

# Western Australian Bird Notes

Quarterly Newsletter of the WA Group  
Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union

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## NEW HOLLAND HONEYEATER REPORT

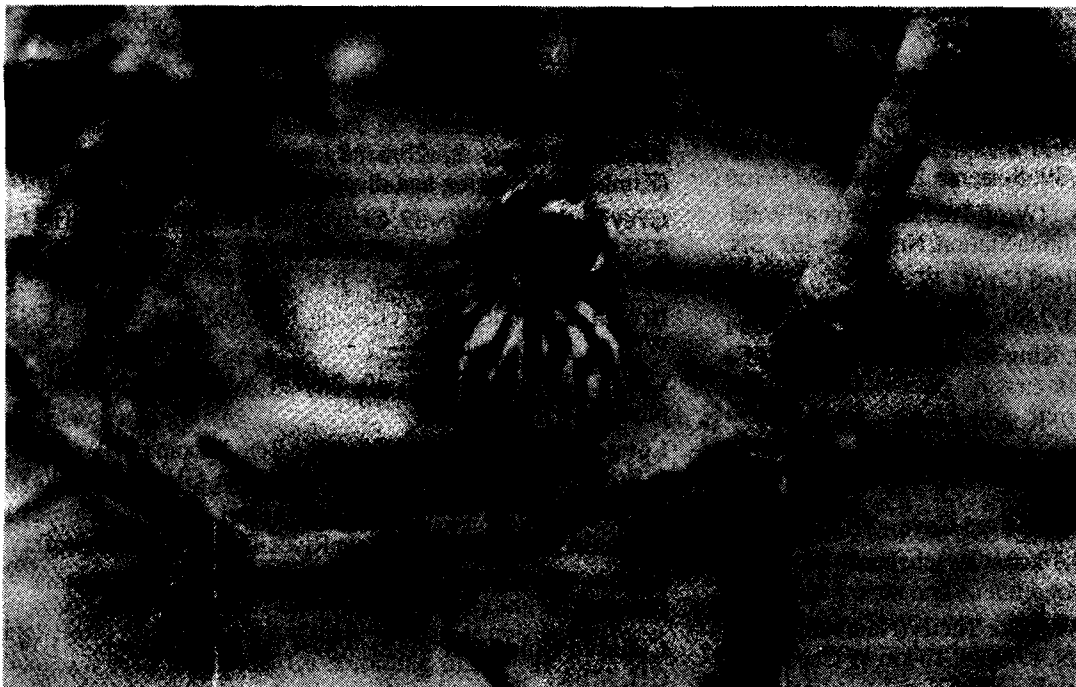
- 17.8.89 Found nest of New Holland Honeyeater, 3 eggs, coloured dusty pink, brown speckles on the large end of 2, but the 3rd egg was nearly all brown. Nest shallow cup-shaped, made from small twigs, dry grass and lined with wool.
- 26.8.89 Eggs hatched, brown fluffy bodies. Both honeyeaters feeding them.
- 27.8.89 8am Chick with the biggest head was 1cm across its abdomen. The other 2 were weak with no abdomens. Removed the "odd" chick, certain it was a cuckoo.
- 2pm The two remaining chicks were stronger and had rounder abdomens.
- 1.9.89 Chicks have doubled their size, eyes still closed.
- 2.9.89 Took photos of the young birds, the parent birds very protective, peck my fingers when I parted the fern for the snapshot.
- 6.9.89 Eyes of the young are open, well feathered.
- 8.9.89 While taking a photo of the young in the nest one hopped out. I put it for safety in a plum tree. The other then hopped out and fluttered across to the same tree.

- 10.9.89 Female (?) New Holland Honeyeater building nest in fuschia bush 17 to 18 metres from previous nest.
- 13.9.89 1 egg in the new nest.
- 15.9.89 3 eggs in new nest. All look alike.
- 24.9.89 Only 2 eggs in the nest.
- 29.9.89 Two chicks hatched, 14 days after the eggs were laid. The female (?) is so used to me looking in it stays on the nest. The other bird eyes me off from a nearby fig tree.

