/06, bushland near Tonkin Highway (Perth Airport) – SvA (unusual in the eastern suburbs)

Fairy Martin – 12 nests, 26/02/06, Orrong Road / Roe Highway (Welshpool) – SE (rarely reported in the metropolitan area or south thereof)

SOUTH WEST (Shark Bay to Cape Arid)

Freckled Duck – 92+, 24/02/06, Lake Shaster Farm (Ravensthorpe) – SM, FO *et al.* (high count)

Fluttering Shearwater – 1 beach washed, 11/02/06, near Cosy Corner (Albany) – MN (rare in WA; museum specimen)

Australian Bustard – 1, 13/03/06, Pfeiffer Road (Albany) – PMe (rare near Albany)

Black-tailed Godwit – 1, 24/02/06, Lake Shaster Farm (Ravensthorpe) – SM, FO *et al.* (uncommon this far south)

Little Curlew – 1, 15/02/06, Hutt Lagoon (Northampton) – CH (rare in the south west)

Wood Sandpiper – 35, 05/03/06, The Broadwater (Busselton) – BAWA (SA) (high count for extreme southwest)

Long-toed Stint – 30, 05/03/06, The Broadwater (Busselton) – BAWA (SA) (high count for extreme southwest)

Pectoral Sandpiper – 2, 05/03/06, The Broadwater (Busselton) – BAWA (SA) (uncommon)

Pacific Golden Plover – 10, 05/03/06, Lake McLarty (Murray) – AC (high count in the south west)

INLAND DOTTEREL – 1, 29/01/06, farm (Woodanilling) – IG (scarce now in the south west)

Masked Lapwing – 1, 05/03/06, The Broadwater (Busselton) – BAWA (SA) (uncommon in the south west)

FRANKLIN'S GULL – 1, 05/03/06, Hellfire Bay, Cape Le Grande NP (Esperance) – MCa, AA, GD (rare in WA; see photograph in this issue)

Bridled Tern – several, early 03/06, circling over Termination Island, Recherche Archipelago (Esperance) – TS (possible breeding colony)

Fork-tailed Swift – 300+, 14-22/02/06, Gregory (Northampton) – CH (high count in the south west)

BARN SWALLOW – 1, 25/02/06, Lake McLarty (Murray) – AC (rare in the south west; description provided, including underparts with cinnamon buff wash, indicative of subspecies *tytleri*, from Siberia to Mongolia)

ARID ZONE

Australasian Gannet – beach washed,
18/03/06, Coral Bay (Carnarvon) –
LG (uncommon in the Gascoyne)

Lesser Frigatebird – 1 female,
03/02/06, Barrow Island – MC * 1
male, 20/03/06, Wandoo B Oil
Platform – PM (uncommon this far
south)

Black-breasted Buzzard – 1,
19/01/06, 50 km E of Norseman
(Dundas) – RP, ST (uncommon
this far south)

Roseate Tern – 2000, 01/03/06, The
Blowholes (Carnarvon) – LG (high
count)

Common Tern – 4000, 01/03/06, The
Blowholes (Carnarvon) – LG (high
count)

Common Noddy – 60, 18/03/06, Coral
Bay (Carnarvon) – LG (unusual on
the mainland)

Peaceful Dove – 1, 10/03/06, Wanjarri
Nature Reserve (Wiluna) – RT
(seen and heard; well outside
normal range)

KIMBERLEY

Asian Dowitcher – 164, 22/03/06,
Wader Beach, Roebuck Bay
(Broome) – RC (high count)

OBSERVERS

AA = Adam Arnold
AC = Alan Collins
BAWA = BAWA Excursion
CH = Colin Heap
FO = Frank O'Connor
GD = Garry Deering
IG = Ian Garstone
JG = Joan Gye
JV = John Vogel
LG = Les George
MC = Michael Craig
MCa = Martin Cachard (Qld)

MN = Margaret Nash
PM = Paul Marty
PMe = Patrick Metcalfe
RC = Ricki Coughlan
RP = Ryan Phillips
RT = Roy Teale
SA = Sue Abbotts
SE = Steve Elson
SM = Sue Mather
ST = Sean Tomlinson
SvA = Sean van Alphen
TS = Terry Sanders



Franklin's Gull at Cape Le Grande NP.
Photo courtesy Adam Arnold



Birds Australia WA Inc Reports



CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

The first half of this year has proved to be an interesting and at times challenging period for Birds Australia. Birds Australia (and BAWA as a regional group) has been increasingly called upon for our recognised expertise on birds and consequently has been able to play an important role in education, awareness raising and even advocacy on bird-related issues.

Topping the list, there has been a fair bit of media attention and, dare I say, scare-mongering, dedicated to bird flu in recent times. Much of this has been centred on the notion of migratory birds such as waders, carrying the virus into Australia. Fortunately amongst the numerous hyped-up articles of doom and gloom, there have been a number of media approaches to the national office on the issue. Birds Australia has consequently released a media statement (which can be found on the national website) and given a number of media interviews to present some more balanced science on the issue. On a local scale, Mike Bamford also represented BAWA on a television news interview on the topic of bird flu. This proved to be a great success with the broadcast story offering a refreshing counterbalance

that stated the fairly remote risks posed by migratory waders visiting our shores.

The media savvy amongst you will also have noted the fairly large political debate concerning the Orange-bellied Parrot and its use as a reason for the Federal Environment Minister to stop a proposed wind-farm in Victoria. There were clearly some strong politics involved in this decision, but it was again refreshing to see a number of media organisations approach national office to draw upon Birds Australia's extensive research experience with this species. Again this provided a refreshing balance to media reports by injecting some solid science into the issue.

Following the Orange-bellied Parrot saga, there were some attempts to draw a long bow to the sighting of Night Parrots on a proposed iron-ore development in the Pilbara last year, and the potential impact of the mine on this species. Again we were very fortunate that the media consulted Birds Australia for an expert opinion that resulted in an article in *The Australian* (featuring comments from Graeme Hamilton) as well as a radio-interview on 6PR by BAWA member John Blyth.

Beyond such expert commentary, BAWA also has a strong advocacy role to play. I have recently given several interviews to newspapers and television news, on the threat posed by Common Starlings, now spreading rapidly into south-east WA. BAWA was successful in achieving good media coverage to promote this urgent conservation issue to a wider audience. In the process we were able to keep up the pressure to relevant government departments to eradicate Common Starlings while the opportunity is still possible (to avoid a repeat of the Rainbow Lorikeet situation). Unfortunately the Common Starling issue is still looming as a large and difficult one.

It is encouraging that within the space of a few months, BAWA and BA have been approached so often in recognition of our research knowledge on Australian birds. This role will become increasingly important in the future and both BA and BAWA will have important roles to play by speaking out when it

is appropriate to do so, and adding good science to the debate at hand.

Education is a core component of Birds Australia's activities and is currently focussed on by the extremely hardworking (and overworked?) group led by Brice Wells and Elsa Dabbs. However, it is important to realise that we all have a role to play in promoting birds and bird conservation to the wider community. By simply adding your knowledge on birds to a relevant conversation or issue, showing other people how to watch birds, raising awareness of which species occur in your local area, helping with Birds Australia projects such as the wader count, Carnaby's Cockatoo count, Atlas surveys and just by wearing your Birds Australia cap, jacket or t-shirt, you are doing your bit to make Australia a better place for our birds.

Until next time, happy birding!

Rob Davis

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2005

Note: These accounts have been audited by Greg Wyllie, Chartered Accountant and a satisfactory report received. This is an abridged version – a copy of the complete accounts is available at Peregrine House.

BALANCE SHEET	\$	\$	\$
Assets			
Current Assets			
Total Cash on Hand	121 359		
Total Stock on Hand	<u>17 867</u>	139 226	
Non-current Assets			
Investments	138 401		
Equipment on Hand	<u>17 859</u>	<u>156 260</u>	
Total Assets			295 486
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
GST Liabilities		-3 555	
Grants			
Various		<u>81 960</u>	
Total Liabilities			<u>78 405</u>
Net Assets			217 081
Accumulated funds			
Prior Year's Surplus/(Deficit)		116 574	
Retained Earnings		65 213	
Current Year's Surplus/(Deficit)		<u>35 294</u>	
Total Accumulated funds			217 081

INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR 2005

Income			
Total Trading Table		7 751	
Total Books		1 603	
Total WA Bird Notes		2 888	
Donations including Bequest		12 682	
Interest & Investment Rollovers		9 233	
Other income-Fees \$3 055, Grants \$5 883, etc		<u>29 562</u>	63 719
Expenses			
Audit & Bank Charges		531	
Donations		2 240	
Functions		1 399	
Rent		4 191	
Office Expenses (Phone, Stationery, Postages, etc)		18 451	
Regional Group Travel		628	
Library Expenses		<u>984</u>	
Total Expenses			<u>28 424</u>
Net Surplus/(Deficit)			<u>35 295</u>

ROTTNEST BUSHBIRD AND WADER COUNT, 2–5 FEBRUARY 2006

This is the ninth year that Birds Australia volunteers have conducted twice yearly bird surveys of the salt lakes, shorelines and some bush areas of Rottnest Island. The resulting data, apart from being added to Birds Australia's own databases, is used by environmental groups and researchers, including the Rottnest Island Authority's environmentalists and is included in their annual report.

On Friday 3 and Saturday 4 February 2006 Birds Australia volunteers conducted bushbird surveys on 12 of the Rottnest Island Authority's rehabilitation sites—the results are shown in Table 1. These sites are providing increasing habitation for birds and it is hoped that over the long term, data from the surveys will help support further reafforestation on the island.

Although only four Painted Button-quail were recorded on the survey days three other pairs were sighted on the island in

two different locations than in previous years. There appears to be one main flock of Galahs on the island, at present with 22-30 birds seen together at various times.

On Sunday 5 February, over a two hour period, the summer wader count was carried out by 20 volunteers who covered all of the island's lakes and much of the coastline used by waders. These results are shown in Table 2.

This year's count was much different than the past four years due to the recent departure of almost all of the Banded Stilts. Table 3, comparing the last nine year's results, shows this difference.

Since 2002 the number of Banded Stilts recorded each year has been between 5000 and 8000; this year only four birds were seen. A keen birdwatcher who works on the island reported that the estimated 3000–4000 Banded Stilts that were on the lakes this summer left around 9 January 2006. It is assumed that they have gone to breed on recently flooded

BIRD SPECIES	Site											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Common Pheasant	7	13			2	1					3	
Nankeen Kestrel												
Harrier species												
Painted Button Quail					4							
Spotted Turtle Dove	1		1									
Laughing Turtle Dove	3	1	3			4	3			2	3	
Galah		2										
Rock Parrot												
Sacred Kingfisher		5				1						
Rainbow Bee-eater	22	20	12	2	3	20	2	2	2			
White-browed Scrubwren	15	27	4		6		3	2	3		4	1
Western Gerygone	12	7	1	3	7		8					
Singing Honeyeater	29	20	1		12	7	5	3	1	1		
White-fronted Chat	5									1		1
Red-capped Robin	6	7	4		2		1					
Golden Whistler	3	7	1	1	2	1	1	1				
Australian raven	6	13	4	4	17	2	12	2			*P	*P
Silvereye	51	16	14	5	45	7	10	10	1		14	
Richards Pipit							2					

Table 1: Rottnest Island bushbird count 3-4 February 2006

*P Numerous Ravens on and over sites adjacent to rubbish tip.
Welcome Swallows and Tree Martins were observed flying over all 12 sites.

