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Vol 133 March 2010  2  Western Australian Bird Notes
Many readers will be aware of the increasing concerns within the conservation community in relation to the Western Ground Parrot. In recent issues of Western Australian Bird Notes and Wingspan there has been some news on the conservation efforts and support this ‘sub-species’ is now receiving. The conservation status of the Western Ground Parrot becomes even more alarming when one considers the recent genetic work suggesting it is a distinct species (Murphy et al., 2009), because there are almost certainly less than 150 individuals left today.

If efforts to conserve the Ground Parrot, or to at least stem the recently observed decline in population, are not successful we may experience the first contemporary bird extinction in Australia during the next decade.

Over the last few years the declining status of the Critically Endangered Western Ground Parrot has been of increasing concern to the South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team. In 2004 the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC; CALM at that time) was fortunate to receive funding from South Coast NRM for a full time Project Officer and support staff. The original intent of this recovery program was to conduct a translocation to the Walpole area, but numbers of birds in the source population had fallen so low that this plan was shelved. The focus of the recovery efforts then shifted to documenting the status of populations, and learning as much as we could about the birds and their habitats so that this information could be used to inform management of occupied habitat. Slowly some of the ecology of this highly cryptic parrot is being unravelled. For example, although no nest has yet been found (since 1913) it has been shown that breeding sites are within long unburnt habitat.

Numbers of Western Ground Parrots have continued to decrease. It is believed that the two major threats are wildfire and predation by introduced predators.

Recently, proactive fire management of Ground Parrot habitat by DEC staff (Comer et al. 2009) has begun to reduce the risk of the burning of all the long unburnt habitat at the same time. But now, much effort is going into the two new challenges — control of feral cats and captive management.

**Cat baiting**

The need to consider the threat of feral cats, in addition to foxes which are already baited under DEC’s Western Shield program, was highlighted by Ground Parrot survey results and an apparent increase in the density of cats in areas occupied by the parrot in Fitzgerald River National Park and Cape Arid National Park.

Over the last few years experimental use of non-toxic (to native fauna) cat baits has been conducted and DEC is now in a position where an experiment using cat baits injected with 1080 poison will be carried out, subject to approval, in autumn 2010. Research to assess pre-baiting predator abundance, the density of ground parrots, and other native fauna species present in areas that will be baited has already commenced. In the longer term we hope to be able to demonstrate that controlling both foxes and cats in these landscapes will have benefits for a wide range of species, including the Dibbler, Chuditch, Western Bristlebird, Malleefowl and Western Ground Parrot.

**Captive management**

In the shorter term securing the Western Ground Parrot population will be assisted greatly by the establishment of a captive management facility (Bondin 2009), providing a security policy just in case our actions to conserve the wild populations are not effective. Three birds (two male and one female) have been captured and these will be kept in purpose built aviaries. In the short term this will allow us to demonstrate that we can maintain birds in captivity. In the longer term it is hoped that we will be able to breed birds successfully in captivity, so that depleted natural populations can be replenished once the threats are being managed successfully.

The Friends of the Western Ground Parrot community group was formed back in 2004 but has recently been formalised and become incorporated so as to aid Ground Parrot recovery as effectively as they are able. DEC and the Friends of the Western Ground Parrot with long term support from Exetel, and other support from South Coast Natural Resource Management, State NRM, the Commonwealth Government and Perth Zoo have allowed the first steps to commence in this exciting project. Birds Australia WA has offered much support for the Western Ground Parrot over the years and their continued support will be invaluable.

The two new arms of the Ground Parrot Recovery Project will not only see an attempt made to address the feral cat problem in over 300 000 ha of National Park and Nature Reserve occupied by the species, but also to secure the captive population of Ground Parrots in the hope that we will eventually be able to breed and release birds back into areas where currently they are no longer found.

With funds committed for the first year of this program there is a glimmer of hope on the horizon, but to be successful, ongoing funding will be required. The path to a secure future for the Western Ground Parrot is shaky at the moment. With persistent and continued collaboration and support from all parties concerned with the future of the Ground Parrot, it is certainly possible that a secure future may be achieved.

**Sarah Comer, Brenda Newbey and Allan Burbidge**


Letters to the Editors

Dear Editors

I would like to correct an error in the December edition of *Western Australian Bird Notes*, ‘Naming of the Birds’.

While it is correct that in Germany shelducks nest in sand dunes, the German word for sand dune is not “bergente”. The German word is actually very similar to the English word — *Sanddüne*.

*Bergente* is the German word for a species of duck known as Greater Scaup or Scaup (*Aythya marila*) in the English speaking world.

What really amused me is the fact that the literal translation of the word *Bergente* is mountain duck; *berg* = mountain and *ente* = duck.

Anne Bondin

Obituary

FRANK PRIDHAM

Frank Pridham died peacefully on 18 November 2009. Frank was an active member of Birds Australia and of our local group for many years, in fact, a founding member of our local group at Mandurah.

Frank was a keen bird observer in England, Africa and WA where his work as a forester took him. He was a contributor to *WA Bird Notes* and AWSG. For many years he was in charge of the Forestry School for cadets with the WA Forestry Department, then CALM. A gentleman and a scholar, he took a Degree in English Literature after retiring. I am sure many older members will remember him with affection.

Dick Rule

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$250 for 3 nights. Sleeps 2.
By Stephen Debus, illustrated by Jeff Davies, photographs by David Hollands
2009. Envirobook, Birds Australia and Stephen Debus. RRP AUD$22.95

For bird lovers, naturalists and ornithologists the nine owl and three frogmouth species resident in Australian territory are possibly the group of birds with which they are least familiar. As nocturnal birds they are usually identified through their characteristic calls, often deep in forests and late at night. So there was a need for a publication that makes this difficult task easier. Stephen Debus has given us just this.

At the outset this publication is a well bound paperback able to withstand field work, and is of a size and weight inviting inclusion in the backpack. The comprehensive illustrations and photographs show both morphological differences and the typical posture of each species thus forming a useful identification aid.

In a sense this publication is more than a field guide as the opening chapters on the owl Order (Strigiformes) and the fossil records give interesting background information placing the Australian species in a world context. The final chapter on Threats, conservation and the future is also a useful inclusion, particularly for conservation managers.

The comparison between the two owl families, the Hawk Owls (Ninox) and Barn Owls (Tyto) is helpful but perhaps a table showing, for example the morphological, plumage and call differences could have given the reader an instant picture of the differences. Accounts of different species’ hunting methods and food are interesting. The detailed description of the adaptations that have made this group such successful foragers such as how the asymmetrical ear-openings enable location of sound in both horizontal and vertical planes, is clear, interesting and easily understood.

The section on studying owls gives many helpful hints for finding these elusive birds. Birdwatchers are warned about the overuse of playback calls and bright lights, noting that the welfare of the owls should be a prime consideration.

The main body of this work lists each owl and frogmouth species, describing the bird, voice, distribution, food and hunting methods, behaviour, breeding and conservation issues. The sequence of the information in these sections is consistent so, for example if one wants to know the bathing behaviour of a species it is found for each of the entries at the conclusion of this section. Listing the estimated breeding pairs for each species’ entry, shows the reader how few of these birds are still extant. This information, along with the threats is useful for conservation managers.

Stephen explains that the owls in this field guide are treated at species level only and why there is the exception with the Lesser Sooty Owl. The value of listing sub-species though can be seen when one looks at the difference in the threats of the more widely distributed Sooty Owl as opposed to threats in the limited range of the Lesser Sooty Owl. Whilst habitat loss and fragmentation is the major threat for both these birds, the wet tropics habitat of the latter is a distinct habitat therefore suggesting this threat may be more acute for this sub-species.

The section on frogmouths (Caprimulgidae), genus Podargus, towards the end of the publication, describes the differences in this Order and gives brief details of the three species found in Australia: Tawny, Marbled and Papuan Frogmouth.

The usefulness of this book is enhanced with a glossary and comprehensive bibliography. This is a field guide that would help all who are interested, not just in owls but in birds. It is well laid out, sturdy, user friendly, and with easily understood detailed information about this elusive group of birds plus each species found in Australia.

Suzanne Mather

A GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF EAST AFRICA

The casual book-stall browser might well take in only this book’s colourful bird-cover pictures and bold title, overlooking the small subscript, ‘A Novel’. Nevertheless, the added attraction of the book’s plot, are the 202 narrative pages. The soft back edition easily slips into the pocket, but I doubt the delightful story will slip too quickly from the reader’s mind. Nor would the reader miss the author’s amusing depictions of bird-watchers’ quirks, although I would not necessarily accept that the group he describes could be said to be typical of any bird-watching group, except for an element of competition among some of the author’s principal male characters. That said, the fictional, mixed group seems quite well racially integrated on the outside, but still segregated in other respects.

The general tone of the story recalls for me the deceptive simplicity and charm of Alexander McCall-Smith’s series of novels, from ‘The No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency’, set in Botswana; although, Drayson’s self-deprecating central character, the retiring and widowed Mr Malik, does not share the pizzazz, broad humour and drive of the nearly unforgettable extrovert, Mma Precious Ramotswe.

The author deals factually with native birds in East Africa, touching on quite a number among the 1500 or so species to be found there. The beginning of each new chapter shows a sketch of a different bird species. But uninitiated readers might wonder where the author’s facts start and his fiction ends.

The tale artfully weaves in Kenya’s post-independent social climate, with the central humble Asian character, Mr Malik, the victim of African criminals, often working of behalf of senior African officials. In not only that sense Drayson makes political and social commentary of how low Kenya has sunk. By contrast the humble African gardener, Benjamin, is ever


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cheerful, his common sense, his practicality a great help to a floundering and socially shy Malik. And for the anti-hero, Mr Malik at least, there is a happy ending.

However, the author’s tale all too obviously laments the vast loss in modern Kenya of especially native woodland forest habitat for native birds. In that commentary, we recognise in Australia that we twitchers suffer the same problems at home.

Tony France

This list has been compiled by the WA Rarities 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.


Highlights. This period has seen reports of three new species for Australia: SEMIPALMATED PLOVER (initially thought to be a Ringed Plover), COMMON MOORHEN and HOODED PITTA.

A Little Ringed Plover was found at the Broome sewage ponds in early October. This species is now seen annually in small numbers in the Broome region. In late October, a plover was seen at the sewage ponds and was at first assumed to be the Little Ringed Plover seen earlier in the month. The waders of the Broome Bird Observatory realised that this was incorrect and identified it provisionally as a Ringed Plover. The bird disappeared until late December. The waders photographed it and sent the photos to some experts who identified it as a Semipalmated Plover, a wader that breeds in North America. This is difficult to distinguish from the Ringed Plover but the photographs showed a diagnostic white wedge near the gape. The bird disappeared again, but reappeared in mid January.

Two Common Moorhens were seen at the swamp on West Island of the Cocos Islands. There was an adult and an immature. This is a species from south east Asia. They stayed for at least two weeks but were not seen in mid January.

The Hooded Pitta was found dead on Barrow Island. Its brown cap suggests that it is one of the south east Asian subspecies which is migratory but it is still a long way from any other records. It was found about five days after the cyclone that passed through 80 Mile Beach.

A juvenile Eastern Koel was seen at Denmark in late January was a major surprise. This is the second record for the south west. The previous record was at Quairading in April 1971. It is suspected that both these birds came from the eastern states rather than from the north.

An Radjah Shelduck was seen at Bibra Lake in January. This may be the same bird mentioned in WABN 132 at Lake Monger in October. It is no longer believed to be an escapee as no bands could be seen. Its normal range in WA is the East Kimberley.

Tropicbirds made an appearance in the Perth area in November. A White-tailed Tropicbird photographed at Rottnest was published in the local community newspaper. This is very rarely recorded south of Exmouth and is well out of range. A Red-tailed Tropicbird was photographed first at Thomson Lake, and then later that day at Herdsman Lake where it stayed for about a week. This is an extraordinary record for a bird that is normally over the ocean.

Two Intermediate Egrets were found in the south west. There are occasional reports of this species in the south west, but most have turned out to be juvenile Little Egrets or Cattle Egrets. Please try to photograph the bird and take good field notes if you see this species in the south west.

Lake McLarty had a good season for waders. A Little Curlew made several teams happy on the Twitchathon. There were high counts of other less common south west waders such as Pectoral Sandpiper, Long-toed Stint and Black-tailed Godwit. A Ruff and a Broad-billed Sandpiper were also present.

An Eastern Yellow Wagtail is a rare sighting for the south west. A ‘Yellow Wagtail’ was seen at Lake McLarty in October, and then four were seen near Cranbrook in January where numbers dwindled until they were gone two weeks later.

A Southern Fulmar was found beach washed near Denmark. This seabird is very rarely recorded in WA. The Beach Stone-curlew that was reported in WABN 130 at Cape Arid NP is still present.

Two other major rarities were reported from Broome and 80 Mile Beach in addition to the plover. A Nordmann’s Greenshank was seen again during the wader counts. This is the second report of this globally threatened species in Australia. The previous one was the year before during the wader counts. Two Eurasian Curlews were seen on 80 Mile Beach. There have now been four or five records at 80 Mile Beach and Roebuck Bay since the first record in November 2007. A Little Stint was banded at the Broome sewage works in December. A nest swiftlet species was photographed in Broome after the cyclone in December but it was not possible to identify it to species level.

The annual trip to Ashmore Reef in October again provided many highlights. There were two sightings of Abbott’s Booby which are the fourth and fifth records for WA. Oriental Reed-Warbler now seems to be a regular sighting at Ashmore with three seen this time. The Asian Brown Flycatcher has...
been seen for about four years in a row. An Island Monarch is the third record.

There have been several trips to Christmas Island and Cocos Island during the period. The Red-collared Dove is the fourth record. A snipe found in poor condition on Christmas Island died in care. It was frozen to be sent to the museum as a specimen and identified as a Swinhoe's Snipe, the first confirmed record for Christmas Island. This complicates the interpretation of previous records of snipes seen on Christmas and Cocos, which have been assumed to be Pin-tailed Snipe. During an overnight survey at North Keeling Island, the rangers photographed a Tropical Shearwater near a burrow. This is the first record for the island. The Tropical Shearwater is part of the Audubon’s / Little Shearwater complex and occurs in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. It breeds in the NW Indian Ocean in the same area as Saunders’ Tern which is now a regular on South Island with up to 16 seen.