D. Lawrence

A number of items of interest emerge from the above report. The lining of the nest with wool may not have been previously specifically reported. Recher (1979) writes "lined with soft material" (p.496), Beruldsen (1980) "lined with finely shredded bark and other fine soft dry material" (p.383) and Pizzey (1980) "lined with soft white or brownish plant down" (p.345). The time to fledging (14 days) and the time of incubation (14 days) is in accordance with the periods given by Recher (1979) and Serventy & Whittell (1976). The apparent early start on a new nest also accords with the above authorities.

(Ed.)



### References:

- Beruldsen G. (1980) *A field guide to nests and eggs of Australian birds*, Rigby Publishers Ltd., Australia.
- Pizzey G. & Doyle R. (1980) *A field guide to the birds of Australia*, Collins, Sydney.
- Recher J.T. (1979) in *Readers Digest Complete Book of Australian Birds*, Readers Digest Services Pty Ltd, Sydney.
- Serventy D.L. and Whittell H.M. (1976) *Birds of Western Australia*, UWA Press, Perth.

## OBSERVATIONS

Please send details of sightings to 'Observations Officer' at the W.A. Office of the RAOU. Unusual sightings should be accompanied by field notes. Preliminary checking of the following observations has been undertaken but further scrutiny should be given prior to inclusion in any official or technical report. This list of observations mainly covers the period from August to November 1989.

Compiled by Rodney Vervest.

### DOWN SOUTH

**Grey-headed Albatross** - 1, 21/9/89, Floreat Beach: juvenile - GM

**White-faced Storm-Petrel** - 1, 18/9/89, Leighton Beach: beach-washed - GM

**Cattle Egret** - 8, 23/8/89, Austin Bay N.R. (Peel Inlet) - RV, DMu \* 1, 21/9/89, wetland south of Bibra Lake: in breeding plumage - SF, SN

**Little Egret** - 1, 4/8/89, Lake Joondalup - GM \* 4, 23/8/89, Robert Bay, Peel Inlet - RV, DMu \* pair, 18/10/89, West Corio Swamp (Pinjarra): breeding - RV, GP

**Eastern Reef Egret** - 1, 8/9/89, Geraldton Harbour - GB

**Glossy Ibis** - 4, 27/7/89, Herdsman Lake - EM \* 4, 22/10/89, Herdsman Lake - GM

**Chestnut Teal** - 4, October 89, Lake Cronin: 1 male, 3 females - BWi \* 1, 13/8/89, Lake Claremont - DM \* 3, 26/9/89, Torbay Inlet - LB \* 1, Hurstview Lake (Dandaragan) - BBu, ABu

**Pink-eared Duck** - 1, 13/9/89, Alfred Cove - JH

**Osprey** - 1, 26/3/89, Alfred Cove - IS, BWi \* 1, 15/5/89, Lake Monger - IS, BWi \* 1, 20/9/89, Point Dundas: fishing - KH

**Square-tailed Kite** - 1, 5-6/11/88, Dryandra - SF, AF, JN, DN, IS, BWi \* 1, 3/9/89, 20 km SE Ravensthorpe DK, RJ, RR \* 1, 19/10/89, Yanchep National Park: hunting over heathland - AB

**Little Eagle** - 1, 19/8/89, Hepburn Heights woodland (Metro) - NR, NRU

**Grey Falcon** - 15/5/89, 90 km E Wongawol Station - KC

**Spotted Harrier** - 1, 19/9/89, Stirling Range N.P. - SF, SN

**Malleefowl** - 1, 9/9/89, 1 km E Zanthus Siding: walking slowly in front of vehicle - SF, SN

**Buff-banded Rail** - 1, 17/9/89, Clarkson Reserve, Maylands - MW \* 1, 13/10/89, Alfred Cove - PRH

**Australian Bustard** - 1, 9/9/89, 50 km S Zanthus Siding: with dependant chick - SF, SN

**Bush Thick-knee** - 2, 24/6/89, Dryandra - JHi, RH, IS, BWi

**Large Sand Plover** - 1, 20/9/89, Sorrento Beach - GM

**Inland Dotterel** - 2, 24/7/89, NW of Tuckanurra near Weld Ranges - LB \* 3, 10/9/89, Rawlinna Station, Nullarbor - SF, SN