Site 1:	Anniversary Park	Site 5:	Fire Site
Site 2:	Kingston	Site 6:	Beekeepers Block
Site 3:	East of Barker Swamp – north side of centre line fence	Site 7:	West of Oliver Hill
Site 4:	East of Barker Swamp – south side of centre line fence.	Sites 8-12:	Sites north of Forbes Hill

Bird Species	Sites												Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Bar-tailed Godwit										1	1	7	9
Whimbrel										1			1
Common Greenshank											1		1
Terek Sandpiper													
Grey-tailed Tattler													
Ruddy Turnstone	77		27	21	15	36	3		4	3	19	6	211
Sanderling	2		2	15	5	1				18	28	20	91
Red-necked Stint	182		92	169	130	597	72		81		8		1331
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper						1							
Curlew Sandpiper	6			14	2	3							25
Red-necked Phalarope						2							2
Pied Oystercatcher											1		1
Black-winged Stilt			5		5	3							13
Banded Stilt					4								4
Red-necked Avocet					1	9			1				11
Pacific Golden Plover						1							1
Grey Plover			1		1						2	1	5
Red-Capped Plover	28		15	7	5	27	2		5				89
Lesser Sand Plover													
Greater Sand Plover													
Banded Lapwing			4					20					24
TOTAL	295		146	226	168	679	77	20	91	23	60	34	1819

Table 2: Rottnest Island wader count, 5 February 2006

Sites

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Government House Lake | 7. Lake Vincent |
| 2. Garden Lake | 8. Oval Airstrip |
| 3. Serpentine Lake | 9. Pink Lakes |
| 4. Causeway Lake | 10. West End Bays |
| 5. Hershel Lake | 11. Porpoise Bay |
| 6. Lake Bagdad | 12. Salmon Bay |

Bird Species	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Bar-Tailed Godwit	4	7	6	5	14	10	11	15	9
Whimbrel	1	4	1		1	1	1		1
Common Greenshank	1	2	1					1	1
Terek Sandpiper		1						1	
Common Sandpiper	2	2	1	2	2		10		
Grey-Tailed Tattler	1	20	27	6	11	4	2	1	
Ruddy Turnstone	175	367	285	430	402	299	236	159	211
Great Knot				5					
Sanderling	77	125	60	67	121	94	98	87	91
Red-Necked Stint	438	1125	1504	1324	1380	958	978	791	1331
Sharp Tailed Sandpiper			17					1	
Pectoral Sandpiper			1						
Curlew Sandpiper	90	141	60	345	64	98	46	8	25
Red-Necked Phalarope			1	1	1		1	2	2
Pied Oystercatcher	7	11	12	6	7	10	8	4	1
Black-Winged Stilt	5	2	2	2	6	6	2	7	13
Banded Stilt	3284	1107	20	418	5090	7713	7617	5735	4
Red-Necked Avocet	11	20	9	4	13	8	11	8	11
Pacific Golden Plover		1						1	1
Grey Plover	12	24	11	14	15	17	13	5	5
Red-Capped Plover	180	431	111	113	161	162	135	162	89
Lesser Sand Plover		1	1	2	3		2	1	
Large Sand Plover		7	13	3	1	4	2	2	
Banded Lapwing	24	15	8	13	4	41	37	38	24
TOTAL	4312	3413	2561	2761	7296	9425	9210	7029	1819

Table 3: Rottnest mid summer wader counts 1998-2006

inland ephemeral salt lakes and it will be interesting to see what inland wader observations show later this year. Possibly due to the lack of Banded Stilts the recorded numbers of Black-winged Stilts and Red-necked Avocets were slightly higher. Certainly they were more widespread and there was more evidence of breeding with adult birds on nest scrapes and juveniles of both species seen.

Other waders sighted between 2 and 5 February but not recorded during the count were a Common Sandpiper, Grey-tailed Tattler and a Lesser Sand Plover. A total of 59 bird species were seen on Rottnest during the four days of the surveys.

The volunteers would like to thank Oceanic Cruises, who this year provided support for the surveys in the form of free ferry travel, and also Boat Torque Rottnest Express who provided travel at a nominal rate.

Thanks also to the Rottnest Island Authority for their co-operation, information and the use of a vehicle for the duration of the surveys, and to UWA for the use of the research station accommodation and a vehicle at rates that help keep the volunteers' costs down.

John Lauri

RESULTS OF THE HOODED PLOVER SURVEY, 25 and 26th FEBRUARY 2006

The Hooded Plover summer 2006 survey was held on Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 February. The success of these surveys is often determined by the preceding weather patterns and this year was no exception. Severe tropical cyclone Clare crossed the Pilbara coast on Monday 9 January. The remains of cyclone Clare continued to move south, producing heavy rain and some flooding through inland parts and the south-west land division. Flooding was particularly significant in the area around Lake Grace in the Great Southern district where 224 mm of rain was recorded in a 24-hour period on the 12-13 January. The high water levels at lakes and inlets were still evident at the time of this survey.

A wet winter and the coolest summer for the last 50 years were contributing factors to many lakes remaining full. The lakes to the south of the Stirling Ranges were all flooded with no access and no available beaches for waders. The lower count at Yalgorup National Park was perhaps the result of above average winter and January rains, resulting in high water levels and flooded beaches for some months. Coastal lakes around Esperance were reported as full with little beach around them. Reports from Lake Kwarnicup mentioned the highest water level seen, with 80% of the lake covered by shallow water. Lake Chillinup and Lake Quarderwardup also had high water levels. Stokes Inlet could not be surveyed because of flooding. High water levels have existed for years at Lake Gore that had little or no beach.

The Hooded Plover survey was mentioned in the *Esperance Express*, *Albany Advertiser* and *Augusta-Margaret River Mail*, thanks to the promotional efforts of our regional volunteers.

Survey Results

This year's survey was very successful with the highest count of Hooded Plovers recorded since 2002. However the percentage of juveniles was lower than the previous two years (Table 1).

Summer survey	Adults and (Juveniles)	% of Juveniles	Total
March 2002	691 (39)	5.3%	730
Feb/March 2003	344 (23)	6.3%	367
February 2004	412 (79)	16%	491
February 2005	548 (75)	12%	623
February 2006	631 (44)	6.5%	675

Table 1: A comparison of the data collected over summer surveys from 2002 to 2006

No Hooded Plover observations were reported around the Perth metropolitan area or the Peel Inlet. Yalgorup National Park had lower numbers than usual, which was attributed to the lake's high water levels. Population numbers remained stable on the Cape Leeuwin to Cape Naturaliste beaches despite increased pressures from people, dogs and vehicles. For example, in 2003, 45 Hooded Plovers were seen, in 2004 there were 21, 2005 18 and 2006 23. A high concentration of Hooded Plovers was found on the near coastal farmland lakes between Jerdacuttup Lakes and Young River Station. Hooded Plovers were identified in this area during the Common

Location	Survey results
Shark Bay to Perth	No sightings
Wetlands between Rockingham and Mandurah	No sightings
Beaches from Mandurah to Leschenault Inlet	No sightings
Yalgorup National Park (Yalgorup HPMR*)	68 (includes 4 juveniles)
Geographe Bay	2 adults
Beaches from Capt Naturaliste to Augusta (Naturaliste-Augusta HPMR)	23 (includes 2 juveniles)
Beaches from Augusta to Broke Inlet.	4 (includes 2 juveniles)
Beaches from Broke Inlet (Walpole) to Beaufort Inlet (east of Albany) (Walpole-Denmark HPMR)	24 (includes 2 juveniles)
Beaches from Beaufort Inlet to Hopetoun (Bremer Bay-Hopetoun HPMR)	15 (includes 1 juvenile)
Beaches, coastal- and inland lakes east of Hopetoun to Stokes Inlet	315 (includes 13 juveniles)
Beaches Stokes Inlet to Cape Le Grande	84 (includes 15 juveniles)
Esperance Lakes (Lake Gore system to Mullet Lake) (Esperance HPMR)	88 (includes 2 juveniles)
Beaches east of Cape Le Grande	26 (includes 3 juveniles)
Inland lakes in south-west of the State	26
Total	675 (includes 44 juveniles)

Note: HPMR = Hooded Plover Management Region

Table 2: Locations and results of the summer 2006 survey of Hooded Plovers.

Starling survey held in November 2005. The beaches to the west of Esperance and the lakes to the north of Esperance produced some good counts. Flocks of Hooded Plover were mentioned at some inland sites, for example, Bennetts Lake (23) and Benji Benjenup Lake (47). Breeding results were recorded near Munglinup, Cape Arid and Gracetown.

Interesting observations and anecdotes recorded during the survey are listed:

- At Lake Shaster Farm (site 4) Hooded Plovers were observed along the lake edge sheltering and foraging in and through dead flora.
- Near Mason Bay Hooded Plovers were seen resting on a limestone mould 5 m from water.
- Hooded Plovers were sighted at Lake Jebarjub which was described as a lake with a grey sandy-clay beach covered in a hairlike matting of water weed and pink shell-grit gastropods.
- Hooded Plovers at Gracetown were seen feeding on a limestone reef, adjoining the beach at low tide.
- At Fourth Beach, Esperance, Hooded Plovers were seen feeding on exposed reef at the water's edge.
- Hooded Plovers were found with Red-necked Stints at a lake to the west of Barkers Inlet.
- Along the south coastal stretch between Parry's Beach and Boat Harbour the seven Hooded Plovers sighted in adult plumage were reported as having yellow coloured legs.
- Hooded Plovers were found at the southern end of Benje-Benjenup Lake on sandy clay soil among old stumps.
- At Hassell Beach Hooded Plovers were feeding along a fresh water stream, still running but that disappeared into the sand about 500 m from the sea.
- Hooded Plovers were seen making a nest cup at Hassell Beach on 23 January 2006.
- A big ocean swell made beach surveying difficult east of Windy Harbour.

Conservation threats

The main conservation threats identified at beaches were people, dogs, four wheel drive vehicles and cats. There were some reports of vehicles on beaches driving straight through flocks of roosting birds. Many vehicles on the beach were driving along the front of the dunes. At inland lakes foxes were identified as the main threat.

Acknowledgements

This year's participation rate was high and I thank everyone for their valuable time and contributions. The following individuals and organisations are acknowledged and thanked.

We received assistance from Pemberton Discovery Tours.

Christine Wilder completed her annual trek along the south coast from Augusta to Broke Inlet.

Birds Australia members made an enormous contribution.

A special word of thanks for the Hooded Plover regional coordinators who organised the volunteers in their districts: Dick Rule (Yalgorup), Tony France (Myalup), Natalie Dillon (Margaret River), David Edmonds (Walpole), Tina Smith (Denmark), Anne Bondin (Albany), Anne Gadsby (Bremer Bay) and Ken Read (Esperance).

Suzanne Mather, Frank O'Connor, Stewart Houghton, Stella Stewart-Wynne, Joyce and David Ballard and Phyllis Bentley for their south coast field



Fig. 1: Hooded Plover feeding on reef near Gracetown.

Photo courtesy Erica Shedley

trip.

The members of the Hooded Plover sub-committee: Kate Creed, Stewart Houghton, John Lauri and Trevor Stoneman.

The support and assistance received each year from the Department of Conservation and Land Management and their staff, in particular Allan Rose at Cape Arid National Park, Garry Carr at Fitzgerald River National Park and the many other national park rangers who assisted.

Marcus Singor
Chairperson, Hooded Plover Sub-Committee

CARNABY'S BLACK-COCKATOO ON THE SWAN COASTAL PLAIN OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA:



Population & Food Resource Estimation

The Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Swan Coastal Plain project began in October 2005 with the broad aims of determining how many Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos there are, where they are, what they feed on and what food resources are available to them on the Plain from Gingin to Bunbury.

The 'Great Cocky Count' was organised to help answer the question of bird numbers. The survey involved counting Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos from anywhere on the Plain in parks, reserves and home gardens on particular dates within specified time periods in February, March and May 2006. The counts have been highly successful in receiving support from both the Birds Australia membership and the general public. Over 450 people have been involved, with many volunteers participating in all the counts. The February count yielded high numbers, with the largest reported flock at almost 500 birds. In March, a greater percentage of people

saw birds, with several reporting flocks of well over 500 birds. Data for the May count are not yet available.