METROPOLITAN (UBD Directory)

Radjah Shelduck – 1, 16-23/01/10, Bibra Lake (Bibra Lake) – GA et al. (rare in the south west)

Red-tailed Tropicbird – 1, 25/11/09, Thomsons Lake (Beeliar) – RP * 1, 25/11/09 to 04/12/09, Herdsmans Lake (Herdsmans) – GB et al. (rare in the metropolitan area; photographs)

White-tailed Tropicbird – 1, 10/11/09, settlement (Rottnest Island) – MSJ (rarely reported in Western Australia; photographs)

Intermediate Egret – 1, 21/01/10, Little Rush Lake (Yangebup) – MC (rare in the south west)

Black-winged Stilt – 2513, 21/01/10, Bibra Lake (Bibra Lake) – MC (high count for the metropolitan area)

Australian Pied Oystercatcher – 131, 31/01/10, Alfred Cove (Attadale) – MS (high count)

Australian Painted Snipe – 1, 3/10/09, Herdsmans Lake (Herdsmans Lake) – BR (rare in the south west)

Australian Owlet-nightjar – 1, 23/01/10, Trigg bushland (Trigg) – NJ (rare in the metropolitan area)

SOUTH WEST (Shark Bay to Cape Arid)

Southern Fulmar – 1 beach washed, 22/11/09, Lights Beach (Denmark) – GT (rare in Western Australia; photographs)

Intermediate Egret – 1, 02/01/10, Beach Road (Busselton) – MC (rare in the south west; photograph)

Beach Stone-curlew – 1, 19-20/01/10, Thomas River mouth Cape Arid NP (Esperance) – AR et al. (still there since 24/01/09; photograph)

Little Curlew – 1, 13-30/12/09, Lake McLarty (Murray) – AC et al. (uncommon in the south west; photographs)

Pectoral Sandpiper – 7+, 30/12/09, Lake McLarty (Murray) – JG, SA (high count)

EASTERN KOEL – 1 juvenile, 31/01/10 to 01/02/10, Parry Beach (Denmark) – TS (2nd record in the south west; photographs)

‘Yellow Wagtail’ – 1, 21-22/10/2009, Lake McLarty (Murray) – MST, MW * 1-4, 12-23/01/10, salt lake 12 km NE of Cranbrook – SE et al. (rare in the south west; photographs of latter sightings; at least one of these birds appears to have been an Eastern Yellow Wagtail Motacilla tschutschensis but the exact identity of the others is unclear – because of the identification difficulties and considerable taxonomic uncertainty in this group, observers should attempt to take detailed field notes and photographs of any ‘Yellow Wagtails’)

ARID ZONE

HOODED PITTA – 1 found dead, 23/01/10, Barrow Island – ABe (1st record for Australia; photographs; specimen to be sent to WA Museum)

KIMBERLEY ZONE

SEMI PALMATED PLOVER – 1, various dates from 25/09/09 to 31/01/09, sewage ponds (Broome) – NW, MSI (photographs; 1st record for Australia if accepted by BARC)

Eurasian Curlew – 2, 15/12/09, 80 Mile Beach (Broome) – FO, PM (rare in Australia)

NORDMANN’S GREENSHANK – 1, 30/11/09, 80 Mile Beach (Broome) – AB, MO (photographs; 2nd record for Australia if accepted by BARC)

ASHMORE REEF

Abbott’s Booby – 2, 28/10/09, at sea Broome to Ashmore – GS, MC et al. * 1, 01/11/09, at sea Broome to Ashmore – GS, MC et al. (rare in Western Australia)

Island Monarch – 1, 29/09 to 01/11/09, West Island – GS, MC et al. (rare in Australia)

Asian Brown Flycatcher – 1, 29/10/09, West Island – GS, MC et al. (rare in Australia)

CHRISTMAS ISLAND

Red-collared Dove – 1, 05/12/09, LB3 – RB et al. (4th record for Australia)

Swinhoe’s Snipe – 1, 09/12/09, Pink House – EJ et al. (1st confirmed record for Christmas Island; later died; specimen to be sent to WA Museum; photographs)

COCOS ISLANDS

TROPICAL SHEARWATER – 1, 22/11/09, North Keeling Island – IM et al. (1st record for Cocos Island if accepted by BARC)

Fork-tailed Swift – 2, 12-15/01/10, West Island – MC et al. (uncommon on Cocos Islands)

Striated Heron – 2, 12/01/10, West Island – MC et al. (uncommon on Cocos Islands)

COMMON MOORHEN – 2 (adult, immature), 27/11/09, Bechat Besar Swamp – PB et al. (1st record for Australia if accepted by BARC)

Barn Swallow – 45, 02/12/09, West Island – RB et al. (highest count on Cocos Islands)

OBSEVERS

AB = Adrian Boyle
ABe = Alayna Beattie
AC = Alan Collins
AR = Alexandra Rosewarne
BR = Bill Rutherford
EJ = Eddly Johari
FO = Frank O’Connor
GA = Graham Armstrong
GB = Guillaume Bouteloup
GS = George Swann
GT = Geoff Taylor
IM = Ishmael McCrae
JG = John Graff
MC = Mike Carter (Victoria)
CHAIR’S REPORT

BAWA now has five country branches, the latest being Wheatbelt/Avon. I am hopeful that we can enrich the birding life of our country members by involving them directly in our research and conservation projects. These members provide BAWA with valuable local knowledge and expertise that help to make our projects more effective and ensure the benefits are lasting.

Shorebirds 2020 is an ongoing Birds Australia project and Kim Onton is the WA coordinator. BAWA is applying for grants to continue the Carnaby’s Black-Cockatoo Project with Raana Scott as Project Manager and to begin the Australasian Bittern Project with Robyn Pickering as Project Officer. The Carnaby’s Swan Coastal Plain Roost Survey Project is coordinated by Quinton Burnham as Project Officer. So there is plenty of scope for BAWA members to become involved in project work on the coast from Broome to Eyre, the south coast wetlands, the Swan Coastal Plain and the wheatbelt — something for all.

The Australia Day campout at Augusta was an enjoyable experience for participants (as usual) but it was important in that BAWA was able to respond to a local request for a survey to assist local conservation efforts. Working with local conservation groups and schools to improve habitat and community awareness has the potential to increase the significance of campouts so as to enhance the work of BAWA and, in particular, the work of the Community Education Committee in country areas.

Bruce Haynes

Four species of raptors were also identified: three Eastern Ospreys, a juvenile Brown Goshawk, a Black-shouldered Kite and a Whistling Kite. The latter two caused some disturbance amongst the smaller shorebirds.

Apart from this good range of species that provided great opportunity to observe many of the key distinguishing features amongst the shorebirds, the group was also privileged to observe, at a distance from Austin Bay Nature Reserve, a huge mix of over 10 000 waterbirds. It left a lasting impression of the importance of these wetlands.

Workshop participant, Don Bowes gave an excellent slide and video presentation of the plight of the Fairy Tern as it attempts to find alternative safe nesting sites because of developmental disturbances of some of its traditional sites.

Liz Bonner’s presentation on the history and importance of the Ramsar Convention, and the agreements and legislation arising from it, was of great interest to the group and sparked considerable debate, to a point where some of the group would like a dedicated follow up session.

At the conclusion of the four days, a better informed and skilled group was presented with a certificate of attendance by the local Mayor, Paddi Creevy, who is a strong supporter for protecting the wetlands. She has invited further input to the Council in order to recommend steps that could be taken to further protect the birds.

The two courses have made an important contribution to increasing the number of better skilled participants available for the National February Shorebird 2020 count.

The group thanks Liz Bonner and Bill Rutherford for their commitment, knowledge and skills.

Ken Monson on behalf of the ‘Class’

MEDIA RELEASE FROM BIRDS AUSTRALIA

Extreme heat not the only threat to Carnaby’s Black-Cockatoo

Saving the Carnaby’s Black-Cockatoo from extinction requires locals throughout the South West regions to mobilise according to Birds Australia project manager Raana Scott.

Populations of the unique bird are under pressure following the tragic death of at least 152 cockatoos from suspected heat stroke in the Hopetoun and Munglinup areas in early January.

“We get regular reports from Hopetoun locals of around 200-250 birds. This isn’t an exact figure but we can definitely say that a significant proportion of the Hopetoun population has been affected by this event,” Ms Scott said.

Now that the scientific tests have ruled out causes of death such as pesticides and chemicals, she said local communities had to ensure that the birds were not put under any more pressure- be it by land clearing for urban development; tree hollow competition from bees, galahs and corellas; shooting or road strike.

“All the Carnaby’s Black-Cockatoos that remain are of critical importance to the populations throughout the South West. We need to make sure that the remaining populations are as healthy and robust as possible to reduce the chance of stochastic events such as January 6 having such a devastating impact on the species.”

Ms Scott suggested people could instigate local ‘friends of’ groups and help plant local natives so that the cockatoo could continue foraging, roosting and nesting. Birds Australia also needed volunteers to assist with nesting hollow repairs, roost monitoring and some administrative tasks.

Several research projects are due to start which will investigate species migration to and from nesting areas and communication methods, to build upon ongoing genetic work into population dynamics and genetic dispersal.

The results of these projects will give conservationists and local communities a better understanding of the species and allow for even greater strategic recovery efforts.

Provided the Carnaby’s Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project receives State NRM funding, Birds Australia with assistance from South Coast NRM and other NRM agencies will continue to work with landholders, local community groups and landcare agencies to strategically protect and enhance priority nesting and feeding sites.

Those wishing to report cockatoo sightings or find out more information should visit www.birdsaustralia.com.au/carnabys.

Raana Scott
Project Manager
Carnaby’s Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project
phone: 08) 9076 2203 mob: 0427707047
fax: 08) 9072 0499
PO Box 1801, Esperance, WA 6450
Unit 3, Suite B 113 Dempster St, Esperance

WA TWITCHATHON 2009 REPORT

The 2009 WA Twitchathon was run successfully in December, although temperatures hovering around 40°C on the Sunday made it uncomfortable at times. Three competitions were organised: a 24-hour twitch, a 12-hour twitch, and an 8-hour armchair twitch. The full results are below. The 24-hour race was won by SWOT with a relatively comfortable margin of six species from Canny Owls, but the 12-hour race was much closer, with the Melville Hava-chats winning by the barest of margins from A Schnifter of Schneders.

The best sighted was awarded to Little Curlew (seen by The Big Twits, Canny Owls and A Schnifter of Schneders at Lake McLarty) narrowly ahead of Malleeewoo (SWOT) and with honourable mention to Little Penguins from shore in Mandurah (The Big Twits). The worst dip was awarded to Rainbow Lorikeet (JEMMs), narrowly from Singing Honeyeater (Peeping Pardalotes) with honourable mentions to Welcome Swallow (Stark Raven Mad) and Laughing Kookaburra (Flying Nomads).
24-hour Twitch

1st – 149 species: SWOT, (South West Ornithological Trackers) (Peter Taylor, David Secomb and Erica Shedley)
2nd – 143 species: Canny Owls (Frank O’Connor, Wynton Maddeford and Alan Galbraith)
3rd – 139 species: The Big Twits (Alan Collins, Martin Cake, Greg Howell and John Graff)
4th – 98 species: Stark Raven Mad (Wes Bancroft and Natalie Warburton)
5th – 80 species: K&AC (Andrew Chuk and Katherine Chuk)
6th – 60 species: Charabanc (Peter Thom and Jim Burgett)

12-hour Twitch

1st – 109 species: Melville Hava-chats (Robyn Pickering, Robin Ashford and Gavin White)
2nd – 108 species: A Schniffer of Schnederers (Stewart Ford, Matt Love, Victoria Cartledge and Belinda Barnett)
3rd – 93 species: JEMMs (Ted Cawley, Maureen Cawley, Maris Lauva and John Litherland)
4th – 85 species: Peeping Pardalotes (Andrew Hobbs, Jill Hobbs, Rose Haswari and Mark Newman)
5th – 84 species: Flying Nomads (Colin Heap and Ron Dibbens)

8-hr Armchair Twitch

1st – 52 species: The OBE Team (Clive Napier, Wendy Napier and Brian Wilson)

Many thanks to all those who participated and made it a successful event, to those involved in the east coast twitchathons who provided advice on rules and organisation, to those on the BAWA excursions committee who were very helpful with drawing up the rules and planning, and to Bruce Haynes and Marion Massam, who were very helpful in organising some publicity for the event.

John Graff

Explanation of Twitchathon term

Dip (twitching)
To fail to see a species you were trying to twitch (see). Can be used as a verb (eg, The Big Twits dipped on Carnaby’s Black-Cockatoo at Dryandra) or a noun (eg, Carnaby’s Black-Cockatoo was a dip for the Big Twits).

In the twitchathon a worst dip is typically the commonest species your team failed to see/hear, but could also be a species you missed after putting a big effort into finding or with a funny story behind it (eg, one team nominated Australian Owlet-nightjar because they nearly ran over one, but as they swerved to avoid it only one member of the team was able to identify it, so it couldn’t go on the list).

BIRD reds AUSTRALIA AT THE 2010 WORLD WETLANDS DAY CONFERENCE

In Perth, the annual Wetlands Conference celebrates the February anniversary of the signing of the Ramsar Convention, an event now remembered on World Wetlands Day. This year, BA staffer/BAWA member Cheryl Gole and BAWA member Sue Mather attended the conference for Birds Australia and presented a poster on Important Bird Areas (IBAs) and wetlands.

The international theme for World Wetlands Day 2010 was “Wetlands, Biodiversity, and Climate Change”, and its focus was on Caring for our wetlands — an answer to climate change. This was to coincide with the United Nations International Year of Biodiversity and in recognition of the likely impact of climate change on wetland ecosystems, and importantly, about the role of wetlands in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The opening keynote address at the Perth conference by CSIRO’s Dr Bryson Gates was a thought-provoking paper that systematically debunked many of the myths promulgated about the realities of climate change. Other keynote addresses explored the serious issues facing the extensive wetlands in Bangladesh, examined the cultural context of wetlands removal and modification in Perth, and looked at the importance of education in involving people in wetlands conservation. A series of brief spoken poster presentations explored a number of themes relevant to wetlands conservation, education and management.

In December 2009, all BA members received a copy of the IBA report with their copy of Wingspan. Check out the section on IBAs in WA and, if you want to be involved in the project or have any question, contact the national IBA project manager Cheryl Gole or WA Coordinator Sue Mather.