**Banded Stilt** - 8, 11/2/89, Alfred Cove - IS, BWi

**Red-necked Avocet** - 95+, 11/2/89, Alfred Cove - IS, BWi

**Eastern Curlew** - 2, 20/9/89, King River Inlet, Albany - SF, SN

**Wood Sandpiper** - 2, 5/10/89, Kogolup Lake - JH

**Common Sandpiper** - 2, 2/9/89, Lake Thetis (Nambung N.P.) - GB

**Terek Sandpiper** - 1, 13/10/89, Alfred Cove - PRH, JD

**Common Noddy** - 1, 28/9/89, Floreat Beach: beach-washed - GM

**Whiskered Tern** - 18, 21/8/89, Lake Theits (Nambung N.P.) - AF, JN, DN, IS \* ca. 50 pairs, 17/9/89, 10 km W Cape Arid N.P.: collecting nesting materials - SF, SN

**Little Corella** - 120+, 6/4/89, Yokine - IS

**Rainbow Lorikeet** - 4, 3/8/89, Balcatta - IS

**Regent Parrot** - 5, 9/9/89, 2 km E Zanthus Siding - SF, SN

**Alexandra's Parrot** - 7, 2/6/89, 50 km S Lake Tobin (Canning Stock Route) - JS

**Western Rosella** - 1, 14/10/89, Beermullah Lake (Gingin) - BBu

**Bourke's Parrot** - 40, 12/5/89, dam near Sandstone - KC

**Blue Bonnet** - several pairs, 10/9/89, between Zanthus Siding and Rawlinna Station, Nullarbor - SF, SN

**Southern Boobook** - 1, 30/5/89, Stirling St. Perth - IS

**Rainbow Bee-eater** - 70, 11/10/89, Wanneroo - ID

**White-backed Swallow** - 1, 3/8/89, Herdsman Lake - GM (1 pair seen roosting 1/8/89 - EM), 2 in nest 7/9/89 sandpit nr Wannamal West Road Gingin - BBu

**Ground Cuckoo-shrike** - 2, 10/9/89, Rawlinna Station, Nullarbor: feeding 3 chicks - SF, SN

**Western Yellow Robin** - 10/5/89, White Wells Station - KC

**Crested Shrike-tit** - 3, 20/8/89, Julimar State Forest - GL, GM \* 1, 5-6/11/88, Dryandra - IS

**Cinnamon Quail-thrush** - 17/5/89, Mt Beadell (Gunbarrel Highway) - KC

**Western Whipbird** - 1, 3/9/89, 20 km SE Ravensthorpe - DK, RJ, RR

**Shy Hylacola** - 1, 30/9/89, Old Ongerup Road, Fitzgerald River N.P. - LB

**Slaty-backed Thornbill** - 15/5/89, Wongawol Creek, E of Wiluna - KC

**Banded White-face** - 40 km E Carnegie Station - KC

**White-cheeked Honeyeater** - 2, 2/7/89, Lake Monger - IS, BWi

**Grey Honeyeater** - 11/5/89, seen at Mount Magnet - KC

**Pied Honeyeater** - 21/5/89, W.A. border SE Giles - KC

**Red-eared Firetail** - 1, 3/9/89, 20 km SE Ravensthorpe - RJ, RR \* 1, 22/10/89, Lesley near Boulder Rock - TK

**Chestnut-breasted Mannikin** - 1, 23/10/89, Lake Neerabup - NR

### UP NORTH

**Masked Booby** - 7/6/89, Adele Island - KC

**Cattle Egret** - 1, 21/6/89, 26/7/89, 16/8/89, Derby Sewerage Works - BW, GH

**Black Bittern** - 1, 26/12/88, Dog Chain Creek, King Leopold Ranges - JMc

**Pacific Baza** - 2, 20/6/88, mouth of Glenelg River (Kimberley): soaring and displaying over woodland - AB

**Grey Falcon** - 2, 12/8/89, Cran Creek, Broome - BW, GH \* 1, 23/8/89, over Broome Bird Observatory - BW, GH \* 1, 10/9/89, 2 km W of Observatory - BW, GH