The project is also looking at numbers of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos at roosting sites and what birds feed on when on the Swan Coastal Plain. During winter when the breeding birds return to the wheatbelt, the project will focus on vegetation surveys to determine food resources available to Carnaby's on the Plain.

To find out how you can get involved in the project, including providing assistance with data management, contact Bansi Shah on <b.shah@birdsaustralia.com.au> or 0427 707 047. For further information about the project, see <www.carnabyscockatoo.org>.

Bansi Shah



A flock of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos at Yanchep.

Photo courtesy Eric Lehmann

COCKATOOS, CONSERVATION AND COMMUNITIES

The Katanning District Landcare Committee (LCDC) is working hard to help save Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos in their region. The Katanning LCDC is currently coordinating a Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Project within the Katanning and Kent Shires; this is funded through South West Catchment Council and has shown a steady increase in private landholder partnerships in the past six months.

Birds Australia has been fully supportive of the Katanning LCDC Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Project and actively participating in it from the beginning with excellent displays at shows and media representation of the plight of these birds. Many hours have been spent on important field surveys and monitoring of the species by committed Birds Australia volunteers, staff members, and others from the wider community. Without the volunteers the project would not be able to collect valuable data regarding flock sizes, breeding successes, feral bee intrusion and other important factors and information needed to assess the status of the species.

This information collected for the Birds Australia Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project is also being used to support the Katanning LCDC Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Project where the ultimate aim is to conserve existing valuable feeding and breeding habitat, and to increase the habitat that is available into the future. For this project to produce outcomes it has been necessary to interact with local farmers within a 20 km vicinity of important known habitat areas. This interaction has resulted in the farmers' involvement in the project and commitment to direct on-ground actions such as fencing and revegetation. Sometimes this has meant fencing bushland areas that have previously been used for sheep, or giving up small areas of farming land for revegetation with plants that are used by the species or will alleviate saline conditions that are causing a decline in habitat area.

Local farmers within the Katanning and Kent Shires have been very interested in participating in on-ground work such

as fencing and revegetating critical Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo habitat. These on-ground works are funded by the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Project and are facilitated by the Katanning LCDC with government agencies such as Land for Wildlife, the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) Katanning District doing the ground assessment for habitat areas and possible revegetation sites.

Government agencies and the local community have been getting involved in field days run by Birds Australia and Katanning LCDC, with professional commentary from CALM and Birds Australia. This allows them access to information and insight into the issues facing Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo such as the causes of the species' decline. Participants have been guided into the field, shown habitat of importance, climbed ladders to look into nesting sites and had the pleasure of seeing Carnaby's in the wild.

The project has seen an integrated approach taken to initiate the appropriate actions that have been needed to assess, monitor and plan for direct work to improve habitat and create new corridors and bushland linkages.

All the stakeholders involved in these projects would like to thank all the volunteers and state that this work does not go unnoticed or unrecognised. It is imperative and valued for the ongoing work involved in Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo recovery planning and implementation within these areas from the coast to the inland.

Anyone who might like to provide assistance by volunteering for tree planting or fencing projects in the future could contact Jill Richardson at Katanning Landcare on 9821 4327 who would coordinate these activities or Helen Pitman, Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project, at Birds Australia on 9383 7749.

Kathleen O'Brien
Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Project Facilitator
for Katanning Landcare

CONSERVATION WEEK, 19–26 March 2006

Birds Australia WA contributed a full week of events for Conservation Week 2006. The week is organised by the Conservation Council of WA to promote environmental awareness in the community and get people involved in environmental activities in their local community.

On Sunday 19 March Brice Wells and Elsa Dabbs supported Bansi Shah and Helen Pitman, supplying a display and assistance for their walk and talk on Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo in Yanchep National Park.

Our Bird Identification Seminar for beginners ran for four mornings from 21 – 24 March. The seminar was well attended with the exception, for reasons unknown, of one day. Brice Wells and Frank O'Connor did their usual sterling job of identification, use of binoculars, resources and explanation of birding. Sue Mather, sharing her knowledge of waterbirds, supported the lectures by Brice and Frank on bushbirds and waders. Field guides and cards were in demand and another successful seminar was concluded. Our thanks to the walk leaders, Barbara Anderson, Mike Bamford, Graham Bown, Frank O'Connor, Rick Curtis, Merrian Kuerschner, Sue Mather, Jennifer Muir, Ian Rudd, and Brice Wells, for giving their time. Thanks to Liz Walker for helping me with registration and the selling of field guides and cards.

On Saturday the 25th we had two events. Graham Bown, Lorraine Marshall and Ian Rudd led bird walks around Alfred Cove for the Atwell Art Gallery during the morning of their Melville Festival Day. Birds Australia WA also gave a prize for the art competition the Art Gallery ran for primary schools. The winner was the Mel Maria Catholic School. Mike Bamford judged the winning entry and Michael Morcombe donated a field guide as a prize for the best entries from a school. Sets of cards were given in recognition of outstanding work done by the Atwell Art Gallery students:

Kate Bond for *Don't feed the birds*, Nick Ferrero for his goshawk, Andrew Sugden for a poem. Thank you, Mike and Michael, for your contribution.

Also on the 25th Brice Wells, Gale Wells and Elsa Dabbs attended the Men of the Trees day setting up a display, selling cards and field guides, giving out information brochures and talking to numerous people. Brice gave an interesting talk on birds in a special marquee set up for the occasion.

Seven events for Conservation Week—thank you everyone for helping promote conservation and Birds Australia WA.

Elsa Dabbs
Public Relations Sub-committee

BIRD IDENTIFICATION SEMINAR AT SHIRE OF KALAMUNDA PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE, 9 APRIL

Sixty-eight people signed up for the Bird Identification Seminar at Kalamunda. Most of them were on a waiting list from last year's seminar. It goes to prove the hills are definitely alive with bird enthusiasts. This was a workshop promoted by the Eastern Regional Metropolitan Council who provided the venue plus morning tea, while we provided the bird expertise. It is a good working partnership and cost effective.

Brice and Gale Wells, and I attended the session held in the theatre section of the Performing Arts Centre. Brice was in full flow, holding the audience's attention in the palm of his

hand and having the benefit of being up on the stage. I really missed a photo opportunity this time! All the basics of birding were talked about, followed by a question session. We had our display of birds and as usual a table of books and cards to sell. Claudius the Cockatoo, our mounted display, was on hand and a new display of bird feathers. The second part of this seminar will be held on 27 May at the Chidlow Sports Pavilion.

Thanks to the ERM Council staff for your support.

Elsa Dabbs
Public Relations Sub-committee



Atwell Art Gallery, Alfred Cove

"Men of the Trees" Day

Bird seminar at WA Ecology Centre

"Men of the Trees" Day

Montage of activities during Conservation Week.

Photos courtesy Elsa Dabbs

SEARCH FOR WESTERN GROUND PARROTS IN NUYTSLAND NATURE RESERVE



March survey: The survey was very well supported. The Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM) provided not only the two leaders, and two vehicles, but also another staff member and a volunteer who is working for three months with the South Coast Region. There were as many volunteers as we had hoped for. All that was missing were the target birds!

We didn't find the population we had hoped to re-locate, or any other population. There was one unconfirmed record of a single bird.

We did cover a wide area, listening in mostly good conditions in vegetation of various fire ages. The trip was well worthwhile in showing again just how sparse these birds are. We were again reminded that with these birds, it is unwise to make assumptions about their behaviour as our knowledge base is too slim.

There is a lot of potential habitat out there, much of it burnt in 2002. The March survey of the Pasley population in east Cape Arid National Park found that WGPs are now making use of vegetation of that age though they prefer to roost in older vegetation. The population located last June was in vegetation last burnt in 1998.

June survey: Because of the support from CALM, enough funding remains to run a fourth trip to Nuytsland Nature Reserve. It is intended to run this trip in June (from 7 to 16). It is planned to find out whether the population discovered last June, but missing in March 2006, has returned. More survey time will be spent searching areas of good habitat in this remote region. This vast area offers hope for expansion of the WGP population. The overall goal is to enable CALM

to plan effective management of all Western Ground Parrot populations within its area of responsibility. As far as is known, all of them are in CALM-managed parks or reserves.

Brenda Newbey



Survey team, March 2006

L-R: Brenda Newbey, Rosemary Turle, Hannah Denniston, Pat Allan, Keith Chappell, Melissa Danks, Bill Osborne, Geoff Hoggart, Mike Barth, John Tucker, Jim Creighton, Mike Griffiths.

Photo courtesy David Chemello



Tawny Frogmouth—a master of disguise!

Photo courtesy Debbie Walker



Members' Contributions



A PURPLE PATCH AT THOMSON'S LAKE

I made a visit to Thomson's Lake on 16 March 2006 for a few hours from about 8:30 am. The lake had dried out considerably but there were still hundreds of birds to be seen on it.

The lake bed had water over about a quarter of its area and this varied from very waterlogged to just over ankle deep. I found this out when I decided to see what three young Whistling Kites were feeding on out in the water. I slowly got close enough to see that they were feeding on a fresh Black Swan carcass, before two of the youngsters flew off. The last one allowed me to get within about 15 m of it before it decided to fly. It only went about 50 m to a much more "picked over" Black Swan carcass. When I walked over to see what it was picking at, it allowed me to within about the same distance as before. It then just flew back to the first carcass and began to feed again.

"... at least 13 young Whistling Kites ..."

I then noticed some birds spread out along the mud in front of the reed bank but I could not make out what they were at that distance, as I only had my binoculars with me. When I got closer I realised I was looking at a dozen young Whistling Kites, just resting on the shore. I looked back and the first bird was still feeding, which meant there were at least 13 young Whistling Kites on the lake at the same time.

I only saw a few Eurasian Coots near the reeds but I probably saw about 40 to 50 Purple Swamphens for the day. It began to get really interesting when I reached the next bank of reeds and I began to see some crakes. I slowly made my way through the water, about ten to 15 metres away from the reeds, and over the next half an hour I had wonderful views of 14 small Spotless Crakes (*Porzana tabuensis*). Some of them were quite inquisitive and came right out to look at me. Their black beak, bright red eyes and pink legs were obvious, as was the fine barring under the tail. Their brownish wings and back appeared more russet in the sunlight and their bodies a richer dark blue. I also saw two Baillon's Crakes (*Porzana pusilla*), which are the smallest of our crakes. These were much more secretive and only allowed me brief glimpses of them at a time. Little Grass Birds were calling and I had good views of at least three of these often elusive, little, streaked brown birds as they foraged through the reeds. I also saw five Clamorous Reed Warblers which were also foraging amongst the reeds but they were all strangely quiet. They would often probe between the leaves at the base of the typha, catching small insects, but I also saw one with a Damselfly in its beak.

I recorded quite a few bushbirds on the way back to the car but they just were not as interesting as they usually are!

Derek Mead-Hunter

YOUR GARDEN AT MYALUP, WA

for Elaine and Tony France

I feel as if I've been dragged reluctantly to paradise, Jackie.

I woke the first day to see honeyeaters
and counted nine green parrots in the tree,
the little eucalypt with feathery flowers.
Red over their beaks, and heads as dark as plums,
pale blue undertails—see how well you taught me—

And green so bright they must have stolen it
from the dust-coloured trees, down each wing
one last brushstroke of fluorescent lime,
they cracked the seeds—and then white magpies drove
them off and rang melodious bells like lepers.

Not the way I'd say 28, your name for them,
more like twinyite as if your birds repeat
the Cockney, Scots and Irish in the voices.
Next day pink galahs and kookaburras,
wattle and butcher birds, the blue-tailed wren.

You plant in compost in fine pale sand
that's always blowing and your dune garden grows
kangaroo paw and peppermint tree,
palm and fig, and orange butterflies
with thick black veins while the big gum leans over.

I had no names for things I saw, and when I did they didn't
fit. Your herring isn't mine.
Place names so often left by conquered peoples
and their lost meanings always haunt my tongue
with thoughts of Eden where things first got named.