Cheryl: c.gole@birdsaustralia.com.au
Sue: suzannemather@bigpond.com
Or phone Cheryl: 08 9293 4958.

For general information on IBAs and an electronic copy of the report, go to the Birds Australia website and follow the links to the IBA project web pages. For specific information on IBAs, go to the IBA web page on the Birdata website.

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The naming of birds

Order: Phaethontiformes

Literally shining species of birds.

Family: Phaethontidae

*Phaethon rubricauda* – Red-tailed Tropicbird. Phaethon is Greek for shining and refers to the striking attractiveness of the bird. Phaethon was an epithet for Helios, the Sun God, so it is not surprising that it also means shining. The sight of these birds in an aerial mating display is unforgettable. Rubricauda means red tailed; this refers to the two very long tail plumes. These birds are found in tropical and sometimes in sub-tropical seas.

Other names are Red-tailed Bos’n-bird (also boatswain and bosun all pronounced similarly such is the vagaries and peculiarities of the English language), Silver Bosun-bird and Straw-tail (cf long plumes in the specific name). The term bosun is also given to some of the skuas because of their bossy nature. Whether this is also true of the tropicbirds is unclear although at nesting sites they generally scream harshly. More probably in this case is that bosuns used what is called a marlin-spoke, shaped rather like the tail of a bird, to separate strands of rigging ropes. Coincidently or just as likely and perhaps somewhat imaginatively, a bosun’s whistle has been likened to the call of the bird.

*Phaethon lepturus* – White-tailed Tropicbird. The Greek word leptus means delicate tail or rear. These birds have delicate tails which are white with a golden morph (a fancy ornithological/zoological term for variant) as do the red tailed ones.

Other names are Golden Bos’n-bird, White-tailed Bos’n-bird, Yellow-billed Tropicbird, Long-tail and Marlin-spoke. The latter name is given as the elongated tail streamers can be likened to the bosun’s spike alluded to above. Some rigging ropes on ships were called marlin and the marlin fish actually gets its name from the rope via the spike (the marlin has a long spear-like snout). Nomenclature can get very convoluted at times.

Order: Podicipediformes

Birds with feet (pedes) coming from the rump (podicis) ie far back from the head compared to other water birds.

Family: Podicipedidae

*Tachybaptus novaehollandiae* – Australasian Grebe. From the Greek tachys meaning swift and baptos meaning dipped (cf baptism) or dived. This roughly translated into English refers to their speed in diving for food. Grebe is a French word (grèbe) of unknown origin.

Other names are Little Grebe (in error), Australian Little Grebe, Australian Dabchick, Red-necked Grebe and ‘diver’. Avoid Little Grebe as this is a Eurasian species (*T. ruficollis*) dealt with below, but Australian grebe may be more acceptable. Dabchick is another word for the Little Grebe, dab being a synonym of peck. Diver should also be avoided because of confusion with the divers or loons of North America.

*Tachybaptus ruficollis* – Little Grebe. Latin rufus meaning red and collum meaning neck.

Also called a Dabchick for its dabbing action when feeding.

*Podiceps crispus* – Great-crested Grebe. From the Greek polios meaning grey and cephalos meaning head. Hoary means white or greyish white usually due to aging and refers to the white streaking during breeding.

Other names are Dabchick, Hoary-headed Dabchick and Tom Pudding. The latter curious name comes from Yorkshire in England as a colloquial name given to the Little Grebe and has wormed its way into the Southern Hemisphere.

*Podiceps cristatus* – Great-crested Grebe. Podex Latin rump or anus and pes foot ie bumfoot as the feet are placed far back on the body towards the rump. Cristatus simply means crest. As there is not a crested grebe, great just means it is the largest species of grebe.

Other Names are Crested Grebe, Tippet (from tiptoe?), Grebe, Southern Crested Grebe, Topknot (referring to the crest) Shag (not in any way related to shags or cormorants), Gaunt (slim?), Loon (see above), Carr (means pond) Goose.

The subspecies found here is *australis*.

Order: Phoenicopteriformes

Family: Phoenicopteridae

This could be one of the strangest derivations for any family of birds. It is said to be just the Greek word for flamingo but it appears to be an anagram of the Turkish phrase “PEN-POIA-KESH-OIDER” which, roughly translated, means “I am the family of coloured birds”. The flamingo genus – Phoenicopterus in Greek script – would be PHOINIKOPTEROS which can also be rearranged to produce “PEN-POIO-KOSHTIR” which means “I am a coloured bird.”

Actually both the Order name Phoenicopteriformes and the Family name Phoenicopteridae derive from the ancient Greek noun phoinikopteros meaning literally bird with pink/red feathers, as it is composed by phoinix, red colour/ purple red and pteron, wing, feather.

*Phoenicopterus ruber* – Greater Flamingo. Ruber is red in Latin and this is the largest of the flamingo family.

Flamingo has interesting derivations through various languages. Flama is flame in Latin and is the derivation of Flemings or Flemish a race jocularly purported to have ruddy complexions. This entered the Spanish language as flamenco, a dance of the gypsies (Flemings) and hence into flamingo – flame coloured birds – a rather tortuous route!

A flock of flamingos can be termed a flamboyance or magnificence, a very apt description and less obtuse than many of the terms used for flocks of birds scattered through this text.

Iuvencus
BEAKS I HAVE KNOWN...

I was at Bibra Lake on 15 December 2009 and spied the magpie in the accompanying photograph.

Upon closer inspection I noticed a pronounced hook at the end of its beak, not unlike that on a butcherbird.

Perhaps it is a young bird and its beak will wear away at the tip?

I have included a photo of a resident magpie from my own garden and with a less hooked beak. Compare this with the butcherbird’s hooked beak.

These may be everyday birds but they continue to delight and surprise me.

Gillian Pitt

BIRDS OF TOM SOUTH LAKE, CRANBROOK

Tom South Lake (34° 15’ 43”S, 117° 38’ 32”E) is located about 8 kilometres north east from Cranbrook along the Great Southern Highway to Tambellup. The lake contains water all year round and is on a private farming property. It cannot be accessed without permission. This article provides an insight into the birdlife at this salt lake and associated remnant vegetation located in the wheat belt.

Surveys were conducted in order to obtain base line data of the bird population. This information will allow future comparisons of bird distribution and abundance and measure any impact possibly resulting from climate change. A total of 48 surveys were conducted over a 12 month period in 2007. During November and December 2007 observations and recording were carried out on the bird species that utilised the lake and surrounding vegetation with an emphasis on the breeding behaviour of the birds observed.

The riparian vegetation around the immediate edge of the main lake is comprised mostly of melaleucas, and in some areas they are quite dense with trees reaching 10 metres in height. At the south-eastern end of the lake there are many trees dead or dying, and this may be the result of prolonged drought or increased salt levels within the lake system.

At the south-western end of the lake there is a large flood plain, which for most of the year is dry but is still an important feeding and breeding zone for Hooded Plovers. Vegetation in the area between the flood plain and three smaller salt lakes to the east is comprised of smaller melaleuca shrubs with an understorey of native grasses. Further south is a large area of undisturbed heath, with mostly native grasses and a variety of small shrubs including melaleucas and acacias. Around the three smaller lakes are patches of melaleuca thickets interspersed with open areas of samphire. These three lakes only fill in good years.

Surveys of these lakes were carried out during August and September 2009. As a result of above average rainfall for this region over the winter months all three lakes were full, with a great deal of flooding well into the riparian vegetation, thus creating important nesting sites for several water bird species, including Chestnut Teal with 7 eggs, Australasian Grebe with 4 eggs, and two Silver Gull nests, one with 2 eggs and the other with 3 eggs. Within the flooded samphire two pairs of Black-winged Stilts were in the early stages of nest building.

Further south of the three lakes, towards the railway line, extensive patches of heath, samphire and melaleuca thickets dominate the semi-dry land habitats.

Surveys of birds were carried out within these sites during July, August, September and October of 2007. Species observed within these sites during the survey period included White-fronted Chat, Tawny-crowned Honeyeater, Western Silvereye, Brown Honeyeater, Red-capped Robin, Rufous Fieldwren, Splendid Fairy-wren, Southern Emu-wren, Golden Whistler, White-browed Babbler, Rufous Whistler, Grey Fantail, Inland Thornbill, Yellow-rumped Thornbill and Western Gerygone.

At the south-eastern end of the main lake along the railway line, the remnant vegetation is quite mixed with the dominant trees being York Gums and Sheoaks. The understorey is a mixture of grasses, mostly weeds. Bird species recorded within this site include Collared Sparrowhawk, Horsfield’s Bronze-Cuckoo, Purple-crowned Lorikeet, Australian Ringneck, Red-capped Parrot, Yellow-throated Miner, Willie Wagtail, Rufous Whistler and Australian Magpie.

Cereal crops and pastures form a large part of the study site with two-thirds of the land area around the main lake system supporting pastures and cereal crops. Bird species observed utilizing these sites included Australian Magpie, Magpie-lark, Stubble Quail, Australasian Pipit, Black-faced Woodswallow, White-winged Triller, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Australian Ringneck and White-fronted Chat.

During the core survey period of November and December of 2007 surveys were carried out on the feeding habits of several bird species utilising the land supporting cereal crops and pastures.

One interesting observation made during nocturnal surveys on this lake on 17 November 2007 was that many birds were arriving at the lake during the night using the cover of darkness, possibly to evade predators. Banded Stilts, Black-winged Stilts, Red-necked Avocets, Grey Teal, Australian Shelducks, Black Swans, Hooded Plovers and Red-capped Plovers could be heard arriving in flocks at night. Bird counts made the following morning when light, were compared with the previous day counts and indicated a significant difference in species and individual numbers. Follow up surveys...
conducted on 18 November 2007 indicated an increase in the numbers of several species including Black Swans up from 34 to 55, Australian Shelducks up from 47 to 71 and Red-necked Avocets up from 23 to 75 birds.

Species list

**Stubble Quail:** One bird flushed from barley crop in field near the southern end of the lake.

**Black Swan:** Thirty-four Black Swans sighted in the middle of the lake.

**Australian Shelduck:** Observed 47 birds resting on sand spit. Most birds were moulting.

**Australian Wood Duck:** Nine birds seen resting on sand spit next to Australian Shelduck.

**Pink-eared Duck:** Four birds seen to mix with Grey Teal.

**Australasian Shoveler:** One pair seen resting alone on exposed peninsula.

**Grey Teal:** A flock of 26 birds in a tightly knit group was sighted in the middle of the lake.

**Pacific Black Duck:** Fifteen found resting on sand spit with Australian Wood Duck and Australian Shelduck.

**Australasian Grebe:** Three birds observed with the Hoary-headed Grebe all in breeding plumage.

**Hoary-headed Grebe:** Large congregation of birds, some in breeding plumage, in the middle of the lake. 78 counted.

**Common Bronzewing:** One male observed incubating two well developed eggs on 18 October 2007, in a nest in the fork of a paperbark.

**Crested Pigeon:** Up to 18 birds seen in paperbarks at the southern end of the lake.

**Tawny Frogmouth:** Two adults perched together with two recently fledged young on 18 October 2007 in paperbark trees at the edge of the lake (daytime observation).

**White-faced Heron:** Six individuals observed perched in paperbarks at south west end of lake.

**Black-shouldered Kite:** One pair observed in freshly harvested field.

**Collared Sparrowhawk:** One pair was nesting with three large feathered chicks on 28 October 2007. The nest was located 8 metres above the ground in a Wandoo tree opposite the railway line and south east of the lake.

**Wedge-tailed Eagle:** One pair with a nest that has been used for the last four seasons. One fully feathered chick ready to leave the nest on 18 November 2007. The nest was in a tall eucalypt at the edge of the lake’s southern end.

**Brown Falcon:** One dark phase bird observed stalking White-fronted Chats in low heath.

**Eurasian Coot:** A group of 56 birds counted. All were in a tightly knit group in the middle of the lake.

**Black-winged Stilt:** Small groups were scattered throughout the lake system. A total of 54 birds counted. Adults outnumbered juveniles.

**Banded Stilt:** Two separate flocks near the shore line. One was located at the south western end of the lake and the other at the south east end of the lake. A total of 180 birds counted and of these the majority were juveniles lacking the typical chestnut band.

**Red-capped Plover:** A large flock of 125 Red-capped Plovers, consisting of adult males and females as well as a large number of juveniles. This was the largest number of Red-capped Plover recorded at this lake since surveys began.

**Hooded Plover:** Six pairs were observed scattered around the edge of the lake mostly the south east and south west end of the lake. The main Hooded Plover flock was observed feeding with a large flock of Red-capped Plovers. A total of 76 Hooded Plovers were recorded.

**Red-necked Stint:** Four Red-necked Stints were seen feeding in close association with Red-capped Plovers.

**Sharp-tailed Sandpiper:** Six birds seen on 31 October 2009.

**Curlew Sandpiper:** A small group of seven birds were seen resting on the point of a sand spit.

**Whiskered Tern:** Flock of 49 birds flying low over the water. Some birds observed resting on sand spit. Many birds were in breeding plumage and others were juveniles in non-breeding plumage.

**Silver Gull:** Three Silver Gulls were seen at the edge of the lake; all were adults with distinctive red bills and legs.

**Purple-crowned Lorikeet:** Small flocks moving through the area and sometimes stopping to feed on flowering eucalypts.

**Regent Parrot:** Small family groups moving through the area.

**Western Rosella:** Adult and juveniles observed feeding on the ground near main road.

**Australian Ringneck:** Large numbers around much of the lake. Many recently fledged young birds with adults resting in paper barks at the edge of the lake.

**Red-capped Parrot:** Several birds, mostly juvenile, observed along the railway line south east of the lake.

**Elegant Parrot:** One adult bird observed feeding recently fledged young on 18 November 2007.

**Horsfield’s Bronze-Cuckoo:** Three individuals observed feeding on caterpillars near the ground in samphire at the edge of the lake.

**Shining Bronze-Cuckoo:** One bird observed being harassed by Yellow-rumped Thornbills.

**Eastern Barn Owl:** During nocturnal field surveys, one bird was seen perched on a fence post at the side of the access road to the lake.

**Rainbow Bee-eater:** Small groups of six birds observed flying in a south westerly direction.

**Splendid Fairy-wren:** Four active nests recorded. The first, located on 3 October 2007, contained three recently hatched chicks. The second and third nests were located on 9 October.
2007; the second contained four host eggs and one Horsfield’s Bronze-Cuckoo egg, and the third nest contained three eggs. The fourth nest was located on 12 October 2007 and contained three 5-7 day old chicks. All nests were located at the south west end of the lake in heath and low paper barks.