**Brolga** - 2, Lyndon River crossing, Minilya/Exmouth Rd - CN, WN

**Lesser Golden Plover** - 40, 7/6/89, Adele Island: breeding plumage - KC

**Long-toed Stint** - 3, 6/10/89, Lake Eda, Broome - BW, GH \* 1, 7/10/89, Derby Sewerage Works - BW, GH \* 1, 16/10/89, Broome Sewerage Ponds - BW, GH

**Emerald Dove** - 10/6/89, Sale River - KC

**Shining Bronze-Cuckoo** - 1, 2/10/89, Crab Creek, Broome - BW, GH

**Collared Kingfisher** - 1, 21/9/89, Crab Creek, Broome - BW, GH, MBa

Rainbow Pitta - 10/6/89, Sale River - KC

Yellow Wagtail - 3, 11/10/89, Derby Sewerage Works - JMc, BW, GH

Kimberley Flycatcher - 2, July to mid-August and early October, Crab Creek, Broome - BW, GH et al

White-winged Fairy-wren - 140 km E of Fitzroy Crossing - JMc

Little Crow - 1, 31/8/89, Broome Bird Observatory - BW, GH

#### KEY TO OBSERVER CODES

AB - Allan Burbidge	JHi - Jan Hill
AF - Austin Fincham	JMc - Jock McLaren
BBu - Bruce & Anne Buchanan	JN - Jane Newsome
BW - Brice Wells	JS - J. Skinner
BWi - Bev Wilcox	KC - Kevin Coate
CN - Clive Napier	KH - Katherine Highman
DK - Dot Kingston	LB - Lola Broadhurst
DM - Dusty Millar	MB - Mike Bamford
DMu - Don Munro	MW - Mark Whackett
DN - David Newsome	NR - Norman Robinson
EM - Eric McCrum	NRu - Norma Rundle
GB - Gordon Baker	PRH - Peel Howden
GH - Gail Hooper	RH - Rob Hill
GL - Graham Little	RJ - Rosemary Jasper
GM - George Miller	RR - Ron Richards
GP - Grant Pearson	RV - Rodney Vervest
ID - Ian Davis	SF - Sandra Fincham
IS - Ian Stranding	SN - Simon Nevill
JD - Jack Donohoe	TK - Tony Kirkby
JH - Jack Hunt	WN - Wendy Napier

## WATERBIRD STUDIES

### SCOPEWEST

Research Officer, Rodney Vervest reports -

The new waterbird study is gathering momentum and I am busy with processing the incoming data. Good coverage of the study area has been achieved and a feature of the initial batch of returned sheets is the amount of breeding information collected. The field record book has met with approval and with some refinements to it and the wetland set we should be on target for a streamlined operation in January and the following survey periods. Remember that I am available to discuss any questions or suggestions you may have regarding SCOPEWEST and would welcome your communication. There is still some outstanding data and I would urge all SCOPEWESTERS to get their sheets in quickly. A more detailed report on results for October and the January survey in the March newsletter.

**Wing-tagged Birds** Part of the SCOPEWEST project is devoted to waterbird movement studies and recently a number of birds have been wing-tagged. Please keep your eyes out for Yellow-billed Spoonbills, Straw-necked and Sacred Ibis, White-faced Herons and Great Egrets with yellow wing tags. The tags have two letters (inscribed in black) and will appear high up on the folded wing of these species. Provision has been made on your data sheet for recording this information but

please contact me if you see birds outside the survey periods.