You have your other ghosts as well. At dusk
the watchful kangaroos, their slender faces
as sensitive as deers. Such unfamiliar
stars only your neighbour knows the Southern Cross.
And autumn, invisible without the fall.

Roger Moulson
(UK visitor to WA)

A collection of Roger's poetry was recently published in the UK.

WORN PLUMAGE OF AUSTRALIAN SHELDUCK

The section on plumages of the Australian Shelduck (Mountain Duck) *Tadorna tadornoides* in Marchant and Higgins (1990) has a special subsection entitled *Aberrant Plumages*, in which a museum skin, collected in late January (year not given) in an extremely worn plumage is described: *only feather bases remain in head, neck, mantle and breast, giving these areas pale grey-brown ... appearance, white collar-feathers worn down to calamus, making collar inconspicuous ...* It is debatable whether such a worn

plumage should be called an aberrant plumage, but the use of the word "aberrant" certainly suggests that such a worn condition is regarded as exceptional, and in this extreme form it must be. It might even suggest that some irregularity or suppression of the moult would be responsible for this condition.

I have never seen an individual with plumage so strongly abraded that the whole head was pale. On the other hand, I have seen birds that lacked all brown or buff in the plumage, being entirely black and white. The first occasion was on 7 January 2000, when I counted at least a dozen in the New River near Busselton. These birds looked strikingly different from birds in fresher plumage and for a moment I thought that they were some variety of domestic ducks, but their size and shape, pattern of the dark parts of the plumage, and their association with normally coloured shelducks, soon put me right. In the field, these ducks looked entirely black and white. As already mentioned, the heads were dark, there was no trace of a white collar, and the whole neck and breast were white. There were also, as might be expected, intermediate birds, with white neck and upper breast, but retaining a pale buff on the lower breast. My first impression was that there had been a process of bleaching of the brown, but the specimen described in Marchant and Higgins (1990) indicates that it is wear.

Ten days later, my wife and I observed two black and white individuals at the same place, but when a week after that I went there with a camera, none were left. On 14 January 2002, I noted a female in intermediate plumage, neck and breast white, but lower down some pale cinnamon, on the family property at Callcup, lower Warren River. The inference is that birds with little or no brown in the plumage are not rare in the first weeks of the year.

Unlike the birds seen by me, the specimen is described as brownish *pale grey-brown* (Marchant & Higgins 1990). This is probably the effect of extreme wear, beyond the stage normally reached.

As the black-and-white plumage is so conspicuous, and the Mountain Duck is a large and common bird, I was surprised to find no mention of it in the literature, apart from the description of the extreme individual in Marchant and Higgins (1990). True, there is also the publication by Klapste (1981) which first suggests a plumage very close to that of the specimen, but has this followed by a detailed description, in which head, neck, breast and mantle are stated to be: *of a uniform colour, pale, buffish, similar to the normal male breast colouration*. This indicates the presence of a colour that is completely absent in what I believe to be the usual worn plumage, and makes his observation difficult to interpret.

The moult of the Mountain Duck has been well-studied; it takes place in spring, after breeding. The evidence provided by these ducks in worn plumage, indicates that the moult of their body feathers takes place in summer.

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G F Mees

COCKATOOS EATING GRUBS

The reports in WABN (107, 23 and 108, 18) of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos foraging under bark of wattles and tuarts, apparently for insects or grubs, prompted me to relate the following observation.

A friend and I were walking along the North Fremantle Vlamingh Parklands cycle track that skirts the escarpment overlooking the Swan River on Sunday 14 September 2003. We stopped to examine an old wattle whose bark was heavily pitted and ripped and which appeared to be dead, apart from one or two green branches. While we speculated on what could have caused this devastation, four white-tailed black-cockatoos (presumably Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos) provided the solution by alighting on the tree and proceeding to gouge out bits of the trunk and larger branches. After watching them for some time we were about to move on when one of their number extracted a huge grub from a channel in the bark. When his companions advanced on him, squawking their apparent intention to steal his catch, he stuffed the whole thing into his mouth and gulped it down. Another of the cockatoos also pulled out and ate a grub.

These grubs were cream coloured, about 4 cm long and very fat. I thought they might be witchetty grubs, but my understanding (rightly or wrongly) is that witchetty grubs only occur in the ground around the roots of trees.

Olive Schmidenberg

COMBINATION CLUTCHES IN THE BLUE-BILLED DUCK

Introduction

There have been suggestions that the larger clutches of eggs laid by the Blue-billed Duck are laid by more than one duck. This has been observed in captive birds but has not been proven in the wild. Some of these larger clutches, including those recorded by us, are examined and discussed.

Our observations were on wild ducks in the Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary, Bayswater.

Observations and Discussion

Five authors, that is, Serventy and Whittell (1976), Frith (1977), Pizzey (1984), Slater *et al.* (1989) and Cayley (1990), give the clutch size of the Blue-billed Duck as 4–8 eggs. Marchant and Higgins (1990) give the clutch size as 3–12 eggs (commonest 5–6) but clutches of 13 have been recorded

in captivity. Seyfort (1949) and Serventy and Whittell also suggest that the larger clutches of 9–12 eggs may be combination clutches laid by more than one duck.

Such larger clutches have been recorded by Seyfort (1949), one nest containing 9 eggs and another 10, Frith (1982), up to 12 eggs, and Storr (1991), two nests with 9 eggs, and three with 10.

We have also recorded large clutches in the Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary, Bayswater. Of ten nests examined by us, two contained 10 eggs and two 12. Frith cautions that 'combination nesting' has not been proven in the wild. However, Marchant and Higgins (1990) state that such nesting is known from captive ducks, four of 16 consecutive nestings being combination clutches in one instance, and therefore considers that it must also occur in the wild. We also consider that our larger clutches may have been combined ones.

It would seem then that these clutches of 9–12 eggs are quite commonplace and that 'combination nesting' may well be entrenched in the Blue-billed Duck's behaviour. Such behaviour is not unique to this species, because several of our ducks lay in the nests of others of their species. And when Grey Teal and Pink-eared Ducks come into breeding condition *en masse*, they may even build over the nests and eggs of their own species (Frith 1982).

Conclusion

We still cannot say that combination clutches in the Blue-billed Duck occur in the wild, but it is highly probable that they do, and investigating this would be a good project for an enthusiastic birder.

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- Storr, G.M. (1991). Birds of the South-West Division of Western Australia. *Records of the Western Australian Museum*, Supplement No. 35.

Eric Singleton, Peter Singleton and Robert Stranger

FAIRY TERNS NESTING LATE AND UNSUCCESSFULLY

The Western Ground Parrot survey team had some time off on the coast. One of their discoveries on 12 March was a small colony of about 30 Fairy Terns nesting near the end of Point Malcolm. The nests had one egg and the birds were very noisy and anxious. We were unimpressed with the choice of nest site, a very low sandy strip between rocks. Sure enough two days later brought a surging sea and a high tide. We looked on 15 March but although several Fairy Terns remained, the nests had all been washed away. By the following day there were no Fairy Terns to be seen.

B Newbey

TWO INCIDENTS AT HERDSMAN LAKE

On a reconnaissance walk, prior to the 19 March excursion, I saw an Australian Raven jumping from the lawn to the trunk of a eucalypt tree and tearing off the loose bark which then fell to the ground. It then tipped its head to the side, looked for grubs and ate them before repeating the performance. As I was returning to my car, three Yellow-billed Spoonbills landed at the water's edge. Two were juveniles (noted by black eye and no yellow eye ring) and they followed the adult everywhere, harassing it with bleating calls and open beaks. They then flew off. This observation suggests that there may be another breeding site of Yellow-billed Spoonbills in the metropolitan area.

Claire Gerrish

A SURPRISE NEAR THE HARDWARE STORE!

On a trip to our local hardware store in Russell Street, Morley on Sunday 24 April at sunset, we decided to show our little grandson the birds in an adjoining lake. Imagine our surprise when within a minute of our reaching the boundary fencing, two Nankeen Night-Herons flew in and perched on a frame in the middle of the lake only metres from us.

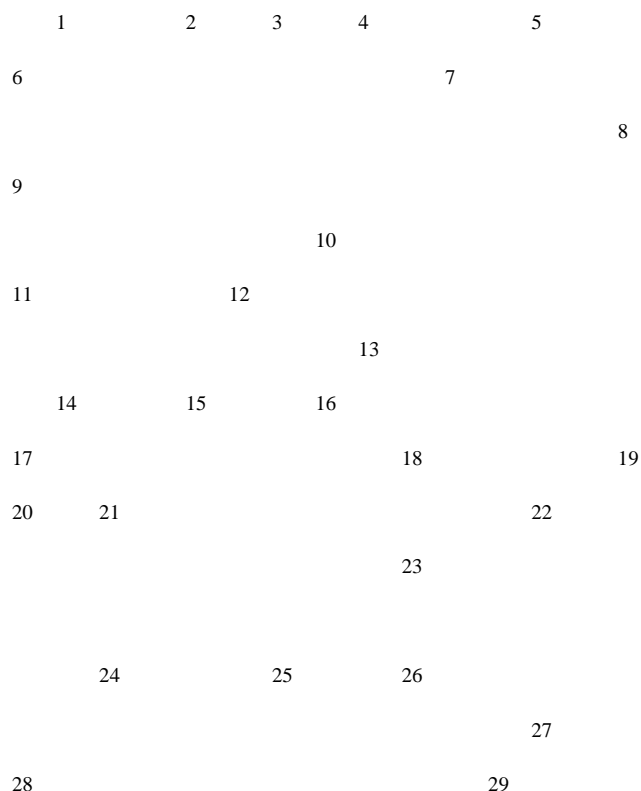
This is the species that first attracted me to birdwatching about 14 years ago, when we saw one sitting on a branch inside a grove of paperbarks at Tomato Lake, Belmont. We were there for a picnic lunch on a Sunday and there were many families moving around, but the bird was quite happy to remain perched only a couple of metres from the path. It was in full breeding plumage and such a beautiful sight.

The Russell Street lake has become a haven for waterbirds, having been developed by community groups over the last few years. In the few minutes we were there we saw Purple Swamphen, Pacific Black Duck and Eurasian Coot as well as the night-herons.

Margaret Philippon



By Pam Agar

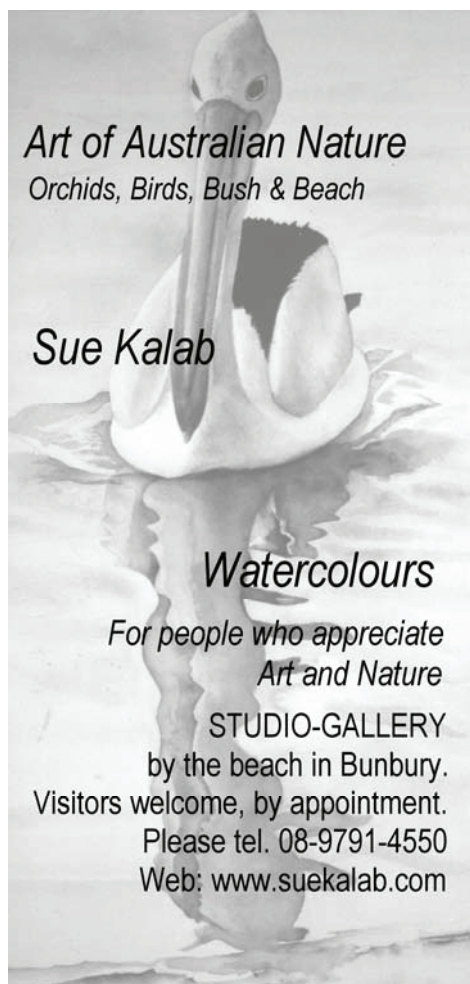


Clues across

6. Material for cockatoo nest hole repair (2 words).
9. Items for discussion.
10. Likely daytime activity of owls.
11. Water-bird, sometimes seen soaring.
13. Support of each needed on flyways.
14. Scientific technique.
18. To recede.
20. Provided by parent bird?
23. Treaty concerning migratory flyways.
24. Burrow-nesting seabird.
28. Formal assembly.
29. Too much is a hindrance.