**Southern Emu-wren:** One pair with a nest containing three chicks was found in low native grass 12 cm from the ground on 9 October 2007. The nest was very well concealed. It was only 5 metres from an active Splendid Fairy-wren’s nest. Both males were observed to fight when near one another’s nest.

**White-browed Scrubwren:** A total of eight pairs were studied during November. All pairs had 2-3 well advanced young, and no active nests were found at this time. All young birds were 8-12 weeks old and had plumages similar to adult females. Young birds were observed to feed independently of adults, though still maintaining a family association.

**Rufous Fieldwren:** Three males observed calling from exposed branches in low heath at the southern end of the lake. No nests recorded.

**Western Gerygone:** Three active nests recorded, all located in Wandoo trees. The first two were located in trees growing along the railway line south east of the lake on 26 October 2007; each contained 3 eggs. Two days later the remaining nest was located in the outer foliage of a small sapling 3 metres high on the edge of the main highway and contained 2 eggs.

**Yellow-rumped Thornbill:** Twelve nests recorded, with pairs nesting around much of the lake. Most nests were found in paperbark trees, but one nest was in a Sheoak and another in the outer leaves of a Wandoo tree. Some birds were building nests in the first two weeks of July. Most nests contained 3 eggs with only two nests containing 4 eggs. About 70% of the eggs were unmarked white and 30% of the eggs showed small red to reddish brown markings at the larger end of the egg shell. The breeding results for Yellow-rumped Thornbills at Tom Lake South for the 2007 breeding season are as follows: three nests at different stages of construction were located on 10 July, six nests each supporting three eggs were located on 28 August, one nest with three eggs and one egg of a Shining Bronze-Cuckoo was located on 18 September and two nests each supporting four eggs were located on 21 September. Observations at this site over three years indicated that most pairs nested in the same tree or nearby tree and that most pairs raised 2 - 3 broods each season.

At one site a Grey Butcherbird was observed to rip apart the nest of a Yellow-rumped Thornbill which was only recently constructed and contained no eggs or young.

**Inland Thornbill:** Five pairs were studied during September, October and November 2007. One nest with three eggs was located on 9 September, two nests with 3 eggs were located on 12 October and two nests with two eggs were located on November 6 and 7.

In October 2007 due to unseasonably heavy rains two nests were abandoned. The same pairs rebuilt new nests in nearby shrubs three weeks after their first breeding attempts.

**Singing Honeyeater:** One nest recorded with two freshly laid eggs on 9 October 2007, in the outer leaves of a small paper-bark tree at the south east end of the lake.

**Yellow-throated Miner:** One extended family of 17 birds was monitored for three breeding seasons. During the 2007 breeding season this group was involved directly or indirectly with four nests. Three nests located on 16 October contained four eggs and one nest located on 18 October contained three eggs. Two nests were 75 metres apart.

**Red Wattlebird:** Three active nests recorded all were in paper-bark trees and each nest contained two eggs. These were found on 11 August, 16 August and 4 September 2007. These eggs were significantly smaller than those recorded in the Perth area at Bold Park (clutches 1 and 2, measured on 28 July 1989), and near Wanneroo (clutch 3, measured at Pinnaroo Valley on 12 August 1994) (Table 1).

Table 1: Comparison of sizes of Red Wattlebird eggs found at Tom South Lake (Cranbrook area) and near Perth. All measurements are in millimetres. SD = standard deviation.

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<th>Perth area Length</th>
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<th>Tom South Lake Length</th>
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**White-fronted Chat:** Nine active nests recorded, all in low heath and samphire growing along the fence line that divides the lake system. The earliest nest was recorded on 8 July 2007, and contained 3 eggs. Another four nests recorded on 4 September — two of these nests supported clutches of three eggs, one contained three recently hatched chicks and the other nest had three, one-week old chicks. A further two nests were recorded on October 3rd, one with three eggs and the other with two chicks ready to leave the nest. Two nests each with three eggs were recorded on 9 November 2007. These November eggs were possibly second clutches, as old nests from this year’s breeding season were located in nearby samphire and small flocks of newly independent young were observed feeding on nearby open ground. Most of the birds had moved from the area by mid-December. On several occasions small flocks were observed feeding on small flies at the edge of the lake, and in close proximity to foraging Hooded Plovers.

**Tawny-crowned Honeyeater:** Three active nests were recorded in low heath. Two nests (found on 20 and 27 September 2007) contained two eggs and one nest (found on 29 September) contained two recently hatched chicks. All adult birds were shy and elusive during data collection. All three nests were placed less than 40 cm above the ground.

**Brown Honeyeater:** Six active nests were recorded, mostly in paper bark trees growing around the edge of the lake. The first, still under construction, was located on 30 August 2007. Two nests found on 12 September each supported clutches of...
Western Australian Bird Notes

Members’ contributions, ctd

two eggs. Of three nests located on the 25th September, one supported two, 4-6 day old chicks, whilst the other two nests supported clutches of two eggs.

New Holland Honeyeater: Five nests were recorded in extensive low thick heath vegetation growing along the Great Southern Highway at the south west end of the lake during detailed searches on 25 September 2007. Two of these nests were still under construction, two supported clutches of two eggs and one contained three eggs.

The two nests with two eggs were located only 15 metres apart, and all nests were placed less than 2.5 metres above the ground.

White-browed Babbler: One family of seven birds was observed in low thick paper-bark trees, with old nests and roosting nests. One nest, found on 16 September 2007, contained a single 5-7 day old chick. This family has been observed for the past three years. The group nest is in the same patch of bush each season and birds were only found to move locally.

Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike: One pair with nest containing three eggs and located on 12 November 2007 was only six metres from an active White-winged Triller’s nest also containing eggs. There was also a Willie Wagtail nest with three eggs located on the lower branch of the same tree as that of the Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike.

White-winged Triller: Three pairs were recorded nesting at the southern end of the lake in paper bark trees. Two nests contained two eggs and one nest contained three eggs, and all were found on 12 November 2007. One White-winged Triller nest was found near a Willie Wagtail nest and Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike nest. Another White-winged Triller nest was found in a tree opposite an active Black-faced Woodswallow nest.

White-winged Trillers were seen feeding on caterpillars that were gleaned from the leaves of ‘Afghan melons’, which were abundant in the pasture. This appeared to be an important food source for nestlings.

Golden Whistler: Three pairs were recorded in paper bark thickets. Two pairs had active nests, with one containing two freshly-laid eggs on 22 October 2007, and the other two recently-hatched chicks on 18 November.

Rufous Whistler: One pair was recorded with a nest containing three eggs in casuarinas opposite the railway line on 22 October 2007.

Black-faced Woodswallow: One nest was recorded on 18 November 2007 containing 4 eggs. Five adult birds were observed in the care and defence of the nest and eggs. The nest was placed in a small shrub next to the railway line south east of the lake.

Black-faced Woodswallows were seen preying on skinks that were crossing open areas within the pastures, and on three occasions adult birds returned to a nest with three chicks to feed them small skinks approximately 50-60 mm long.

Grey Butcherbird: Five active nests were recorded. One nest contained two eggs, three nests contained three eggs and one nest contained four eggs. All nests were located on 8 October 2007, during a survey specifically targeting this species and to map out and compare individual pairs nesting sites over three breeding seasons. These pairs were monitored for three breeding seasons and each pair only raised a single brood per season. Two pairs built their nests in the same tree as in the 2006 breeding season. All nests were located in paper-bark trees.

Australian Magpie: Eight active nests were recorded from August to November. Two active nests found in the same tree each contained 3 eggs. One nest was placed 4.5 metres from an active Magpie-lark’s nest. All nests were placed in eucalypts and five of the eight nests were located within a 100 metre square block.

Grey Fantail: Two pairs were recorded in scrub land. Both had active nests, one containing three freshly-laid eggs on 6 October 2007, and the other a single chick approximately 6-7 days old on 26th November 2007.

Willie Wagtail: Eight pairs were present, all with nests ranging from freshly laid eggs to chicks ready to leave the nest. On 26 October 2007, two nests were found with three eggs, one nest with four eggs and one with three recently hatched chicks. A further two nests were located on 18 November, one with three chicks ready to leave the nest and the other with one chick ready to leave the nest. Two other nests were located on 21 November, one nest supporting two recently hatched chicks and the other nest supporting three chicks ready to leave the nest. One active nest was only several metres away from an active Restless Flycatcher nest. All of the Willie Wagtail nests were placed low in paper-bark trees and pairs were scattered around the edge of the lake.

Australian Raven: Six active nests recorded around the lake. Two nests located in eucalypts and the other four nests were located in paper bark trees. Only five nests were checked as one nest was inaccessible, though an adult bird was observed sitting during weekly surveys. Of the five nests checked during August only one contained four eggs, while the other four nests contained three eggs.

Restless Flycatcher: One pair, with an active nest containing three chicks on 18 November 2007. The nest was placed on a low fork of a paper bark tree near the water’s edge, and 4 metres from an active Willie Wagtail’s nest.

Magpie-lark: Two active nests were recorded. One was placed in a paper bark tree and the other in a Wandoo. Both nests contained three eggs during a survey on 23 August 2007. One pair had a second clutch of three eggs, found on 18 November. The Magpie-lark used the same Wandoo tree for three breeding seasons.

Nesting associations with other species were observed and recorded over a three year period. The same tree also supported active nests of Yellow-throated Miner, White-winged Triller, Willie Wagtail and Australian Magpie.
Red-capped Robin: Four pairs were recorded, mostly in paper-bark woodland and in low open heath mixed with paper-barks. One active nest containing two chicks was recorded in a low paperbark on 9 September 2007.

Silvereye: No less than 21 nests recorded. Many pairs were found to nest within 10-20 metres of one another with no apparent aggression shown between nesting pairs. This species was found to be the most abundant of the small bird species utilising the different vegetation zones around the lake.

Extensive surveys were carried out during the breeding season of 2007 to identify and map Silvereye nesting sites around the lake. For the 21 active nests found, placement varied greatly from 1 to 6 metres above the ground. Six active nests were recorded on 29th Sep 07, and of these, one was under construction, four nests each supported three eggs, and one nest supported two eggs. On the 4th October a further nine nests were recorded, of which five supported three eggs each, and one two supported three eggs each, two supported three chicks each and two were still under construction. On the 26th October, six nests were recorded, of which two nests each supported three chicks, and the other four each contained two eggs.

Welcome Swallow: Small flock observed catching insects in association with Tree Martins.

Tree Martin: Small flock catching insects over the surface of the water in association with Welcome Swallows.

Australasian Pipit: Most birds observed in paddocks at the edge of the lake.

Steve Elson

BLACK-NECKED STORK FISHING WITH CROCODILES

I thought this might be of interest to readers as I hadn’t seen it before. I was working at Fitzroy Crossing over Christmas and New Year and at 5 pm on the 29th December 2009, whilst watching through binoculars from 100 m away, I saw this interesting behaviour.

A Black-necked Stork was standing motionless in shallow running water where the Margaret River joins the Fitzroy, near Geikie Gorge. The Margaret had been in flood, but had diminished to a stream about 15 m across, divided by small sandbanks into three small streams.

The Black-necked Stork started flapping and running back and forth across one small stream. At this point about ten crocodiles appeared from nowhere and rushed to a point downstream and lined up side by side, shoulder to shoulder blocking the stream. The bird didn’t get too close to them. These were ‘freshies’, not ‘salties’, 4-5 feet long.

When the Black-necked Stork had reached a point about 5 m upstream of the crocodiles, small fish could be seen jumping in between, and both the bird and the crocodiles caught several fish each. Eventually the bird caught a fish about 25 cm long, which took about five minutes to swallow, so he stopped chasing and the crocodiles dispersed.

Richard Evans

THE BIG TWITS 2009 TWITCHATHON DIARY

Saturday 12 December

2 pm – 3 hrs before start
The Big Twits arrive at our not-so-secret woodland location and reveal our softness by booking into cottage accommodation. While checking in, Carnaby’s Black-Cockatoo and Brown-headed Honeyeater are seen around the accommodation. Neither will end up on our Twitchathon list.

3 pm – 2 hrs before start
A chance sighting of three Canny Owls confirms that the Twits are not the only twitchers in the area, increasing the pressure. Three Twits are left at a nearby dam while the fourth makes a petrol run. There is a surprising amount of activity around the dam, despite the warm weather. Yellow-plumed Honeyeater, Blue-breasted Fairy-wren, Elegant Parrot and Rainbow Bee-eater are among the species present.

4.30 pm – 30 mins before start
The Twits arrive at our starting point and quickly locate such interesting birds as Hooded Robin, Jacky Winter and Blue-breasted Fairy-wren. However, we are dismayed to note that the Canny Owls have chosen the same starting point and are picking up similarly good birds.

4.55 pm – 5 mins before start
The pressure mounts, as the Twits try to stay with the Hooded Robin and Jacky Winter, figuring that either would make an appropriately impressive first bird for the Twitchathon.

5 PM START
Naturally, the Hooded Robin and Jacky Winter have both vanished in the last few minutes before the start, so as the clock ticks over 5 pm, we have to be content with Yellow-rumped Thornbill as our first tick. Fortunately, the robin and Jacky Winter are both relocated, along with Elegant Parrot and a number of other good birds and we leave our first stop after half an hour on 17 species.

7 pm – 22 hrs left
Searching through an area of heath finally pays dividends, as we see our only Tawny-crowned Honeyeater of the race. Soon after, one Twit hears Carnaby’s Black-Cockatoo calling very faintly in the distance, but they aren’t heard again. As darkness sets in, we reach 33 species.
8 pm – 21 hrs left
We stop briefly for dinner at the cottage then head out for a spotting expedition.

11 pm – 18 hrs left
The spotting is not as successful as hoped, but we do manage good views of Southern Boobook and Tawny Frogmouth, plus Black-fronted Dotterel and Pacific Black Duck on a farm dam. We try to grab a few hours of sleep with the total on 37 species.

Sunday 2 am – 15 hrs left
Alarm clocks drag the Twits from our beds at 2 am. After a quick breakfast and clean-up, we hit the road at 2.35 am.