### ANNUAL WATERFOWL COUNT

The Duck Master reports -

By the time this note reaches you every duck, swan and coot in the South-west and Eucla Land Division in the period 18-26 November 1989 will have been counted!! Well almost, anyway. In March 1990 we will again be asking you to find every duck, swan and coot you counted in November 1989 plus those others you may have missed. Contact your local Duck Master at the RAOU office to join the team of duck counters.

## OBSERVATORY REPORTS

### BROOME BIRD OBSERVATORY

#### Little Ringed Plover

On September 29th of this year, a party of four from BBO visited the Pearl Coast Wildlife Park. We were doing the regular count of wild birds that take advantage of the lakes built in the park in 1987. The party consisted of Norma Duff, Margery Clegg, Bryan Barrett and Brice Wells. Just before the lakes is a small ponded area that has been planted with reeds. As we passed them Bryan noticed a bird near a Common Sandpiper, and asked, "what's that?" My initial response was to say, "it could be a Large Sand Plover." A second look, however, showed me to be very wide of the mark. What we were looking at was a very exciting bird indeed. There was no doubt that it was a plover, the large dark eyes, strong black beak, and its posture made this likely. The feature that made it exciting was the ring that extended from the throat and completely encircled the head. Its colour was cream rather than white and fairly uniform around the nape. The chin was also creamy, and the forehead cream, strongly speckled brown. The supercilia was poorly marked and whitish rather than yellow. The nearby Common Sandpiper gave us a good size comparison. We judged the bird to be much smaller, nearer the size of a Red-capped Plover. Like the Common Sandpiper there was a white peak in front of the wing. The leading edge of the shoulder had a narrow black line, with a pale mark running across the shoulder. The rest of the wing was mottled brown with a black tip to the primaries. The wings ended level with the tail. The tail itself was white underneath, (as indeed was the whole of the belly) brown above with a distinct black terminal band on top. There was a dark line between the cream throat and the incomplete breastband. The back was pale brown. The leg colour can only be described as pinkish/orange. The most obvious behaviour was the plover's habit of tapping the mud with its feet. First one foot then the other. It did this all the time we were watching. The only other trait we noticed was an infrequent "bob" rather like the Common Sandpiper, but not nearly as pronounced. Gail Hooper and I subsequently saw the bird on the 30th September. I saw it again on the 4th and 9th of October. It was also seen by Brian Kane and members of the Wildlife Parks bird staff, including the manager Graham Taylor. Efforts to get close enough to photograph the bird were unsuccessful. We concluded that we were looking at a Little Ringed Plover, probably an immature bird. When I saw the bird for the last time (9th October) I was with Rod Smith. We went from the park to the Broome Sewerage ponds and found another of the same species. Its general appearance was similar to the one described, but the eye-ring was much brighter, being undeniably yellow. It could

have been an adult in non-breeding plumage. This second bird was also seen by Brian Kane (later on the 9th) and George Swann (16th).

**B. Wells**

Something we've meant to report but never have until now. Coming back from Perth on the 20th February 1989, we reached the edge of Roebuck Plain right on dusk. Suddenly we were surrounded by Oriental Pratincoles all hawking across the plain, picking up the grasshoppers, moths etc. that were there in countless thousands. We ran through this vast mass of birds for about 15 kms. At times we estimated that the birds spread out for about half a kilometre on either side of the roadway. As a conservative "guesstimate" we thought there were not less than 50,000 birds. As far as we could ascertain they were all Orientals. From then on we scarcely saw one in the Broome area. We assume that we caught the birds massing to begin their migration back to their breeding grounds.

**G. Hooper & B. Wells**

#### **Telephone**

The BBO is now on the telephone. Ring 091 935 600.

#### **First Course at Broome**

The first course at Broome will be held from 21-27 April 1990, Wave the Waders Goodbye. Watch waders leave for their breeding grounds. Possible opportunities to see Asian Dowitcher, Broad-billed Sandpiper, Redshank and many others too numerous to mention. Join an exciting and enjoyable historic first course. Cost including meals and local transport \$260. Telephone 091 935 600 for enquiries and bookings.