Clues down

1. National meeting of like-minded people.
2. Money set aside for a purpose.
3. Wing marker.
4. Unfledged young.
5. Connects bush-land areas.
7. Items of food for many birds.
8. Site of most eagle nests.
12. Everyone.
15. Sometimes in conflict with beach-nesters.
16. Width of shelduck neckband.
17. Group of birds.
19. Raptor of open country.
21. Part of a cycle.
22. Estimate, abbreviated.
25. To decay.
26. Red-brown colour.
27. Pronoun for male Emu.



Spiders are quite handy!
Cartoon by Penny Towells



Notices



BIRDS AUSTRALIA CONGRESS AND CAMPOUT 2006

ALBANY TOWN HALL, ALBANY, WA
CONGRESS 18 – 20 OCTOBER

The Congress will feature scientific papers on a range of topics with a special emphasis on research being done on birds in the southern part of Western Australia. Themes of the Congress papers are Birds in modified landscapes; Restoration and recovery of birds; Introduced birds as pests and their management; Birds and water; Conservation biology; and, Student research. Some of the reported research will include work done on the local Malleefowl, Western Ground Parrot, Carnaby's (Short-billed) Black-Cockatoo, and pest birds such as Common Starling, House Sparrow and Rainbow Lorikeet. Presenters of spoken papers and poster sessions will include professional ornithologists, academic researchers and students, CALM officers and amateur ornithologists.

The Congress will open with a public session, Bird Habitat Conservation, featuring presentations from a range of speakers involved with conservation of public and private land. These presentations will highlight some of the conservation policy and practical issues related to birds' habitat.

The work of local primary school children on the birds of the Albany district will be on display at the Congress.

Local guides will conduct walks each morning, before the Congress starts, to allow participants to enjoy the interesting range of birds in Albany.

For further information see <<http://birdswa.com.au>> or phone 08 9384 7426.

CAMPOUT 21– 24 OCTOBER

The Campout will be based at Albany and is to be led by Clive Napier who has a detailed knowledge of the area and long and distinguished experience as a Birds Australia (WA) camp leader. Four local leaders will assist Clive.

Albany is located near one of the world's biodiversity hotspots and has a range of diverse ecological habitats within easy reach. A recent campout in the area recorded 146 species including many endemics. Excursions into the wider region will provide opportunities to see local endemics including the Noisy Scrub-bird, Baudin's (Long-billed) Black-Cockatoo, Red-capped Parrot, Red-winged Fairy-wren, White-breasted Robin, Western Spinebill, Western Rosella, Western Bristlebird and Western Whipbird. The trip to Cheyne Beach/Waychinicup may also include whale watching and heath wildflowers. Princess Royal Harbour should have a number of migrants including Golden Plover. Oyster Harbour has a range of water birds and waders. Lake Powell and Wilson's Inlet have water birds including cranes and rails and the Karri forest has White-breasted Robin, Crested Shrike-tit and Red-eared Firetail. Twin Creeks Reserve and Stirling Range National Park (depending on weather) have a wide range of bush birds and wildflowers.

A pelagic day trip (\$130 per head for 15 – 30 persons) will be available on one day of the campout (schedule depending on weather).

The campout will be based at Emu Beach Holiday Park. Early booking is very desirable. See <<http://www.emubeach.com>> Or phone 08 9844 1147

Birds Australia Congress and Campout 2006



CALL FOR PAPERS AND POSTERS

Birds Australia -WA invite spoken and poster presentations for the two day Congress in Albany Thur/Friday 19th and 20th Oct 2006.

Professional and amateur ornithologists/scientists are invited to submit contributions to the Congress. The program committee have tentatively proposed sessions based around:

- birds in modified landscapes
- restoration and recovery of birds
- introduced birds as pests and their management
- birds and water
- conservation biology
- student research

Spoken Papers

Presentation timeslots will generally be 10 minutes with an additional 5 minutes for questions/discussion. Presentations by research students are particularly welcome.

Please send an abstract of your presentation to the **Convenor** (see below) by **15th July**. Abstracts should include a title, author(s) names, affiliation(s) and email (if applicable) and address with a **maximum 300** word summary of the presentation. Give attention to including objectives (aims), methods, major outcomes (results) and discussion in your abstract. Where possible please submit abstracts by email.

Poster Presentations

Please submit an abstract of your poster as above.

The program of presentations will be prepared during August and speakers will then be notified of their place and instructions for preparing their presentation-Spoken or Poster.

Please indicate clearly your preference for either a Spoken or Poster Presentation

Contact

Dr Bruce Haynes (Convenor) <b.haynes@ecu.edu.au>
(08) 9384 7426

Dr Robert Davis (Chair Scientific Program
Committee) <rob@graduate.uwa.edu.au>
(08) 9295 3319

Important Bird Areas in WA



The aim of the Important Bird Areas (IBAs) project is to identify and protect a network of critical sites for the conservation of Australia's birds.

IBAs are:

- key sites for the conservation of birds and biodiversity;
- places of international importance, meeting global criteria;
- practical targets for conservation action;
- used to reinforce existing protected area networks;
- used as part of a wider approach to conservation.

Identifying IBAs and IBA Criteria

Some IBAs - mostly offshore islands important for seabirds - have already been identified in WA. IBAs must meet the criteria for bird conservation importance and appropriate boundaries:

- A1. Globally threatened species: the site must have a regular presence of Critical or Endangered species or at least 10 pairs or 30 individuals of a Vulnerable or Near Threatened species, as categorised by the IUCN Red List.
- A2. Restricted-range species: the site forms one of a set protecting all *restricted-range species*. 'Restricted-range species' are birds with a global range of <50,000 km² and these overlap to comprise eight Endemic Bird Areas (and seven 'secondary areas') in Australia.
- A3. Biome-restricted species: the site forms one of a set protecting all species restricted to a given biome. For this purpose, Australia has been divided into seven biomes.
- A4. Congregations:
 - A4i. The site supports > 1% of the biogeographic population of a waterbird (matching Ramsar Convention criteria)
 - A4ii. The site supports > 1% of the global population of a seabird
 - A4iii. The site supports >20,000 waterbirds or seabirds (matching Ramsar criteria)
 - A4iv. The site supports threshold numbers of migratory species at bottleneck sites.

Some additional criteria ensure that IBAs are practical and effective.

In WA, we need your help

Would you like to be involved?

In WA, we need help to identify and complete nomination forms for IBAs, to monitor them, and to help facilitate conservation action. You can help by nominating and describing new IBAs, or describing IBAs that have already been nominated, but not yet been described.

For more details on the process of identifying IBAs, you may download the documents from the BA website (follow the links through Study Birds and Research Projects), or contact Cheryl Gole, WA IBA Coordinator (08-9293 4958; <cgole@westnet.com.au>).



INLAND EXCURSION IN SEARCH OF HOODED PLOVERS

The Hooded Plover committee has arranged an inland excursion for September 2006.

The intention of this excursion is to search for Hooded Plovers on the salt lakes to the north of Esperance.

This is wildflower season so there will be plenty to see.

The Hooded Plover committee is trying to secure some funding to off-set the fuel costs.

If our grant application is successful some subsidy may be available.

Expressions of interest should be directed to:

Stewart Houghton
c/o Hooded Plover committee
or telephone: 9384 2536.



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GREY FALCON – CALL FOR OBSERVATION RECORDS

3 March 2006

The first systematic study of the Grey Falcon has been undertaken since July 2004 (*WABN* 111, Sep. 2004, p.23). Not an easy project by anyone's standard, and not surprisingly, sightings are few and far between. For *The New Atlas of Australian Birds*, for example, breeding was recorded only once. With the next breeding season coming up soon, starting presumably from around July, birdwatchers are asked to keep their eyes and ears open for this elusive species, anywhere in Australia.

The project is called 'Movements and Genetics of Grey Falcons', and one of the main objectives is to monitor the short-term and the long-term movements of Grey Falcons. However, no birds have been captured and tagged to date, despite great effort and extensive searches.

If you see a Grey Falcon, it would be much appreciated if you would report your observation to the project leader. For contact details please see below. Should you be fortunate enough to find an active nest, it would be extremely valuable if you report your find without delay on the same day. The reason for this, that by far the best chances to capture an adult bird is within its breeding territory. Once the birds have flown it's too late.

Needless to say your records will be kept confidential.

This project is a Birds Australia 'Special Interest Group' project, and holds all relevant licenses and permits for all mainland states and territories except the ACT.

So please note down the following contact details, especially before venturing into the outback. Even easier, visit the project website and download a record report sheet. Don't worry if you find a Grey Falcon and don't have the record report sheet handy, your report will be appreciated in any form, the sooner the better.

Project leader: Jonny Schoenjahn

Postal address:

1 Elimatta Way, City Beach WA 6015

Phone: (08) 9385 9939, Fax: (08) 9385 9801

E-mail: jonnybird@bigpond.com

Website:

www.users.bigpond.com/jonnybird/greyfalcon.htm

8 – 14 October 2006



The mapping of Malleefowl mound locations at Eyre has been taking place since 1989. In June 2005 a survey by the



Malleefowl Preservation Group added substantially to the number of known mounds within easy reach of the observatory. The total is now 71.

You are invited to join a party of searchers which will examine each of these, and others, in an attempt to understand the status of the Malleefowl population at Eyre in 2006.

Those taking part will need to be fit enough to walk, in small groups, up to 10 km per day. GPS receivers will be used. Instruction in their use will be given where necessary. It may be possible to subsidise some costs for participants but this will not be known until mid-July. Otherwise the advertised course rates will apply.

Further inquiries:

Rod or Joyce 9447 3804,
or email <rodjoyce@bigpond.net.au>

ROTTNEST WINTER WADER COUNT CAMPOUT

June 10th, 11th, 12th 2006

This is a great opportunity to survey the Island's winter population of both shorebirds and bushbirds. However it is the bushbirds in the revegetated sites that are of most interest in the winter. June is usually a pleasant time on the Island but participants need to be prepared for rain.

The accommodation at the University of Western Australia's Research Station is comfortable and reasonably central. Transport around the Island will be provided.

Numbers are limited to 16 people. If you would like to attend please contact me as below.

Sue Mather
Email: <sm12577@bigpond.net.au>
Telephone: 9389 6416

NEW MEMBERS

The following people joined Birds Australia between 1 February to 30 April 2006. We look forward to meeting you at our excursions and general meetings.

J Allen, R Ashford, S Brown, Christmas Island Tourism Association, G Davies, D Farrell, B Fowler, G Howell, C Hunter, G Johnson, B Kirkby, K Lindann, J Litherland, L Middleton-White, H Pierce, R Prag, E Russell, G Tomlinson, C Warburton and G White

Say please!
Cartoon by Penny Towells

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E-mail: turnstone@wn.com.au

PO Box 3089, Broome, WA, 6725

Chris offers exciting birdwatching experiences around Broome including:

- > Shorebirds of Roebuck Bay
- > Mangroves and Mudflats
- > Wetlands and Woodlands
- > Grasslands and Claypans

Chris is an excellent field ornithologist. He has over ten years experience guiding and researching in the Broome area. This experience and his infectious enthusiasm makes him an outstanding interpreter.

Chris looks forward to hearing from you.



Country Groups



ALBANY BIRD GROUP

February 2006 Outing

On 14 February a big group took advantage of the good weather and gathered at Baker's Junction before driving to a flooded area on Palmdale Road which had been four feet under water earlier in the year. We had good sightings of quite a few birds, including Restless Flycatcher, Black-fronted Dotterel and Rufous Whistler (not common in this area). We visited a couple more small lakes on the way to Chillingup Lake, which was so full it covered part of the road and we were unable to drive further.