3.30 am –13 hrs 30 mins left
We are surprised to see a man standing by the side of a deserted country road pointing at the tree-tops, and suspect that another team is messing with us. An almost-certain Australian Owlet-nightjar also flashes across in front of the car, but can’t be relocated, so can’t be counted. To make matters worse, it would have been a lifer for three Twits.

4.30 am – 12 hrs 30 mins left
We arrive at a secret estuary location at sunrise and pick up a number of useful wader species. We then head onto an unidentified beachside area and get right back on track with some very handy sightings including Bridled Tern and, amazingly, five Little Penguins floating offshore, leaving us with 66 species on the list.

6 am – 11 hrs left
After picking up a few more species at the secret estuary location, we arrive at an undisclosed wader site. We have a very successful visit, picking up our second amazing sighting in a few hours with what we finally confirm as a Little Curlew. Even more amazing is that the least experienced Twit has ever seen Little Curlew before. We also pick up other good waders like Pectoral Sandpiper and Long-toed Stint and leave the wader site with 105 species.

10 am – 7 hrs left
The temperature is around 40°C as we reach a secret site for SW endemics. JEMMs are just leaving the same site, some wearing fly-nets and we soon find out why as the flies are terrible. Despite the heat and flies, we add five species here, but also leave with several crucial dips, including Red-winged Fairy-wren and Western Thornbill.

11 am – 6 hrs left
If our previous site was quiet, our next stop is utterly dead. We add no species, although we do have another encounter with JEMMs. Somewhat dejected, we push on to a roadside swamp location and find that we are still shadowing JEMMs. The roadside swamp adds several species to our list including White-necked Heron and White-winged Triller, but our total is only 115.

1 pm – 4 hrs left
We arrive at another beachside location, after a last-ditch attempt at Scarlet Robin pays off. We pick up Ruddy Turnstones but little else and quickly push on, getting back on track somewhat with a number of quick stops close to the city yielding White-cheeked Honeyeater, Peregrine Falcon, Red Knot and a number of ducks.

3.30 pm – 1 hr 30 mins left
We arrive at a popular inner city birding site and see a number of other teams also birding the area. We also see Black-tailed Native-hen and Dusky Moorhen to take the tally to 135 species.

4.30 pm – 30 mins left
We pick up two fairy-wrens at a secret beachside location and head for the finish point. We arrive near the finish point with some time to spare and try to pick up a couple of last ticks for the list.

4.50 pm – 10 minutes to go
A quick check over the list shows we haven’t marked off Swamp Harrier, moving us to 138. One Twit reports some Varied Sitella at the top of a hill, so three of us run up the hill and finally find a lone sitella. It proves to be our last tick of the Twitchathon and we finish on 139 species. Carnaby’s Black-Cockatoo is not amongst them, despite several near misses and we finish in a somewhat disappointing 3rd place!

6 pm – 1 hr after the race finish
A number of Carnaby’s Black-Cockatoo call from around the finishing point!

Thursday 2 pm – 4 days after race
One Twit realises that we didn’t tick off Little Grassbird, and so could have had 140 species. Alas, it’s too late!

The Big Twits (Alan Collins, Martin Cake, Greg Howell and John Graff)

CUSTODY DISPUTE? MARITAL DISPUTE? OR ABDUCTION?

On Saturday 23 January 2010 Tony France, Bill Russell and I were searching for Hooded Plover runners on the north side of the south spit at Lake Preston. As we approached we saw two adult Hooded Plovers, which we presumed were a pair, and a runner. As we moved closer we could see fighting between the two adults but were not sure if other Red-capped Plover were involved. As we moved closer the fighting was only between the two adults. They were leaping in the air at each other and beating their wings together. This happened at least four times as we approached.

After we had caught and flagged the runner and released it, it ran and joined one of the adults. The second adult then again confronted the other adult and the confrontation occurred at least three times again.

We could only assume that one of the adults was trying to abduct the runner or attack it for some reason. Bill Russell (per comm.) had reported that one pair at Martins Tank some time ago had acquired an extra pair of runners overnight (from two to four.)

Dick Rule
Crossword No. 2

by Pam Agar

CLUES

ACROSS
1. Long-toed bird of the tropics.
9. Shy bird of forests with clear, ringing call.
11. Finches are common … grasslands.
12. Chats are commonly found in these areas.
15. If it’s a Reeve, it isn’t one!
17. Wise to do this if you want further information.
19. Wilson’s Storm Petrel breeds in this area
23. Winged and warm-blooded but definitely not a bird.
24. Bony wing-projection of Masked Lapwing.
26. Long, lacy feather developed by breeding Egret.
28. Quality of a Crested Bellbird’s song.
30. A Lyrebird is well-known for its ability to do this.
31. Binoculars are … essential item for most birders.
32. Prime real estate for Rainbow Bee-eaters.
33. In most cases, it is oval in shape.
34. Young bird, wearing its first plumage of true feathers.

DOWN
2. These currents enable Australian Pelicans to soar.
3. This call signifies a warning.
5. Spectacular high diver at sea.
6. One way to remove meat from a carcass.
7. Beginner’s term for Corvus coronoides?
8. Cramped cubby for dedicated birdwatchers.
9. Erectile feathers on a bird’s head.
10. For a sea-bird, this could mean big trouble.
14. Young dotterels do this very well.
18. Many of WA’s waders head for this remote location in autumn.
19. Considered an omen by mariners.
20. A Scarlet Robin owns a white one.
22. Unwelcome avian visitor to WA.
25. A female swan.
27. Pertaining to birds.
29. Ground-dwelling bird.
31. Recapture of banded birds may give an indication of this.

Digital photos

When submitting electronic images for possible use in WABN, please use a medium to high resolution, eg, 300 dpi, as this provides a clear reproduction.

Most digital cameras provide an option for selecting the resolution. Low resolution images generally are used only for display on computer monitors and not for printing.

When emailing photos, please send them separately and not embedded in Word documents.

Kimberley Flycatcher, juvenile, Broome (see report on page 24).

Photo: Nik Ward
Broome Bird Observatory

Assistant Warden

Position description, 2010 season

Each year we seek outgoing, enthusiastic, and hard-working people to join us as Assistant Wardens from mid-March to the end of October. We are currently seeking applicants for 2010.

The role involves living at the Observatory and working in a small team environment.

Duties include:

- Assisting overnight guests and greeting day visitors
- Daily cleaning and facility maintenance
- Running the small shop and taking accommodation reservations and tour bookings
- Conducting bird watching tours (training provided)
- Assisting with ongoing research.

It is essential that applicants hold a C class drivers license (or equivalent) with no restrictions and be immediately eligible to apply for an F class endorsement (requires a minimum of four years licensed driving experience).

The BBO has a Special Program status from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and can provide successful overseas applicants with the opportunity to apply for visas to join the BBO program.

General terms and conditions include a small weekly stipend, food allowance, furnished accommodation, annual leave and a contribution to relocation if applicable.

For further information about the observatory visit our website at:

www.broomebirdobservatory.com/employment.html

and contact the Warden Nik Ward for further details.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Nik Ward
Warden, Broome Bird Observatory
Birds Australia
(08) 9193 5600
www.broomebirdobservatory.com

Perth Volunteer Roost Surveys - we need your help!

A vital component of the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project is being undertaken by volunteers across the Perth region right now!

The start of 2010 saw the relaunch of volunteer surveys of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo roosts on the Swan Coast Plain — with the aim to build on information recorded in the 2006 Swan Coastal Plain project.

The goal of this current project is to identify additional roost sites, to record the number of cockatoos using each roost and record whether the birds enter the trees in singles, pairs or triplets. This extra detail can give us important information, for example the number of breeding birds and juveniles in the flocks can be recorded, as a triplet is composed of two adults and a juvenile.

In addition to the regular monitoring of roosts a ‘snapshot’ survey will be undertaken in early autumn, where all volunteers across Perth will complete a roost survey on the same day, to provide an estimate of the total number of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo utilising the region during the non-breeding season.

The survival of these birds relies on the efforts of passionate volunteers and we need people to assist with evening roost surveys across the Perth area and the snapshot survey. If you would like to get involved or know of a roost that could be surveyed please contact Quinton:

email q.burnham@ecu.edu.au or phone 042 876 2292.

Quinton Burnham, Roost Count Coordinator

Request for Bush Stone-curlew DNA

The Australian Museum is conducting a conservation genetics analysis of Bush Stone-curlew populations from across Australia. It is important that we examine Bush Stone-curlew genetic samples from all over Australia, including Western Australia, to uncover information that will help the conservation management of this species.

To obtain Bush Stone-curlew genetic material from Western Australia and nearby states, we are putting out the call for shedded feathers, tissue or feathers from road-kills, or any bones of decomposed birds that may be found by bird enthusiasts. If any of this material is discovered, it can be sent by post, enclosed in a sealed plastic bag, to:

The DNA Laboratory, Australian Museum
6 College Street, Sydney, 2010, NSW.

Include the locality (a description and map co-ordinates or latitude and longitude if available), the date of collection, and name of collector.

For more information, contact Robert Mason via phone (02 9320 6488) or email rob.mason@austmus.gov.au.

Current email addresses

We have recently noticed that email addresses of many members are out-of-date. Please email our office direct:

mail@birdswa.com.au

with your current contact details.

Thank you.

Office Manager, Birds Australia Western Australia
The following people joined Birds Australia between 1 November 2009 and 31 January 2010. We look forward to meeting you at our excursions and general meetings:


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**EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY**

**BIRDING FOR BEGINNERS**

11 - 17 April 2010 - leader to be announced. Cost $560

This introduction to Birds and Bird watching will help you with the basic knowledge and techniques required to start learning about birds. Eyre’s special setting in the Nuytsland Nature Reserve, with the sea and desert in close proximity, offers unusual birding opportunities in a welcoming atmosphere. Relax, enjoy the birdlife, then relax again.

**FURRY FRIENDS**

5th – 11th Sept 2010 – Facilitated by George & Anne McKay. Cost $560

This course will look at the small animal life around the observatory. Drift lines and pit traps will be set, and should yield a variety of small animals such as possums, hopping mice and geckoes. We hope to have more Pygmy Possum tubes available soon. Participants will monitor existing tubes and help erect the new ones. Time will also be spent looking at bats around the observatory and in nearby caves.

**ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS COURSES COMING UP**

**DUNE RESTORATION** Special price **FREE!!!!**

Two more Dune Restoration Sessions are on offer. The first will run from 14th – 20th March 2010 (some places left). The **second session** from 16th – 22nd May 2010 has 3 places left. The maximum number of participants will be 6 for each session. A grant will cover accommodation and meals for those participants willing to work four hours a day. There will also be a small fuel subsidy per vehicle.

The tasks include collection of seed (for future planting) and seaweed (for spreading on the dunes). Ring the Caretakers to secure your place. Get involved.

*Sometimes one wonders if it’s worth the hard work. Yes, it is!! With up to three courses running each year we are making a difference. Memories of the bare track going to the beach and the dense mallee country now skirting it are long term proof of the value of stabilising the mobile dunes.*

Why not join the next course and help make a difference?

Volunteer Caretakers
Eyre Bird Observatory
PMB 32, Cocklebiddy via Norseman WA 6443
Tel: (08) 9039 3450 Fax: (08) 9039 3440
Email: eyrebirdobs@bigpond.com

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**Birds Australia Congress and Campout**

Townsville 13 – 20 August 2010

A call for papers and posters that engage the theme of the Congress:

“CONSERVATION OF AUSTRALIAN BIRDS — APPROACHES, PROJECTS and OUTCOMES”

In the light of Peter Garrett’s recent announcement we are keen to compare the single species approach with holistic ecosystem management in conservation of birds. We intend to focus on the conservation activities of Birds Australia members and groups and how Important Bird Areas can enhance Birds Australia’s performance in this field.

Topics for papers can embrace monitoring as a conservation tool, accounts of conservation projects, captive breeding, translocation of birds to vacant habitat, habitat restoration, data collection & publication and how to achieve conservation action by influencing agencies and landholders.

Enquiries regarding program to: graham.harrington@csiro.au

More details in the March edition of Wingspan and on the BA website.

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**Rangelands Surveys, August 2010**

The dates for this year’s Rangelands Surveys have been set as July 31 to August 15. One venue under consideration is Meentheena, east of Marble Bar. However, the organisers are waiting for the end of the cyclone season to make a final decision.

For further information or to add your name to the list, come to the talk on the Rangelands Surveys at the monthly BAWA meeting at 7pm on 19th April (note the early meeting date) at the Bold Park Eco Centre, or contact:

Ed and Alyson (9299 6283) or Pam and George (9457 2292) or Ruth and John (9384 2098).

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**New members**

The following people joined Birds Australia between 1 November 2009 and 31 January 2010. We look forward to meeting you at our excursions and general meetings:

10 November outing, Denmark area
A walk past towering karris not far from the Denmark River provided excellent views of a group of four Shining Bronze-Cuckoos flitting about in a rather frantic manner all calling constantly. Striated Pardalote and Red-eared Firetail were found nesting. Along the river we found a small colony of nesting Little Pied Cormorants, but bushbirds were few and far between leading some members of the group to study resident snakes. We decided to continue on to a view point overlooking Wilson Inlet and managed to get the group separated. (We have now established a firm rule that cars that merely look like the leader’s car are not to be followed.) We all enjoyed Wilson Inlet albeit in different locations. Lunch saw most of the group reunited at the Denmark River. Our tally for the day was 55 species.

8 December outing, Emu Point/Lake Seppings
We met at Emu Point Boat Harbour with plans to explore the nearby mudflats. Our hopes to see a lot of shorebirds were dashed with only a few Great Knot, Red-necked Stint and Red-capped Plover about. Australian Pelican and ibis which breed on nearby Green Island proved much more numerous. We moved on to Lake Seppings where the usual assortment of waterfowl greeted us. A walk around the lake offered several good bushbird sightings — a pair of Sacred Kingfishers was observed taking food to a nest hollow, White-winged Triller, a species not often seen in Albany, were building a nest and two Dusky Woodswallow nestlings were receiving a steady supply of insects from their parents. A New Holland Honeyeater that had been observing this feast joined the young woodswallows in the nest (see photo on page 2). Was it expecting to be fed as well? We finished the day with our traditional Christmas lunch at Emu Point.

19 January outing, Kalgan area
We started the day at a small park near the Lower King Bridge. As usual, the resident hobby was observing our arrival. Australian White Ibis and Australian Pied Oystercatcher were the most numerous species in Oyster Harbour. An Eastern Osprey was spotted from the bridge together with a single Whimbrel. We continued on to a nearby reserve where eight Rainbow Bee-eaters including at least two immatures were found. The resident owlet-nightjar refused to show itself, but sightings of a group of Varied Sittellas soon had us moving on. There were also quite a few young parrots present. After morning tea we decided to try our luck at the Kalgan estuary and were welcomed by two ospreys, but that was as good as it got. Apart from oystercatchers, shorebirds were nowhere to be seen. We soon left and visited the Kalgan River where we enjoyed the antics of a family of Red-winged Fairy-wrens. Despite our disappointing score on shorebirds our total count was a respectable 60 species.

Future outings
Excursions will take place on Tuesday, 13 April, 11 May, 8 June and 13 July. More details about destinations, where to meet, etc, will be made available on BAWA E-news. You can also check the Albany Bird Group’s website:

http://sites.google.com/site/albanybirds/Home.

Please don’t hesitate to contact us for further information. Excursion leaders will be either Ray Garstone (PH: 9844 7540), Brad Kneebone (PH: 9845 2233) or Anne Bondin (PH: 9844 1793). You can also e-mail us at:
albanybirds@hotmail.com.

Lower South-West Birding Branch
See next page for our calendar for the half-year 2010.

Other birding activities of interest
- April 2nd – 5th: Birds Australia WA Easter campouts at Holleton, north-east of Narembeen, and at Hopetoun and the Fitzgerald River National Park. Phone the BAWA office on 9383 7749 for details.
- 5th – 7th June: Birds Australia WA campout at Dryandra Woodland, north of Narrogin. More details will be sent in a later email.

May: Bridgetown Owl Survey at designated sites around the Bridgetown-Greenbushes shire. Organised by the Blackwood Environment Society. Date to be announced.

Important note: Please ensure that you let one of the leaders know if you intend to come along to one of the bird walks so we can ensure everyone is present before we commence:

Erica Shedley – 9761 7512 or e.shedley@bigpond.com
Peter Taylor – 9772 4788 or goodoldpete@westnet.com.au
Gillian Wheatley – 9761 1274 or snottygobble@westnet.com.au
KARAKAMIA SANCTUARY, CHIDLOW, 11 October 2009

On a rather grey Sunday morning 24 members and guests drove to Karakamia Sanctuary in the Perth hills. It was unseasonably chilly for October and this seemed to have an effect on the wildlife. There was very little birdsong. The birders were divided into three groups to cover the different terrain in the sanctuary. The groups were led by Sue Abbotts, Jan Crossley and Dave Crossley. The total species seen was 50 birds, the highlight being the calls of the recently arrived Rainbow Bee-eaters.

After the morning’s birding we were treated to a delicious sausage sizzle lunch provided by the Australian Wildlife Conservancy. Thanks go to Jo and Manda from AWC for their assistance and guidance during the morning as well as their culinary skills on the barbecue.

Jan and Dave Crossley

NIGHT WALK, ALCOA WELLARD WETLANDS, BALDIVIS, 25 October 2009

Sixteen people gathered at Wellard Wetlands on a warm spring evening in the hope of encountering some nocturnal birds. The highlight was a small flock of Regent Parrots seen around the carpark before the walk started. Spot-lighting can be very hit-and-miss and unfortunately, this walk was definitely a miss. A number of bats and (unfortunately) a fox were seen, and seven bird species were recorded, however none of the seven were the nocturnal species that we were hoping to see. Nonetheless, it was a pleasant walk and it’s hoped that we will be able to organise a similar walk next year.

John Graff

COLLINS ROAD, FLINT STATE FOREST, 1 November 2009

Twenty-four adults and one enthusiastic future member attended the Collins Road site in the Flint State Forest on 1 November. A new species (Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo) was added to the site list, which now stands at 67. On this occasion we recorded 41 species, including Blue-breasted Fairy-wrens and Crested Shrike-tits, while Western Yellow Robins and Rainbow Bee-eaters were found nesting. We also disturbed several Black-gloved Wallabies.

Michael and Lesley Brooker

FORRESTDALE LAKE, 7 November 2009

Seventeen people met at Moore Street to observe the lake from the limestone viewing point. Those wearing boots waded through the typha for a better look. Like last year, we saw many cygnets and other regulars such as Eastern Great Egrets. Following the banksia woodland trail to the east side of the lake, we saw interesting woodland species, Crested Pigeon and Splendid Fairy-wren.

Returning to our vehicles we visited the nearby Stirling Swamp, which is privately owned, to observe from the roadside. Here we saw 14 waterbird species, including nine White-necked Herons and an Australian Hobby.

The morning walk at Forrestdale Lake produced 42 species, of which 27 were bushbirds.

David James

WANNAMAL LAKE, 15 November 2009

Twenty-four members and two visitors attended the excursion including a junior member in company with his father.

Wannamal Lake is not a readily accessed lake in that it has very dense bush thickets around much of the lake. A large percentage of the sightings occurred at the northern end, on the eastern side, which is the Bindoon-Moora Road side.

A total of 64 species were sighted, which was a good effort because it was only a half-day excursion. The highlight for some may have been the Whistling Kite doing battle with the Wedge-tailed Eagle.

Thanks to all who attended.

Max Howard
WOODMAN POINT, 19 November 2009

Strong south-westerly winds and occasional showers greeted ten hardy members at Woodman Point. The weather suggested good seabirds and waders but poor bushbirds. We only saw 21 species but Arctic Jaegers were seen at least five times with three seen together on one occasion.

A brief view of two Sanderlings was the wader highlight among Grey Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Red-necked Stint and Red-capped Plover. A fledging Welcome Swallow and its sibling on the nest were also enjoyable to watch. As we finished morning tea a pale form Arctic Jaeger passed over us providing good views of this beautiful bird (see photos on page 2).

Robyn Pickering

ALFRED COVE, 22 November 2009

The fine, relatively cool weather encouraged 34 people to turn out for some birding at Alfred Cove. As usual, an excellent view of the local Eastern Ospreys was an early highlight. One was also seen later in the walk perched atop one of the goalposts on the nearby football field. The tide was low and it was encouraging to see a good number and variety of waders along the foreshore, including at least 45 Bar-tailed Godwits, 25 Great Knots and a number of Grey Plovers and Common Greenshanks. A Pacific Golden Plover was also seen. Unfortunately the low tide and heat haze meant that views of the waders were not optimal, even with the use of ‘scopes. A dog was also seen on the mudflats, despite the fence and signs. The final bird count was 56 species.

John Graff

BULL CREEK WETLANDS, 5 December 2009

The day was forecast to be 37 degrees and so we were fortunate that we met early at Brockman Park; luckily, parts of the walk are quite shady.

As 18 of us left the park, a beautiful Willie Wagtail’s nest was spotted. The bird had been sitting on the nest but was soon defending it from us. There had been a fire along part of the walk that runs along beside All Saints College.

We were able to view used nests of a Red Wattlebird, Tawny Frogmouth, Australian Raven and Yellow-rumped Thornbill; there was also a current Rainbow Bee-eater’s nest.

A very good photo of a raptor was taken and passed around for identification; the final decision was a Collared Sparrowhawk, a bird not recorded here before.

The final total was 22 birds.

Sue Keogh

STAR SWAMP, NORTH BEACH, 10 December 2009

Rainbow Bee-eaters were very evident with a number of burrows actively being used on flat ground near parkways, people and dogs off leads not seeming to worry them.

A pair of Black-shouldered Kites — one in flight and the other in a dead tree — was spotted with scope, along with a pair of Brown Goshawks high up that may have been from a nest seen early on the walk.

Maybe an 8:00 am start was a little too late as many birds were not calling much an hour later. Perhaps daylight saving has merits for bush birders in December.

Michael Hancock

WATERFORD FORESHORE, SALTER POINT, 27 December 2009

The gentle easterly wind kept the 16 people on the walk cool and the birds in view. We walked east along the river and the excellent revegetation area finding the usual waterbirds, some bushbirds, including Sacred Kingfisher, Black-shouldered Kite and Nankeen Kestrel. From the jetty we saw a pair of Eastern Osprey perched on a dead tree over the water. We walked along a newly formed track through to Clontarf College, to identify the waders in the bay which turned out to be Black-winged Stilts.

The highlight was a Buff-banded Rail and a Spotless Crane in the pools with muddy edges dotted around in the dense rushes.

At morning tea an Australian Hobby flew over and Mistletoebirds called frequently overhead. A walk around the west side and a drive up to Salter Point and The Lagoon added Common Greenshank and Australian Wood Duck for a total of 49 species seen for the morning.

Sue Abbotts

BLACKWALL REACH, BICTON, 10 January 2010

Each year there is an increase in attendance, this time 23 which is pleasing. Perhaps the word is spreading as it is the most scenic walk along the lower river system coupled with plenty of variety and interest. The bird count remained in the usual high thirties (38).

The “odd couple”, being a Galah mated with a Western Corella, have been in this location for at least 30 years and their progeny has been sighted over some of those years. It was expected to see them on the foreshore at what used to be their regular nesting site but no luck, having to be content with seeing them at a distance when out on the sand spit. Those that visited the toilet block near the café reported having a close up view.

The four cormorants and the darter, all being diving birds, are a challenge usually fulfilled but the elusive Great Cormorant was missing this time.

The Eastern Ospreys were out in increased numbers and quite active but instead of being in their regular spots were all over the place. Their regular nest over the other side of the river was in view from the end of the sand spit where two adults and a chick could be seen perched above and in the nest respectively.

The White-cheeked Honeyeaters seemed to have decreased in numbers but were found after careful searching.

Eric Pyatt
LAKE MONGER, 14 January 2010

The good thing about Lake Monger is there are few bushes to peer into or under and the birds float around on the water waiting to be seen and counted. Twelve members and two visitors perambulated around the lake and saw 42 species. There were many juvenile Great Crested Grebes and interesting to see an Australasian Grebe on a nest — Great Crested Grebes do the same.

Several members reported seeing a juvenile bronze-cuckoo, an interesting possibility because neither of the two bronze-cuckoos has been recorded in the 33 years that lists exist for Lake Monger. Another uncommon species for the area was a Sacred Kingfisher well seen by everybody. There was a tight group of about 30 pelicans swimming in a manner suggesting they were feeding on whatever is available in the lake. It’s difficult to think, though, that there is anything big enough to interest pelicans in Lake Monger.

It is worth visiting Lake Monger in the summer; it does attract quite large numbers of waterbirds and as soon as the rain comes they disappear.

Max Bailey

BROOME BIRD OBSERVATORY

Life at BBO gradually became quieter during December as visitor numbers dropped off, but the birding continued to excite as tropical cyclone Laurence brought a bag full of birds to Entrance Point near the port during the middle of December.

However, the beginning of the month saw several interesting birds remaining in the area, such as the Cattle Egret at the sewage works, along with several Black-tailed Native-hens scattered across wetlands in the area. Other wetland birds included two Pectoral Sandpipers on the 12th, one of which remained on and off until the 17th and a Little Stint was identified and a Nankeen Night Heron was seen at dusk heading out towards the golf course.

Events then took a turn when the small plover originally seen in October made a brief return for a few days, still challenging local birders to confirm its identity on distant views before disappearing again. Another identification challenge came on the 21st after cyclone Laurence passed off, but the birding continued to excite as tropical roosting Tree Martins that gradually built up in the mangroves at Crab Creek with speculated figures of up to 200,000 being present at its peak. Several hundred Barn Swallows were mixed in with the roost and a single Red-rumped Swallow was seen on the 28th.

Further afield, reports of Black Falcon came in from Taylor’s Lagoon and Lake Campion and on the 4th a single male Pied Honeyeater was seen at the former site.

What we were waiting for happened on the 14th January when the small plover reappeared at the sewage works and set up a territory, defending it against the local Black-fronted Dotterel. Finally good views and photos were taken to confirm identification as a Semipalmated Plover and if accepted will be a first for Australia. The BBO BLOG gives a good account of this bird with additional photos plus further details of other birds seen in the area.

Snipe were also a feature of December and January with up to ten un-attributed to a specific species in the area. With careful watching several were identified as Swinhoe’s and another as Pin-tailed Snipe which was seen several times as it favoured a small sludgy pool at the entrance of the sewage works and close views could be obtained.

The observatory continued to gather banding data with several visits to the Mangroves Constant Effort Site to band at the regular net sites. This project aims to monitor population levels and longevity by re-trapping previously ringed individuals. It can also provide information on productivity, adult mortality, recruitment into the breeding population and seasonal movements of birds in the area.

A visit from the Mulberry Tree Day Care Group lightened an afternoon with a whistle stop tour around the observatory. The kids had so many questions and enjoyed talking about birds, watching a Beach Stone-curlew from the observation platform which posed so well and a look at benthic fauna we have stored in the mud lab. I was amazed how much even the little ones knew and hopefully there will be some budding conservationists amongst them!

Nik Ward, Warden

www.broomebirdobservatory.com/flyways
Now that all the festivities are over and summer is well and truly here, Eyre is the place to be. There are two more Dune Restoration Courses to come and a busy bee to help caretakers prepare for winter.

Birding has been steady for the summer period and the waders have kept us busy. Australian Pied Oystercatchers have had a good year unlike in Tasmania where breeding has been poor. Oriental Plovers have visited again. They like to cool their feet in the ocean when temperatures on ‘the plain’ get too high.

The ‘Drift Seed’ has thrown up a surprise and, of course, what have the caretakers been up to?

Management is working on an updated website with the help of two ex-caretakers. We hope to have it up and running soon. Our solar power system has been checked and a safety switch inserted in the system. Progress is being made for a wind generator to be added to supplement the power supply.

PowerPoint facilities for our visitors are planned as we increase our power availability in the evening.

Volunteer Caretakers’ Report, November to February 2010

Eyre Bird Observatory to us was a wondrous place mentioned from time to time in Wingspan. We called in on one of our trips west and let it drop that we volunteered as caretaker/rangers at other places and ended up with our names in a book.

Wherever we go we make a bird list and begin a new one on each visit. We didn’t regard ourselves as red hot birders; it is simply a thing we do. Before we came here we spent a little time improving our knowledge but it was all about bushbirds.

We didn’t do anything with regard to shorebirds, which is the main thrust at Eyre. It has been a sharp learning curve. The main activity, though, when we began here were two courses.