We then went to Kojaneerup Road. It was very hot by then, and after a good half hour's walk we reached Lake Quaderwardup which proved not very rewarding. We were glad to get back for lunch just before a storm broke as we were completing the bird call of 60 species.

Charlie Davies

March 2006 Outing

On our way to meet the others at Morley Road, we spotted two Wedge-tailed Eagles on a carcass, probably a cow or calf, in a paddock of a dairy farm.

Twenty of us met for a bird count on Wilson Inlet, although the official wader numbers had been recorded the month before. We saw over a thousand Black Swans, a couple of hundred ducks of various species, and quite a few White-faced Herons. Red-necked Stints were the largest group at 1870. There were 320 Red-capped Plovers including several runners, 60 Common Greenshanks, 10 Pied Oystercatchers and four Grey Plovers. Not a great variety.

Along Morley Road we visited a dried up swamp where we saw quite a few common bushbirds. We then visited the Hay River mouth, before a picnic lunch at Nenamup, where a few more birds were seen. The final count was 49 species.

Liz Davies



Excursion Reports



WOODANILLING CAMPOUT, 26–29 January

By the time this is read, the January camp at Woodanilling may feel some time in the past. There was an excellent review of the camp in the last issue of *Western Australian Bird Notes* (117). During the four days, with some mopping up on the following weekend, over 30 birdwatchers covered 36 lakes, roughly in an area from Wagin to Dumbleyung, and Badgebup to 25 km west of Woodanilling. Excellent rains during last winter filled every depression, be it lakes or a hollow in the paddock, and a mild summer ensured the deeper lakes held their water. This January was a very different picture in comparison with recent years, where only two to three lakes contained sufficient water to hold waterfowl and waders.

A total of 23 species were recorded and 17 700 waterbirds were counted. The top four in numbers (Table 1) and distribution were Black Swan, Australian Shelduck, Grey Teal and Eurasian Coot (all exceeding 2500) which accounted for 85% of the count. There were less than 200 of most of the remaining waterbirds such as Pink-eared Duck, Australasian Shoveler and White-faced Heron. Also, seven of the rare Freckled Duck were seen on one lake. Of the waterbirds 12 species were waders, mostly Red-necked Stint,

Red-capped Plover and Black-winged Stilt, but they only accounted for 7% of the waterbirds, and were mostly seen at Lake Wagin.

The diversity of species in the lakes varied from one to 14 with 13 lakes (36% of lakes visited) where ten or more species were recorded. Of these, six have not had any water in the last six years or more while others had filled to capacity for the first time in many years.

Although late in the season for breeding, several lakes had young Red-capped Plovers, while young Hoary-headed Grebes and Black Swan were also seen.

Of course this would not be successful without lots of help. Thanks to Sally at the Wagin Landcare office and Jill at the Katanning Landcare office who helped to produce maps of the lakes and gave us lots of contacts. Rebecca at Dumbleyung and the McGuires also gave a helping hand. The Katanning Department of Conservation and Land Management office who provided information on several nature reserves and all the property owners who allowed access to their lakes are also thanked as are all those who attended the weekend.

David Secomb

Species	Lake and number of each species present															
	5km E of Coyrecup	Bibiking Rd- Harris Lake	Bibiking Rd Swamp	Billylight Swamp	Casuarina Lake	Cobline NR- Warren Rd	Coomelberrup Lake	Corackine	Coyrecup Lake NR	Dry lake - Ewiyamartup	Dumbleyung Lake	Ewiyamartup	Flagstaff Lake	Grandfathers Lake	Gundaring Lake	Hotker Rd
Musk Duck	2			1				1				1				
Freckled Duck	7															
Black Swan	18	19	7	56			30	260	308	52	34	45	196	12	20	1
Australian Shelduck	8	27	2	6	300		80	18	771	12	256	950	100		474	48
Australian Wood Duck	3								2							
Pacific Black Duck	12	3				1			6	2					8	22
Australasian Shoveler	6	1					3	2	18							
Grey Teal	*	90	50	300	2	6	24	130	465	54	40				130	131
Chestnut Teal												1				2
Pink-eared Duck	5	10			2			120	50	13	65					1
Hardhead								1	4							
Hoary-headed Grebe	20	1	*			2		20	6		2					
Australasian Grebe																
Little Pied Cormorant	1															
Australian Pelican																
White-faced Heron	8	10	5					4	33	2					45	1
White-necked Heron															1	
Eurasian Coot	2	0		*				600	100		28	11			70	17
Great Cormorant											2					
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	2									1						
Common Greenshank								1		1					23	
Wood Sandpiper			2								2				2	
Red-necked Stint	20															
Long-toed Stint											1					
Pectoral Sandpiper															1	
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	56														32	
Curlew Sandpiper	1															
Banded Stilt																
Black-winged Stilt	70	7	8					4		15		56			146	16
Red-capped Plover	72									14	65					
Black-fronted Dotterel			7								1					4
Red-kneed Dotterel			4							3					2	
Silver Gull									2		25	13				
	257	119	140	113	602	5	119	1055	1430	580	535	1117	296	12	884	172

* indicates that species of birds were present at that site but accurate numbers were not obtained.

Table 1: Number of Waterbirds seen on the Waterbird Survey, Woodanilling, 2006

Katanning Water Reservoir	Kidney Swamp	Lake View, Dumbleyung Golf Club	Little Mirripin Lake	Little Norring Lake	Little Parkeyerring Lake	Martinup Lake	Minerup NR	Murapin Lake	Norrington Lake	Parkard Rd Lake	Parkeyerring Lake	Quarbing Lake	Queerearrup Lake	Rushy Lake	Wagin Lake	Wagin Sewage Works	Wammo	Wardering	Count of Individuals	No. of Sites Where Present
									4										9	5
																			7	1
	4	500	4	297		90	1		19	55	52	104	3	162	15			390	2754	28
37	100	110	17	10			27	150	47	4	620	9			105	250		6	4544	29
6												2					6		19	5
27	4	3	6							76			6	1		30	10	5	222	17
		2	2				2	2		83			12	8	2	5		15	163	15
1	30	15	64	11				*	52	740	6	3	50	65	12	450	50	45	3041	30
													1						12	4
	2	27	3						4	67				92		5	8	80	584	19
	1	1	12											2					21	6
1		26	2			6			1	2	1			20			4	4	118	17
														2					2	1
3																			4	2
																		1	1	1
2			2	1			1	2	9	30	3		5		5		1	17	187	21
										1									2	2
11	*	300	182	88		300		300	15	460			90	266		7		1800	4647	22
																			2	1
										10									13	3
																1		2	28	5
																8			14	4
															202				222	2
															1				2	2
																			1	1
															1				89	3
															1				2	2
															15				15	1
	8								17						250		7	1	605	13
															134				285	4
																	7		19	4
																			9	3
	2							4							17				63	6
88	151	984	294	407	*	396	31	458	168	1528	682	118	167	618	760	755	94	2366	17706	280

Table 1, ctd: Number of Waterbirds seen on the Waterbird Survey, Woodanilling, 2006

PEEL EXCURSION, 4 February

Fifteen members from the Perth metropolitan area and five local birders met at 07:30 at the western end of the estuary bridge with the promise of a fine day and a maximum of 30°. The waders were conspicuous by their absence, but there were some compensations for the lack of waders. There were several Eastern Curlews and Whimbrels on the west side of the inlet at Mandurah Quays and Samphire Cove, as well as a Royal and Yellow Spoonbill, Nankeen Night Heron and a Sacred Kingfisher. The highlight was the Osprey nest and the juvenile Osprey eating a fish on a tree near by.

At Coodanup and Nairns the small waders (Red-necked Stint) were missing and we ended up with only Red-capped Plover, four Bar-tailed Godwits and four Grey Plovers at Coodanup. Duck species and numbers were down around the Bridgewater Lakes but we finished the day with 72 species and most went away feeling happy.

Dick Rule

BUSSELTON CAMPOUT, 4–6 March

The hottest days of summer for Busselton were recorded on this weekend but the campsite right on the beach with lush lawns and good shade saved the day. About 26 people attended the campout and three local people joined us for the survey of Ambergate Reserve.

On Saturday afternoon, we looked for waders at various locations around the Vasse–Wonnerup estuary system, including the bird hide, and were somewhat disappointed. On the way back to the campsite we dropped into the Broadwater—a large lake at Vasse that is difficult to access. We could see lots of waders but as it was getting late, we rearranged the itinerary so we could return for a better look later.

The following day we surveyed Ambergate Reserve, cared for by the Busselton Naturalist Club. This is the last piece of sand plain bush left near Busselton. There has been a lot of work at the site and a thin path now runs through the four sectors, making it a great deal easier to move around. By late morning we had seen 35 species. As it was very hot we proceeded to Gracetown on Cowaramup Bay for lunch, followed by the walk up the creek. Most people saw Red-eared Firetails.

The highlight of the weekend was the Broadwater where 64 species of bush and water birds were seen. This included eight duck species, six raptors including a White-bellied Sea-Eagle and Australian Hobby and 15 wader species. Amongst the waders were six Marsh Sandpipers, 35 Wood Sandpipers, four Grey-tailed Tattlers, 30 Long-toed Stints, two Pectoral Sandpipers, 350 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, 39 Curlew Sandpipers and a lone Masked Lapwing!

A special thanks to David Secomb for his assistance with the Broadwater survey.

The area of the Vasse-Wonnerup Estuary System has again proven its importance to waterbirds. A total of 119 species were seen for the weekend.

Sue Abbotts

ASCOT WATERS, 5 March

Near century heat made it difficult for observers, and the birds didn't like it, either.

Twelve observers started at 8:00 am and did the full circuit at Ascot Waters. Brave souls! Relief was only obtained at the end of the walk when we retired to a shady spot on the grassy lawns bordering an artificial freshwater lake. An extra six species were seen here in comfort, and raised the spirits of the group.

No unusual birds were seen during the entire walk. Quite a few Darters and Australian Pelicans soaring in the thermals were a highlight. A flock of about 15 Rainbow Bee-eaters was a pleasant sight. The usually common Buff-banded Rails were absent. The only raptor was a distant view of an Osprey possibly nesting at the top of a nearby high tower. They have been trying to nest here for years but the strong winds usually blow away most of the nesting materials.

We saw 45 species. Most of us thought a 7:00 am start would be more appropriate at this time of the year. Glad to welcome a new member.

Thank you to all the hardy people who came along and made the walk interesting in spite of the heat.

Tom Delaney

HELENA VALLEY WALK, 1 April

The first of April proved to be a better day for the Helena Valley walk than most people had expected. There had been steady rain overnight and the morning was cloudy but we had no more showers. Only 12 brave people found their way to the parking area on the south side of the river.

After a slow start for bushbirds we found Little Black and Little Pied Cormorants, Australian Wood Ducks, Pacific Black Ducks, Australasian Grebes, White-faced Herons, Dusky Moorhens

and Eurasian Coots on the Lower Helena Dam.

After we turned up the hill and into the next valley, the birding was much better and we saw Red-winged Fairy-wrens, White-browed Scrubwrens, Weebills, Western Thornbills and many Grey Fantails. On the return journey Red-eared Firetails were seen as well as Red-capped Parrots, Australian Ringnecks and Dusky Woodswallows.

Honeyeaters were fairly scarce as there was not much in flower. Brown, New Holland, and White-naped Honeyeaters were the only species seen. The final total was 33 species for the morning.

Wendy Napier

Is it blue?
Cartoon by
Penny Towells

HERSDMAN LAKE, 19 March

Over 25 people, beating the heat by meeting early, had a great walk. Nothing out of the ordinary was seen due to higher water levels. Lots of telescopes accompanied us, so we had great views of the birds that we did see. Several Buff-banded Rails were seen and a treeful of Yellow-billed Spoonbills. There were excellent views of the Nankeen Night Heron in the scopes and also stunning views of Glossy Ibis in the sunlight.