First was a Dune Stabilisation Course. We all know what has befallen Eucla Telegraph Station, I’m sure. George Agar and his team, perhaps I should say ‘teams’ as we anticipate the future, are doing their best to prevent the Eyre Bird Observatory from the same fate as the sands deposited by the ocean are blown inland.

The second was Field Techniques in Bird Studies led by Stephen Davies who could be regarded as our Professorial Fellow in Residence. The class of ten young ladies, we’re sure, benefited greatly from a wide ranging course.

At Eyre, the most durable attractions to visitors and caretakers alike are the bird baths around the observatory. They are all different in nature and it might surprise us that they are in continual transition.

When first we came here, the two bird baths at the end of the underground tank were almost the domain of the Major Mitchell’s Cockatoos as they screeched in for their early morning drink (see photos on page 36).

All the other birds, the Australian Ravens, the Grey Currawongs, the Red Wattlebirds, the Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, the Brush Bronzewings and the occasional Grey Butcherbird, who also liked those baths, played second fiddle and ‘so on down the pecking order’. The smaller birds took their turn if the bigger more aggressive birds were not present.

As the season wore on the scene began to change. Parent birds brought fledglings, sometimes feeding them in the area. Major Mitchell’s, Australian Ravens, Grey Currawongs, even the Grey Butcherbirds brought in the family.

On a hot day when just about every bird came in for a drink and quite often, a bath, the Collared Sparrowhawk arrived with two fair-sized fledglings. The ravens claimed ownership. They spaced themselves in defensive positions and kept the fledgling sparrowhawks out. When the ravens tired of their game, the currawongs took over. The sparrowhawks persevered until they got their drink.

The birdbath off the front verandah, on a blazing hot day, has to be seen to be believed. Behind it is the haven for small birds. Honeyeaters and some others like the Dusky Woodswallow, the White-winged Triller and the showy Willie Wagtail come there and stand shoulder to shoulder as thick as they can stick.

The end of January is approaching and our time in this historical precinct and fine old building is coming to a close. We will miss the show at the birdbaths and our sorties along the beach.

Isabel and Des Hose, Volunteer Caretakers

RESEARCH

Remember This!!!!
The ‘Drift Seed’ found on Kanidal beach

Mystery objects from the Eyre Beach Count

Because of its remoteness and the weekly beach count for birds, Eyre is an excellent location for observations on

‘Drift Seed’.

Photo: John O’Brien
the wide variety of objects washed up on beaches (‘drift’). Accordingly, since 2005, the library at Eyre has included a 7-page article and a book on Australian drift seeds. Both are illustrated and so allow some drift seeds and fruits to be identified.

Since then, no drift items were collected until November 2008 when, as reported in ‘Eyre Waves Spring 2009’, John and Beverley O’Brien collected a drift object and took three good digital photos of it, thoughtfully including a scale. The object was 10-12 cm long (ie, twice the size of a tennis ball), not quite spherical, dark brown and rock-hard when found. It was covered with warty protuberances except for a large, circular, scar-like area at the widest end. It was very smelly and was banished to a site well away from the observatory, while the images were sent to the botanist Kevin Kenneally at the WA Department of Environment and Conservation because it was understandably assumed to be a plant seed. None of the local or overseas botanists he showed the images to could identify the organism.

Then botanists at La Trobe University, Melbourne (Pete Green, Trevor Edwards and Bob Parsons) saw the small image in Eyre Waves and had Alma forward the three good colour images. We felt that the objects were likely to be from a large-seeded palm species but couldn’t match them with any known palm.

Next, through the kind efforts of Alma and the Eyre caretakers, Des and Isabel Hose, the actual discarded object was retrieved from the bush near the observatory and posted to La Trobe. We immediately realised that it was of animal, not plant, origin, with the main candidates being ascidians (‘sea squirts’), holothurians (starfish relatives) or sponges. The leading expert on Australian sponges, Dr John Hooper of the Queenslands Museum, kindly identified the specimen as the sponge *Ecionemia geodides*, with a note that the species is quite well-known in the Bass Strait area. We were very pleased to get a name on it, given that there are 1000 or so sponge species in southern Australia, many of which have not yet been named. The drift record of *E. geodides* near Eyre will now go into the marine faunal databank, so that this whole episode has been pleasingly worthwhile, as well as interesting and educational.

Please send any objects thought to be seeds or fruits, or photos/digital images of them to R.F. Parsons, Department of Botany, La Trobe University, Bundoora, Victoria, 3086, email r.parsons@latrobe.edu.au.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the help we received from Alma, Des and Isabel, and Drs Patricia Mather and John Hooper at the Queensland Museum.

Bob Parsons

COURSE REPORTS

COASTCARE DUNE RESTORATION - 15th NOVEMBER to 22nd NOVEMBER 2009

Participants: George Agar (leader), Pam Agar, Gib. Tretowhan, Carol Tretowhan, Peter Miduszewski, Yvonne Davies, Robina Haynes.

Motive: The Eyre Bird Observatory, through Birds Australia WA, received a grant from Coasctcare to help/encourage people to participate in a project to revegetate the dunes threatening the old Telegraph Station at Eyre by subsidising a portion of their travel expenses and covering their accommodation at Eyre.

Objectives: To collect seaweed and seed from the local flora and spread/broadcast on an area of mobile dune which appears to be threatening the Telegraph Station; the seaweed acts as a windbreak and mulch until the seeds grow and take over as a wind break.

The site is at the southern end of what is known as Irene’s Peak, of which a portion was worked on in 2006 and in January 2009.

Observations: Seed wise, the season seems to have confused the *Acacia cyclops* which was bearing shed seed pods, green seed pods and flowers while *Acacia aniceps* was in the process of shedding and most other plants of interest didn’t appear to have flowered, although the *Spinifex hirsutus* should be ripe in January or February.

Seaweed was collected from about 1 km east to 6 km west of the beach access. The quantity was variable and quality was reasonable.

Summary of work done

Area covered with seaweed was approximately ¾ to 1 acre

Total loads of seaweed 22

Total *Acacia cyclops* seed pods 1 butt

Total *Acacia aniceps* seed pods 3 butts

Pam Agar
the beach over the top of the dunes. These last two counts were in rehabilitated areas. Some species were seen only in the undisturbed areas and others only in the rehabilitated areas.

A comparison of total numbers and estimated densities of birds in the standard and rehabilitated areas is shown in Table 2.

Mapping: For mapping around the observatory we got results for ten species (Table 3).

The densities from Point Counts are more realistic for non-territorial birds than the mapping figures. They suggest that there are about as many New Holland Honeyeaters as in 2008, but there were many more Red Wattlebirds and Silvereyes in 2009. As in 2008 in the rehabilitated areas, the Singing Honeyeater was more common than the New Holland, but the reverse was true in the standard, undisturbed ABC areas where there were proportionately more New Holland Honeyeaters. The Blue-breasted Fairy-wren declined slightly around the observatory, but has clearly established itself in the rehabilitated areas. The density of this species has declined steadily in recent years, so evidence of its ability to colonise rehabilitated areas is welcome.

Mist Netting: During mist netting we caught 42 New Holland Honeyeaters, 15 Singing Honeyeaters, 1 Red Wattlebird, 1 White-fronted Honeyeater, 1 Brown-headed Honeyeater and 2 Silvereyes.

Comparing all the counting methods shows some agreement in trends, but usually it is best to compare the results from a count method with the results for the same method from a previous year to get an idea of trends for individual species.

Altogether we caught seven species of reptiles, some in the pit traps and some by hand: the dragon *Tympanocryptus adelaidensis*, sand dragons *Ctenophorus maculatus*, barking geckoes *Underwoodisaurus millii*, the pygopods *Delma australis* and *Pygopus lepidopodus*, and the skinks *Hemiergis initialis* and *Morethia obscura*. We also saw a dugite and a bobtail. On Friday we found Malleefowl mound 65. It had been active but was cold and wet, perhaps as a result of the very wet spring. We visited Burnabbie and found several Rainbow Bee-eaters and Jackie Winters. In addition, Tegan looked for the pygmy possum boxes. There used to be 50 of these, but she had limited success finding them. Many appear to have been overtaken by the sand dunes. Eight nest boxes were located using the old maps, mostly out on the west track and in the vicinity of the observatory. Two were in disrepair, and attempts were made to fix them up as best as practicable in the field. Of the other six, only two showed recent evidence of being used (well, used by pygmy possums at least - the others contained several huntsmen and geckoes (including that Marbled Gecko - *Christinus* spp.)). None of the boxes were in trees that were in flower at the time, so it would be interesting to see how much they are utilised when those trees are in flower.

Stephen Davies and Tegan Douglas

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### Table 1: Results of the point count census of birds around Eyre Bird Observatory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Species</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spotted Pardalote</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inland Thornbill</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weebill</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-browed Scrubwren</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing Honeyeater</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Holland Honeyeater</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Wattlebird</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-browed Babbler</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey Shrike Thrush</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey Butcherbird</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey Currawong</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome Swallow</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silvereye</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Table 2: Results of ABC censuses (total numbers, with estimated densities in brackets) at Eyre Bird Observatory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2009</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Rehabilitation area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area searched</td>
<td>6 ha</td>
<td>4 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brush Bronzewing</td>
<td>13(2.17)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue-breasted Fairy-wren</td>
<td>7(1.17)</td>
<td>4(1.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-browed Scrubwren</td>
<td>5(0.83)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weebill</td>
<td>6(1.00)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spotted Pardalote</td>
<td>10(1.67)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Wattlebird</td>
<td>27(4.50)</td>
<td>6(1.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing Honeyeater</td>
<td>10(1.67)</td>
<td>15(3.75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Holland Honeyeater</td>
<td>24(4.00)</td>
<td>12(3.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown Honeyeater</td>
<td>6(1.00)</td>
<td>2(0.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey Shrike-thrush</td>
<td>4(0.67)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-browed Babbler</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6(1.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willie Wagtail</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3(0.75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dusky Woodswallow</td>
<td>1(0.17)</td>
<td>1(0.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey Currawong</td>
<td>1(0.17)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome Swallow</td>
<td>2(0.33)</td>
<td>5(1.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silvereye</td>
<td>21(3.5)</td>
<td>20(5.00)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3: Density estimates from territory mapping at Eyre in 2008 and 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birds/ha</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
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<td>Species</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spotted Pardalote</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Striated Pardalote</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inland Thornbill</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weebill</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue-breasted Fairy-wren</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-browed Scrubwren</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-browed Babbler</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey Shrike-thrush</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey Butcherbird</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey Currawong</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Code-of-conduct for campouts

This code-of-conduct is designed to make BAWA campouts pleasant, safe and enjoyable for everyone.

1. Members shall notify the BAWA office if they plan to attend a campout, leaving name, address, phone number, and an emergency contact.
2. The leader is responsible for gaining consent from the owners or public authorities to visit proposed birding areas prior to the visit.
3. Family pets should not be taken on campouts. If children are taken on the campout, then parents shall take full responsibility for them and will be held accountable for their behaviour.
4. While the Leader generally seeks consensus on the arrangements for the day’s events, if a final decision is required then this rests with the leader. Their directions should be followed, especially in public land or parks.
5. A compass and whistle can be invaluable if lost, or, to raise an alarm.
6. Participants should treat each other and the facilities provided with respect.
7. Participants wishing to leave any activities early should ensure the leader is advised.
8. Campfires can only be used if permitted at the time and must be fully extinguished prior to leaving the camp area.
9. Rubbish shall be disposed of properly, and if no suitable bin is provided then the rubbish shall be taken home.
10. Members should ensure that their vehicle is in roadworthy condition and they have adequate food, water and fuel, and suitable clothing including footwear. Daily checks can be undertaken using the ‘POWER’ check guide, ie, P = petrol/diesel fuel, O = oil, W = water, E = electrical/battery, R = rubber/tyre pressures.
11. When travelling in convoy having your vehicle ‘lights turned on’ and always keeping the vehicle behind you in sight, especially at turns is good practice. If they stop, check if help is required and advise the Leader.
12. The environment should be left in its pristine condition, and care should be taken not to disturb the wildlife or stock animals. Always leave gates as you have found them, ie, if they are open then leave them open, if closed then close them.

Note: Communication can be enhanced when travelling in convoy and when walking through bushland to call-in interesting sightings by carrying handheld two-way CB/UHF radios.

Important note re campouts

Members anticipating attending campouts must notify the BAWA Office (9383 7749) of the number in their party and when they will arrive. If you are unsure, put your name down as you can always cancel. An emergency contact number should also be provided in case of accident.

New members

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

Sunday 7 March: Peel Inlet, South Yunderup

Half-day excursion

NOTE: CHANGE OF VENUE AND TIME

Lake McLarty is likely to be dry, so the venue for this walk has been changed. Meet at 8:00 am at the south end of Wellya Crescent (near the playground), South Yunderup. From Pinjarra Road turn into South Yunderup Road. Turn left into Murray Waters Boulevard and follow this around until it turns north and the estuary, park and playground are visible on the left.

We will look for waterbirds and waders on the estuary. There will be mud and possibly some wading involved so wear rubber boots if possible. Bring your telescopes and lunch as we will finish at about lunch time.

For members and guests only.

Leaders: Alan Collins and John Graff

Thursday 11 March: Manning Lake, Spearwood

Half-day excursion

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

For members and the general public.

Leaders: Barry and Molly Angus

For members and guests only.

Leader: Claire Gerrish

Sunday 21 March: Rottnest Island

Full-day excursion

Meet at 8:15 am on Rottnest at the Tourist Bureau at the end of the jetty. The Rottnest Express leaves at 7:30 am from ‘C’ Shed, Victoria Quay, Fremantle. Advice from the ferry company is to book well in advance on 1300 467 688.

Rottnest has a variety of habitats, including the shallow salt lakes, the coast, fresh water swamps, woodland and heath. There are 49 species that are regularly seen and more than 112 when vagrants are included.

We will walk around the salt lakes where we should have good views of the waders, then across the golf course where Common Pheasants and Red-capped Robins are often seen. We will return to the Settlement for lunch, after which we plan to walk to Bickley Swamp, near the Barracks, for more...
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(08) 9242 1855

sales@camerahousedutyfree.com.au
instructions from Cheryl and Martin.

2WD vehicles. Mud maps and access
limited to approximately 25 people.
Note that participant numbers will
including water, food and vehicle fuel.
Be fully self-sufficient for everything,
facilities but plenty of space for camping.
many reserves nearby. There are no
the bushland and one or more of the
holds shrubland and sandplain heath.
A number of interesting birds, including
mallee shrubland and sandplain heath.
During the campout, we will explore
the bushland and one or more of the
many reserves nearby. There are no
facilities but plenty of space for camping.
Be fully self-sufficient for everything,
including water, food and vehicle fuel.
Note that participant numbers will be
limited to approximately 25 people.
Track access from the south suitable for
2WD vehicles. Mud maps and access
instructions from Cheryl and Martin.
Saturday 24 to Monday 26 April: Cheynes Beach, Albany
Anzac Day Campout
Cheynes Beach is a fishing village on the edge of Waychinicup National Park, east of Albany. It has a caravan park with cabins as well as the usual caravan and camping facilities. When you book your camp site, please mention that you are with Birds Australia, as an area has been reserved for us. Cabins will be popular for that weekend and there is a minimum 3-day booking, so book early. The Cheynes Beach Caravan Park phone number is 9846 1247 and their postal address is: 12 Bald Island Road, Cheynes WA 6328.
The area has a good selection of bird species, including hard to find endemics, such as Western Whipbird, Western Bristlebird and Noisy Scrub-bird. We cannot guarantee seeing all the above, but it will be fun trying.
If you wish to participate in this campout please notify BAWA office on 9383 7749 with the number of people attending.
For members and guests only.
Leader: Sue Abbotts

Saturday 24 April: Summer Track, North Bannister
Full-day excursion
Meet at 8.00 am on the corner of Summer Track and Albany Highway. Summer Track is about 32 km south of the corner of Jarrahdale Road and Albany Highway and approximately 6 km short of the North Bannister Roadhouse. It is on the right and immediately south of the Serpentine River crossing (signposted). We will explore the Jarrah and Wandoo woodlands near the Serpentine River looking for White-eared Honeyeater, a variety of robins and other bushbirds. For members and guests only.
Leader: Robyn Pickering

Sunday 2 May: Ellis Brook, Gomsells
Half-day excursion
Meet at 8.00 am at the corner of Gomsells Road and Bygum Lane, Martin. There are three walks in this area and we will look at one of these on this visit. It is a popular area where a variety of bushbirds can be seen, some of them not often seen near Perth, such as Red-eared Firetail, Red-browed Finch and Red-capped and Scarlet Robin.
For members and guests only.
Leader: Alan Galbraith

Wednesday 5 May: Carnaby’s Black-Cockatoo
Perth Volunteer Roost Surveys
See under Notices for details.

Sunday 9 May: Helena Valley, Boya
Half-day excursion
Meet at 8:00 am near the locked gate in Victor Road. Park on the right-hand side of the road. Bring morning tea and we will have it when we return to the cars. Drive through Midland east along Great Eastern Highway. Once you have begun to climb the Greenmount Hill watch for Scott Street. Turn right into Scott Street and continue until you reach a roundabout just past the tennis courts on the right. Turn left into Clayton Road and drive to the end. Turn right into Victor Road until you reach the locked gate.
For members and guests only.
Leader: Steve Burns

Saturday 22 May: Serpentine National Park
Half-day excursion
Meet at 8:00 am at the junction of the South West Highway and Falls Road (the turnoff to Serpentine Falls). We will walk along a ridge overlooking Serpentine Falls and have 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: Robyn Pickering

Monday 24 May: Bold Park Eco Centre, Perry Lakes Dr, Floreat
Meeting, 7:30 pm
Dr Martin Cake, Senior Lecturer in Anatomy, Program Chair in Veterinary Biology, Murdoch University, will give an illustrated talk, with specimens, on “Avian Anatomy”.

Sunday 30 May: Bickley Brook, Orange Grove
Half-day excursion
Meet at 8:30 am in the Hardinge Park public car park, Hardinge Road. There is a limited number of bays. Red-browed Finch, Red-eared Firetail, Southern Emu-wren and a reasonable range of other bushbirds have been recorded on previous excursions to the area. Participants may wish to take advantage of the free gas barbecues which are provided (from 8:00 am to sunset) at the conclusion of the walk.
For members and guests only.
Leaders: John and Ruth Luyer

Saturday 5 to Monday 7 June: Mount Gibson Wildlife Sanctuary
Foundation Day campout
This campout is in collaboration with the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) who have owned and managed Mt Gibson Station as a wildlife sanctuary since 2001. AWC have been controlling feral animals on the station and monitoring the effects on wildlife.
The turnoff to Mt Gibson Wildlife Sanctuary is 74 km north-east of Wubin along the Great Northern Highway heading for Paynes Find. The homestead is 27 km from the main road. Two-wheel-drive vehicles are able to get into the sanctuary, but four-wheel-drives will be needed when moving around. Fill your fuel tank at Wubin. Bring warm clothes
and sleeping gear as it gets cold inland at this time of year.

Accommodation: AWC has agreed to waive all camping fees.

There is a visitors centre which has five single dongas with two showers/toilets and cooking facilities. Nearby there is a shearing shed with use of the visitor centre facilities. We will camp in this area but there will be no power for the campers.

We plan to carry out surveys in different vegetation types around the station. The bird watching is good for dry land species such as Southern Scrub-robin, Chestnut and Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush, Mulga and Bourke's Parrot, honeyeaters, Redthroat and MalleeFowl.

Numbers will be limited so please call the BA office on 9383 7749 to put your name on the list. Bookings for the dongas will also be taken at the BAWA office.

For members and guests only.

Leaders: John and Ruth Layer and Pam and George Agar

Saturday 5 to Monday 7 June: Dryandra Woodland
State Forest
Foundation Day campout

Dryandra is one of the most important remnant reserves in the wheatbelt and has mostly birds typical of the wheatbelt woodlands. Members have the option of camping at Congelin Dam camp ground or choosing accommodation from the wide range available in Narrogin. (The cottages in Dryandra are already booked out.) The main entrance to Dryandra is on the Wandering/Narrogin Road.

The Congelin Dam camp ground is off the York/Williams Road (just south of the most southerly entrance to Dryandra, at Congelin Dam). Here there are camping bays, toilets and good gas barbecue facilities. A small DEC camping fee will be charged. Check out the DEC noticeboard.

Dryandra is 164 km south-east of Perth and 22 km north-west of Narrogin. There are sign posts on the Albany Highway at North Bannister (turn off to Wandering) and on the Great Southern Highway at Cuballing and at Narrogin.

For those interested, there is a very good range of accommodation available in Narrogin. (The cottages in Dryandra are already booked out.) The main entrance to Dryandra is on the Wandering/Narrogin Road.

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Latecomers on Saturday can expect information to be posted on the noticeboard outside the office in the village.

As numbers are limited, please advise the BAWA office of your intention to attend. Also advise them if you wish to go on the Barna Mia walk.

Contact Maris Lauva 040302 9051 or Latvian_maris@hotmail.com for any queries.

For members and guests only.

Leaders: John and Ruth Layer and Pam and George Agar

Saturday 5 June: Harrisdale Reserve (Jandakot Regional Park), Harrisdale
Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am opposite Carey Baptist College on Wright Road, Harrisdale.

This reserve is fenced but has a swing gate at this location. There are good tracks throughout with varied vegetation, including wetland areas that may have some water in them if we get early winter rain. Many bushbirds have been seen including Scarlet Robin, Splendid Fairy-wren, Western Spinebill, White-browed Scrub-wren, Grey Shrike-thrush, Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo, Red-capped Parrot and Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo. Wetland species are also a possibility.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Debbie Walker

Saturday 13 June: Tom Bateman Reserve, Thornlie
Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am beside the playground/sporting complex at the corner of Nicholson and Wilfred Roads (car-park entry is off Wilfred Road).

We will look at a series of wetlands constructed to remove nutrients from water draining into the Canning River. We will also look at small bushland areas if they are accessible. Rubber boots may be a good idea, and insect repellent. Bring morning tea to have while we do a combined bird list.

For members and the general public.

Leaders: George and Pam Agar

Thursday 17 June: King's Park, Perth
Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park at the northern end of Forrest Drive, opposite the Pioneer Women's Memorial in the Botanic Gardens, near the junction of Lovekin Drive. There should be a variety of bushbirds in the area.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Michael Hancock

Saturday 19 June: Flynn Road, Mundaring
Half/Full-day excursion

Meet at 9:00 am at the corner of Flynn Road and Great Eastern Highway, about 10 km past Sawyers Valley or 1 km on the Perth side of The Lakes (the York turnoff). We will look at several areas of Wandoo woodland, where three species of robin are often seen and sometimes Crested Shrike-tit. Wear wellingtons or other boots as we shall cross water. Bring morning tea that you can carry. Bring lunch if you would like to continue with us at a further area nearby.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Charles Merriam

Sunday 27 June: Gleneagles Rest Area
Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am at the Gleneagles Rest Area approximately 25 km down Albany Highway from Armadale. We will look for Western Yellow Robin, Red-winged Fairy-wren, Western Spinebill and Western Wattlebird. After morning tea, we will look on the other side of the highway for Scarlet Robin, Western Thornbill and possibly Rufous Treecreeper.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Frank O'Connor

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1. jacana; 4. egret; 9. currawong; 11. in; 12. arid; 13. wren; 15. male; 16. us; 17. ask; 19. Antarctic; 23. bat; 24. spur; 26. plume; 28. ventriloquial; 30. mimic; 31. an; 32. sand; 33. egg; 34. juvenile.

DOWN

Crossword answers No. 2

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Western Australian Bird Notes 33 Vol 133 March 2010
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
  Tel 9293 4958, e-mail cgole@westnet.com.au

- **Monthly meeting speakers** — contact Brian Wilson Tel 9293 1094

- **Country Branches Liaison Officer** — contact Darryl James
  Tel 9414 8939, e-mail: dfjames16@bigpond.com

- **Excursion leaders** — contact Sue Abbotts Tel 9444 1607,
e-mail suechat@bigpond.net.au

- **Card sales** — contact Beryl Walker Tel 9397 6887,
e-mail ghem@bigpond.net.au

- **Office volunteer** — contact Beryl Walker Tel 9397 6887,
e-mail ghem@bigpond.net.au

- **Fundraising** — contact Bruce Haynes Tel 9384 7426,
e-mail b.haynes@pesa.org.au

- **Carnaby’s Black-Cockatoo roost surveys** — Location, numbers
  — contact Quinton Burnham Mob 0428 762 292,
e-mail q.burnham@ecu.edu.au

Calendar of events

- **Sun 7 Mar:** Peel Inlet, South Yunderup: Half-day excursion
  

- **Thu 11 Mar:** Manning Lake, Spearwood: Half-day excursion

- **Sat 13 Mar:** Herdsman Lake, Stirling: Half-day excursion

- **Sun 21 Mar:** Rottnest Island: Full-day excursion

- **Mon 22 Mar:** Bold Park Eco Centre, Perry Lakes Dr, Floreat:
  Meeting, 7:30 pm

- **Sat 27 Mar:** Bibra Lake, Cockburn: Half-day excursion

- **Fri 2 to Mon 5 Apr:** Holleton: Easter campout

- **Fri 2 to Mon 5 Apr:** Hopetoun, and Fitzgerald River National Park:
  Easter campout

- **Sun 4 Apr:** Ray Marshall Park, Viveash: Half-day excursion

- **Sat 10 Apr:** Woodman Point, Cockburn: Half-day excursion

- **Thu 15 Apr:** Ascot Waters, Ascot: Half-day excursion

- **Sun 18 Apr:** Bold Park, Cambridge: Half-day excursion

- **Mon 19 Apr:** Bold Park Eco Centre, Perry Lakes Dr, Floreat:
  Meeting, 7:30 pm

- **Sat 24 to Mon 26 Apr:** Cheynes Beach, Albany: Anzac Day campout

- **Sat 24 Apr:** Summer Track, North Bannister: Full-day excursion

- **Sun 2 May:** Ellis Brook, Gosnells: Half-day excursion

- **Wed 5 May:** Carnaby’s Black-Cockatoo: Perth volunteer roost surveys

- **Sun 9 May:** Helena Valley, Boya: Half-day excursion

- **Sun 16 May:** Yangebup Lake, Cockburn: Half-day excursion

- **Thu 20 May:** The Spectacles, Kwinana: Mid-week excursion

- **Sat 22 May:** Serpentine National Park: Half-day excursion

- **Mon 24 May:** Bold Park Eco Centre, Perry Lakes Dr, Floreat:
  Meeting, 7:30 pm

- **Sun 30 May:** Bickley Brook, Orange Grove: Half-day excursion

- **Sat 5 to Mon 7 Jun:** Mount Gibson Wildlife Sanctuary: Foundation
  Day campout

- **Sat 5 to Mon 7 Jun:** Dryandra Woodland State Forest: Foundation
  Day campout

- **Sat 5 Jun:** Harrisdale Reserve (Jandakot Regional Park), Harrisdale
  (formerly Forrestdale): Half-day excursion

- **Sun 13 Jun:** Tom Bateman Reserve, Thornlie: Half-day excursion

- **Thu 17 Jun:** King’s Park, Perth: Half-day excursion

- **Sat 19 Jun:** Flynn Road, Mundaring: Half/Full-day excursion

- **Sun 27 Jun:** Gleneagles Rest Area: Half-day excursion
Horsfield’s Bronze-Cuckoo, adult, Broome (see report on page 24).
*Photo: Nik Ward*

Semi-palmated Plover and Black-fronted Dotterel, Broome (see report on page 24).
*Photo: Nik Ward*

Kimberley Flycatcher, adult, Broome.
*Photo: Nik Ward*

Brush Bronzewing, Eyre (see report on page 25).
*Photo: Isabel and Des Hose*

Grey Butcherbird (see report on page 12).
*Photo: Gillian Pitt*

Prepare to attack — Collared Sparrowhawk, Eyre.
*Photo: Isabel and Des Hose*
“This is our spot” — Major Mitchell’s Cockatoos at the birdbath, Eyre.  
Photo: Isabel and Des Hose

At Eyre Bird Observatory  
(see report on page 25)

Left: Ann and Roz bringing in the seaweed in 2006.  
Right: Looking good! Two years after planting.  
This photograph was taken while David and Ann were caretakers in May 2008.  
Photo: David and Ann Painter

Oriental Plover,  
Photo: Isabel and Des Hose

Hiding — Pied Oystercatcher chick.  
Photo: Isabel and Des Hose

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