Due to the lack of waterbirds we walked along to the drain separating Floreat Lakes. We found several bushbirds, including Weebills. The Yellow-rumped Thornbills continued their business very unconcerned about the large group of people on the path with them. One energetic walker found three further species for us at Floreat Lakes.

We finished the walk with morning tea in the shade of the casuarinas and were not too hot at all. Fifty five species were seen, and thanks to everyone for making it such a pleasant walk.

Claire Gerrish

BOLD PARK, 9 April

This was the third of four planned surveys of the bird life of Bold Park where BAWA is working with the Botanical Gardens and Parks Authority (BGPA), represented by Jodi Mansell-Fletcher. Walking the transects of the seven survey sites, identified by the BGPA, ensures that there is a comprehensive survey of the whole area at one time. The added task was matching the plant communities where the birds were seen. A busy morning, that seemed to be enjoyed by the 26 people who were there.

There were 37 species seen, compared with 46 last October and 41 in January. So what was missing? The Painted Button-quail, Little Eagle, Little Wattlebird and Rainbow Bee-eater had been there on previous surveys but in this April survey Splendid Fairy-wren was reliably seen for the first time for some years.

Many people commented on their delight in seeing areas of Bold Park they had not seen before. It would be really appreciated if the same people could participate in the final survey on 2 July. The morning ended with a well-earned and delicious morning tea supplied by the BGPA. A big thank you to all participants, especially the site leaders.

Sue Mather

WOGARNO STATION, EASTER CAMPOUT, 14–17 April

A working outback sheep station

Twenty-eight members attended the Wogarno Station Easter campout. John and Ruth Luyer did a sterling job in checking routes and preparing maps for our forages around the property and helping to make this a really successful campout. Although the camp had been advertised as suitable

for sedans, the recent rain had played havoc with the station tracks so it was safer to use 4WD vehicles. Owners of these vehicles gave generously of their vacant seats and nobody missed out on the great birds that were to be found away from the camp area. The upside of the rain was the amount of fresh growth on the property. The contrasting green against red earth made for some great photography. Sun rise and sun set also provided further spectacular photographic opportunities.

Fifty nine bird species were found on the property and those who ventured further afield found extra birds to add to their lists. Bourke's Parrots were so easily found one camper was heard to say, "Not another boring Bourke's". Crested Bellbirds were a frequent sighting and were calling constantly. Mulga Parrots also visited the camp ground daily whilst an Owlet Nightjar was found living in the roof of the storeroom. Lunchtime appearances at his entry point were much admired. The abundance of thornbills meant that those unfamiliar with the species of the area came home feeling confident of their identification in the future. Sadly the Chiming Wedgebill and Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush were not seen on the property but a few lucky people found one or the other in the Mt Magnet area. The bird species numbers may not have been large but there were numerous other wildlife species to be seen. The most prolific of these were the dreaded sand fly with most campers leaving with evidence of their presence.

We had been warned a family with five boys would be joining us on the Sunday (they had booked before the club booking was made). That created some concern, however we need not have worried. They were a delightful mob and even left an apology note with a bowl of paper cranes, one for us each to take home and bring us good luck. Thanks to the Shannon family who were no trouble at all.

Thanks also to the station owners LJ and David for helping to make our stay at Wogarno enjoyable and for their generosity, inviting us for all for drinks at the end of the campout. There was champagne for all, what a treat. I am sure that many of us will return again to see such great outback country, with many birds and wildflowers.

Elsa Dabbs and Merrian Kuerschner



Sunset at Wogarno Hill.
Photo courtesy Elsa Dabbs

EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY

Volunteer Caretakers' Report

*The time has come the Walrus said
To talk of other things
Of shoes and ships and sealing wax
Of cabbages and kings.
(The Walrus and the Carpenter, Lewis Carroll)*

Yes, the time is drawing near for us to bid a temporary farewell to Eyre Bird Observatory. The last six months have just raced by. We have met many wonderful people and learned more than we ever imagined. In the three months since our last report we have gone from an extremely quiet period to the full on activities of a Dune Vegetation Course, and everything in between, and an even busier time coming up with the Dune Course in May.

Some bird populations have changed, others have remained fairly stable.

We have not seen Australian Ringnecks for nearly four weeks, or Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater since February. Purple-crowned Lorikeets are back, albeit in small numbers, but no Mistletoebird has been seen or reported, despite the abundance of mistletoe starting to form berries. Eight Ground Cuckoo-shrikes have been seen near the highway, the first seen for about three years. There have been a couple of visits from Fork-tailed Swifts, and a pair of Galahs is tagging along with the Major Mitchell's Cockatoos, though the cockies don't seem to have invited them.

On Kanidal Beach the Red-capped Plovers continue to breed with the last runner being seen, and rescued from the surf on 16 April. We certainly didn't expect such late breeding.

Three beach-washed birds were found a couple of weeks ago, a Sooty Shearwater, a juvenile Australasian Gannet and a Crested Tern. The Pacific Gulls are lessening in number, the Silver Gulls have all but gone and the Crested Terns have increased.

We were interested to read, in the last *Western Australian Bird Notes* (117), the article about the



Sooty Shearwater seen at Eyre, March 2006.
Photo courtesy Norm & Gina Gregory

Sooty Oystercatchers. We hadn't seen any for some months, but in March they reappeared on Kanidal Beach, the weed banks at the Nine Mile, on the rocky areas of Wader Beach and on Twilight Beach.

Very few Pied Oystercatchers have been seen since January.

The rains of February/March brought a Red-necked Avocet, a White-faced Heron, three Australian Wood Ducks, a Black-winged Stilt and a Marsh Sandpiper to the Crystal Ponds at Cocklebiddy.

Out at Burnabbie, two Western Gerygones entertained us with their beautiful song.

The weather has been steadily cooling, with Eyre regularly recording Western Australia's lowest overnight minimum. Many nights have been so clear you feel you could reach up and touch the stars. The skies in these sorts of places are reason enough to visit. They might look good in the cities and towns, but it's not

until you have had an unpolluted view, that you really appreciated the wonder and beauty of the night skies.

*The sun descending in the west,
The evening star does shine;
The birds are silent in their nest,
And I must seek for mine.
The moon, like a flower, in heaven's high bower,
With silent delight
Sits and smiles on the night.
(Night, William Blake)*

After the good rain in January, we have gone begging with only half of each month's average to follow; however it has been enough to keep the tanks topped up.

The April Dune programme brought us a disparate group of wonderful people who worked so well together. They did an amazing job, covering a large area of dune with seaweed and seeding it, as well as collecting and treating more seed for the next group. They battled along with the old trailer, undertaking several running 'fix-it' jobs to keep it on the road.

Now it's time to say good-bye (we hand over to Bob and Helen on 1 June). We are off on a trip to catch up with friends and family in the east, and are looking forward to our return in October.

We wish Bob and Helen, and Mary and Arpad as enjoyable and special a time as we've experienced.

Thank you all for having us and for the support of everyone.

Norm & Gina Gregory



Eyre Vegetation volunteers—L-R: Ric Banister, Amber Gale, Keith Rogers, Jan Fowles, Murray Fowles, Marion Banister, Shapelle McNee (leader)

Photo courtesy Norm and Gina Gregor



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. When members arrive without notice it makes it difficult for leaders who have made arrangements only for the people on the list, so, if you are unsure, put your name down. You can always cancel, and then we can advise the next person on the waiting list. With this information we will be able to ensure the group will be together and will know when to expect people.

New Members

Please let the leaders know that you are a new member and don't hesitate to ask for assistance with bird sightings.

Thursday 8 June: Market Garden Swamps, Spearwood Morning excursion

Meet at 8:30 am on the corner of Pennlake Drive and Brenzi Court (under the power lines), on the edge of Market Garden Swamps. Travelling south on Rockingham Road from Spearwood Avenue, turn right into Rigby Avenue, then left at the T-junction and left at the roundabout. Over 30 species of birds have been seen here. Bring morning tea.

For members and the general public.

Leaders: Barry and Molly Angus

Saturday 10 to Monday 12 June: Rottneet Winter Wader/Bushbird Count

This survey is part of the twice-annual continuing survey of shorebird sites and bushbird presence in the revegetated sites.

Accommodation is approximately \$16.50 per night at the UWA Research Station at the eastern end of the airstrip. This offers cooking facilities, utensils, refrigerators and bathrooms. You need to bring your own food or buy it on arrival. Transport around the Island and to the accommodation will be provided. Numbers are limited to 16 people.

If you are interested in attending please contact me on 9389 6416 or email <sma12577@bigpond.net.au>.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Sue Mather

Sunday 11 June: Bickley Brook, Gosnells Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am just past the children's camp at the reservoir. There are good prospects of seeing both Red-browed Finch and Red-

eared Firetail, Southern Emu-wren, and a fair selection of other bushbirds.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Les Harris/Sue Abbotts

Saturday 17 June: Stinton Cascades Nature Reserve, Karragullen Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am at a small parking area just off Brookton Highway, in Irymple Road, Karragullen. This is a CALM reserve of Jarrah, and a good area for birds.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Hank van Wees

Saturday 24 June: Jandakot Regional Park, Forrestdale Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am at the corner of Ranford Road and Skeet Road

(formerly Hale Road), opposite the poultry farm. We will walk around bushland and swampland where Tawny-crowned and other honeyeaters, Splendid Fairy-wren, several raptors, and many other species have been seen-- around 46 so far. Wear old shoes or gumboots.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Debbie Walker

Sunday 25 June: Pelagic trip, Hillarys Boat Harbour

This is your chance to see albatross and petrels close up. Bring your camera. The trip leaves at 7:00 am and we return at about 3:30 pm. We head nearly 60 km offshore to the trench west of Rottnest to look for seabirds and cetaceans. There is a limit of 30 people. The cost will depend on the number of people—\$75 if 23 people, \$65 if 30 people.

Book by contacting Frank O'Connor on <foconnor@iinet.net.au> or 9386 5694.

Monday 26 June: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat Meeting, 7:30 pm

John Brooke, a member, will give an illustrated talk entitled "Views of New Zealand, including its birds—onshore and offshore".

Sunday 2 July: Bold Park Bird Watch, Cambridge Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am in the Eco Centre car park, adjacent to Peregrine House, 167 Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat. This is the fourth and last of the comprehensive surveys of Bold Park. It would be appreciated if participants in the earlier surveys were able to assist, particularly the site leaders.

A minimum of 28 people is needed for this important task. Each group will survey one site, recording both

the species observed and the habitat used.

The survey will be followed by morning tea provided by the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Sue Mather

Sunday 9 July: Lake Monger, Cambridge Half-day excursion

Meet at 9:00 am in the most westerly car park off Lake Monger Drive. This



Tawny-crowned Honeyeater, Mandurah
Photo courtesy Dick Rule

is a good opportunity to see many species of ducks, waterbirds, and some bushbirds.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Max Bailey

Thursday 13 July: Star Swamp, North Beach, Stirling Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park at the end of Mary St, Waterman. To get there, turn off the West Coast Highway at Mary St, and drive to the car park. Alternatively, from Marmion Avenue, turn left into Beach Road, left into Ethel St, then left into Mary St.

Species that may be found here include Variegated Fairy-wren, White-winged Fairy-wren, Southern Boobook and Carnaby's Black-

Cockatoo. Star Swamp has Tuart and banksia woodland, Prickly Moses and heath. A variety of raptors and bushbirds can be seen.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Michael Hancock

Saturday 15 July: North Mole, Fremantle Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am at the end of North Mole, near the lighthouse. We will look for sea birds here, and may go on to Woodman Point. Bring your telescope if you have one.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Michael Craig

Sunday 23 July: Herdsman Lake, Stirling Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am in the Maurice Hamer car park. Turn off Pearson St. into Falcon Ave, then right into Lakeside Rd. The car park is on the left, opposite Heron Place.

This is one of the waterbird refuges that never dries up.

Bring your telescope if you have one.

For members and guests only.

Leaders: Richard and Liz King

Monday 24 July: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat Meeting, 7:30 pm

John Blyth, a member and former chairman of the WA Group, will give an illustrated talk entitled "Introduced Birds in WA".

Saturday 29 July: Piesse Brook, Kalamunda Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am at the junction of Hummerston Road and Schipp Road at the southern end of Kalamunda National Park. Take Mundaring Weir Road from Kalamunda, and turn left into Hummerston Road. We

should see Golden Whistler, perhaps the introduced Red-browed Finch, and other bushbirds.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Stella Stewart-Wynne

Saturday 5 August: Pinnaroo Valley Memorial Park, Padbury
Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am in the first car park off Whitfords Avenue, Padbury. Turn left at the roundabout then left again into the car park. This is an interesting park where gardens and lawns are flanked by natural woodland of Tuarts and banksias. About 80 species of birds have been identified in the area, including Splendid Fairy-wren, Scarlet Robin and Varied Sittella.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Hank van Wees

Saturday 12 August: Pipidinnny Road, Eglinton
Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am on the corner of Wanneroo Road and Pipidinnny Road, about an hour's drive from Perth. Be prepared to pay a small fee to enter the picnic area for lunch. We will look at four habitats during the day: the coastal dunes for Variegated Fairy-wren, White-browed Scrubwren; the heath for White-winged Fairy-wren, Tawny-crowned and White-cheeked Honeyeater; the swamp for waterfowl; and lastly, a part of the Yanchep National Park which few people visit.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Brice Wells

Sunday 13 August: Pelagic Trip, Hillarys Boat Harbour

This is your chance to see albatross and petrels close up. Bring your camera. The trip leaves at 7:00 am and we return at about 3:30 pm. We head nearly 60 km offshore to the trench west of Rottnest to look for seabirds and cetaceans. There is a limit of 30 people. The cost will

depend on the number of people—\$75 if 23 people, \$65 if 30 people.

Book by contacting Frank O'Connor on <foconnor@iinet.net.au> or 9386 5694.

Thursday 17 August: Burswood Open Spaces, Burswood
Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am at the Information Centre on Resort Drive. From Great Eastern Highway turn into the Resort, then left at the first roundabout. The Information Centre is about 150 m on the right. Park in the free parking on your left.

Lots of waterbirds to be seen here in the lakes and along the Swan River. Unusual birds regularly seen are Little Egret, crakes, and the three grebes. It is easy walking and not too far.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Tom Delaney

Sunday 20 August: Wellard Wetlands, Baldi
Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am at the entrance to Wellard Wetlands on the northern side of Zigzag Road, 1 km from St Albans Road. Coming from Perth, turn left off the freeway into Mundijong Road, then right into St Albans Road. There should be plenty of bushbirds and waterbirds here, as well as several species of raptors.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Clive Napier

Saturday 26 August: Whiteman Park, Swan
Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am at the administration building (main car park) of Whiteman Park. Look for the BAWA signs. We will walk the Bennett Brook trail of the park. This pleasant walk

should provide the opportunity to see a very wide range of bird species. Western Spinebill, Western Thornbill, White-naped Honeyeater, Red-capped and Scarlet Robins and Golden Whistler have all been sighted here.

For members and guests only.

Leaders: Jennifer Wilcox, Robert Davis, Michael Bamford

Monday 28 August: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat
Meeting, 7:30 pm

Helen Pitman, Regional Coordinator for the recovery project on Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo, will give an illustrated talk on her work.

Sunday 3 September: Serpentine National Park
Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am at the junction of the South West Highway and Falls Road (the turn off to Serpentine Falls). We will walk along a ridge overlooking Serpentine Falls and also with views across the plain to the ocean. The bush in this area has both Marri and Wandoo and usually yields a good number of bird species.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Sue Abbotts

Thursday 7 September: North Lake, Melville
Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am in the car park on Progress Drive, just off Farrington



Drinks at the Wogarno homestead.

Photo courtesy Elsa Dabbs

Road. We will walk around this small lake where about 80 species of waterbirds and bushbirds have been seen.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Clive Napier

Sunday 10 September: Wungong Gorge, Bedfordale
Full day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am in the first car park for Wungong Dam at the end of Admiral Road, off Albany Highway. Over 90 species of birds have been recorded here, including Red-eared Firetail, White-breasted Robin and Red-winged Fairy-wren. Several raptors have also been seen.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Bill McRoberts

Saturday 16 September: Flynn Road, Mundaring
Full day excursion

Meet at 9:00 am at the corner of Flynn Road and Great Eastern Highway, about 1 km on the Perth side of The Lakes turn off, (the York Road turn off). We will look at several areas of Wandoo woodland, where three species of robin are often seen, and perhaps a Crested Shrike-tit.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Charles Merriam

Saturday 23 September: Forrestdale Lake
Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am in the Moor St car park. From Perth, drive down the freeway, turning left at Forrest Road, continue across Nicholson Road, into Armadale Road. Just over 1 km along turn right into Weld St, then second left into Lofties St, then right into Moore St.

There should be plenty of waterbirds, bushbirds and possibly some raptors.

The wildflowers should be good, too.

Bring morning tea, scopes if you have them, and rubber boots, as it may be muddy.

For members and guests only.

Leader: David James

Monday 25 September: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat
Meeting, 7:30 pm

Mrs Toots, an American birdwatcher, ecologist, and author of photographic wildlife books, will give an illustrated talk on Hummingbirds.

Saturday 30 September to Monday 2 October:

Campout at Wongan Hills, Shire of Wongan-Ballidu

Wongan Hills, in the wheatbelt, is approximately 185 km north-east of Perth. The surrounding area includes habitat such as bushland, flat-topped hills, rocky areas and salt lakes.



Woodanilling wader count.

Photo courtesy Libby McGill

There should be wildflowers to enjoy as well.

Accommodation is available at the Wongan Hills caravan park, in Wongan Road, and includes powered sites (\$17 per night single, \$20 per night double), fully self-contained chalets, budget cabins with or without en-suite, and a group lodge. The proprietors are willing to hold the lodge for us for a few weeks, and sufficient numbers booked for this would mean we have access to a

large common room for evening gatherings. Please phone 9671 1009 to make your own reservations. It is suggested that you book early, as others have already booked several cabins!

Alternative accommodation is also possible at Wongan Hills Guest House. Bed and breakfast is approximately \$50 per person per night, \$70 double per night. Dinner can be arranged or there is a hotel or roadhouse for meals. For bookings phone 9671 1015 or check their website:

<www.wonganhillsguesthouse.com.au>.

For members and guests only.

Leaders: John Luyer and George Agar

Sunday 1 October: Darling Scarp, Kelmscott
Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park of the Cohuna Wildlife Park, Mills Road East, Gosnells (courtesy of the owners). This is an area of mixed vegetation, but mainly Jarrah and Marri with granite outcrops and plenty of wildflowers.

For members and the general public.

Leader: David Ballard

Monday 23 October: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat
Meeting, 7:30 pm

Speaker to be announced.

Monday 27 November: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat
Meeting, 7:30 pm

Paul Marty, a member, will give an illustrated talk on birds of Antarctica.



THE BIBBULMUN AT BALINGUP With INSPIRATION OUTDOORS

Walk with just a day pack in the beautiful forest and with energy to enjoy the birds and the flowers. Then return to your cosy accommodation for a hot shower, and great food and good company. The 5 day Balingup Explorer runs from August 28 to September 1 or try a weekend of walking which includes a mediaeval feast from August 25-27. Other locations include Albany to Walpole and the Cape to Cape Track. To receive a programme for 2006, contact Pam:

Ph: 9378 2523/0408 909 897

E-mail: inspire@multiline.com.au

www.inspirationoutdoors.com.au

Crossword Answers No 45

ACROSS

6 corrugated iron, 9 agenda, 10 sleeping, 11 pelican, 13 nation, 14 sampling, 18 ebb, 20 lesson, 23 Ramsar, 24 shearwater, 28 convention, 29 gear.

Down

1 congress, 2 fund, 3 tag, 4 nestling, 5 corridor, 7 invertebrates, 8 high, 12 all, 15 people, 16 narrow, 17 flock, 19 harrier, 21 season, 22 est., 25 rot, 26 tan, 27 he.

Birds Australia Western Australia (Inc) (A DIVISION OF ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS UNION)

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5/2006



Opportunities for Volunteers



This section gives members an avenue to advertise for voluntary assistance with projects, surveys, initiatives, office.

- ◆ **Atlas** – surveys for this are continuing – contact Cheryl Gole
Phone 9293 4958, e-mail <cgole@westnet.com.au>
- ◆ **Monthly Meeting Speakers** – contact Brian Wilson 9293 1094
- ◆ **Excursion Leaders** – contact Sue Abbotts 9444 1607,
e-mail <sabbotts1@bigpond.com>
- ◆ **Public Relations Sub-committee** – members willing to visit
schools, set up displays, attend shows and help with
administration – contact Elsa Dabbs e-mail
<dabchic5@bigpond.net.au>

- ◆ **Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Project**— the Swan Coastal Plain
project still requires volunteers. Roost surveys are ongoing until
the end of June and feeding information is still urgently required,
as is assistance with data handling in the office. If you are
interested, please contact Bansi on
<b.shah@birdsaustralia.com.au> or 0427 707 047. Further details
on website <www.carnabyscockatoo.org>

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NOTE NEW INTERNET DETAILS!

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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

Printing Deadlines (at the BAWA Office)

September 2006 issue: 1 August
December 2006 issue: 1 November
March 2007 issue: 1 February
June 2007 issue: 1 May

Advertising Rates

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

Calendar of Events

Thu 8 Jun: Market Garden Swamps, Spearwood, Morning excursion

Sat 10 to Mon 12 Jun: Rottneet Winter Wader/Bushbird Count

Sun 11 Jun: Bickley Brook, Gosnells, Half-day excursion

Sat 17 Jun: Stinton Cascades Nature Reserve, Karragullen. Half-day excursion

Sat 24 Jun: Jandakot Regional Park, Forrestdale, Half-day excursion

Sun 25 Jun: Pelagic trip, Hillarys Boat Harbour

Mon 26 Jun: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat, Meeting, 7:30 pm

Sun 2 Jul: Bold Park Bird Watch, Cambridge, Half-day excursion

Sun 9 Jul: Lake Monger, Cambridge, Half-day excursion

Thu 13 Jul: Star Swamp, North Beach, Stirling, Half-day excursion

Sat 15 Jul: North Mole, Fremantle, Half-day excursion

Sun 23 Jul: Herdsman Lake, Stirling, Half-day excursion

Mon 24 Jul: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat, Meeting, 7:30 pm

Sat 29 Jul: Piesse Brook, Kalamunda, Half-day excursion

Sat 5 Aug: Pinnaroo Valley Memorial Park, Padbury, Half-day excursion

Sat 12 Aug: Pipidinn Road, Eglinton, Half-day excursion

Sun 13 Aug: Pelagic Trip, Hillarys Boat Harbour

Thu 17 Aug: Burswood Open Spaces, Burswood, Half-day excursion

Sun 20 Aug: Wellard Wetlands, Baldivis, Half-day excursion

Sat 26 Aug: Whiteman Park, Swan, Half-day excursion

Mon 28 Aug: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat, Meeting, 7:30 pm

Sun 3 Sep: Serpentine National Park, Half-day excursion

Thu 7 Sep: North Lake, Melville, Half-day excursion

Sun 10 Sep: Wungong Gorge, Bedfordale, Full day excursion

Sat 16 Sep: Flynn Road, Mundaring, Full day excursion

Sat 23 Sep: Forrestdale Lake, Half-day excursion

Mon 25 Sep: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat, Meeting, 7:30 pm

Sat 30 Sep to Mon 2 Oct: Campout at Wongan Hills, Shire of Wongan-Ballidu

Sun 1 Oct: Darling Scarp, Kelmscott, Half-day excursion

Mon 23 Oct: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat, Meeting, 7:30 pm

Mon 27 Nov: Tamala Hall, Environment Centre, Floreat, Meeting, 7:30 pm

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