## **EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY**

Birding at Eyre in summer is exciting. You can see up to eleven honeyeater species and many other bush bird species from the Observatory windows. The coastal location makes Eyre pleasant in summer and the seabreeze can always be relied upon. Interesting activities planned for this summer are:-

#### **Christmas at Eyre**

24-30 December 1989 \$200.00

There are still places left on this Xmas course. Escape the Christmas rush and bustle and enjoy the birds and beauty of Eyre. Father Xmas usually finds his way to Eyre for a spot of Xmas birding and he insists on a special Xmas feast.

#### **RAOU Nullarbor Honeyeater Banding Expedition**

3-31 January 1990

Eyre is the central point of the most ambitious bird banding project ever attempted in Australia. Eyre will be one of the many banding stations across the Nullarbor operating throughout the month of January 1990. There are still places at Eyre, particularly in the last two weeks of the month. You can be part of this exciting project. Previous banding experience is not essential and experience can be gained.

#### **Dune Stabilization Workparties**

January-February 1990

Discount rates will be offered to guests who joint these workparties. The aim is to continue the excellent work done in previous years. The discount requires you to spend 4 hours per

day high on the majestic white dunes planting seed, enjoying the panorama, breathing fresh sea air and getting fit. This leaves plenty of time for birding and sightseeing. Visit Eyre this summer with the added bonus of the congenial company of the Warden, Ian Ashton, and his assistant, Arvi Pocock. Phone 090 393450 for details and bookings.

## **NOTICES**

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The Annual General Meeting will be on Monday 5th February, 1990. All committee positions will be declared vacant and office bearers will be elected for the coming year. Signed nominations should be handed to the Secretary beforehand up till the start of the meeting.

### **1991 NATIONAL RAOU CONGRESS**

The 1991 National RAOU Congress will be held in Perth on 20-22 September 1991. Mark these dates in your diary.

## **MEMBERS CONTRIBUTIONS**

### **DECLINE IN NUMBERS OF AUSTRALIAN MAGPIE**

We have observed a decline in the number of Australian Magpies in our locality, Middlesex near Manjimup. No species study has been undertaken but nests have been recorded annually since 1974.

On the perimeter of our property there were five groups, now there are only two and the carolling we used to hear is very much missed today. The disappearance of old known groups has been repeated throughout our 5km study area and lack of breeding success was confirmed in the annual road casualty list. In 1984-85 we picked up 6 juvenile magpies killed on the road but last year none at all.

This breeding season we are attempting a census of local Australian Magpie groups, not individuals and in the consideration of possible causes of the decline it would be a great help if we knew whether it is a local occurrence or part of a more general decline. Have you, in and around Perth and elsewhere, as many Australian Magpies groups today as 15 years ago?

**R.J. & M.N. Brown**

WA Bird Notes would be interested to hear from subscribers about their knowledge of variations in Australian Magpie populations. Any letters will be passed on to the Browns.

(Ed.)

### **PELICAN POINT : JULY 1988 TO JUNE 1989**

The Pelican Point reserve was visited 44 times during 40 weeks of the period under review. Most of the visits were made at 5.30pm, or during the winter in the afternoon.

In the course of the year, 57 species were seen bringing the total bird species recorded to 78 in the 6 years since 1 July 1983, when records began to be kept of all species seen. Prior to that date, only sightings of water birds were recorded, the change

being brought about by participation in the Metropolitan Bird Survey.

Observations of interest for the year were one male Chestnut-breasted Mannikin seen in November 1988, a Little Corella which made a brief landing on the foreshore in January 1989 and Rainbow Lorikeets which flew over the reserve. All of these were new for my list of species for Pelican Point. An Australasian Shoveler, a second record, was present on the lagoon in February 1989 and an Osprey, flying downstream and over the reserve on four occasions, was a welcome record after an absence of at least 6 years. Excellent views were obtained several times during January and February 1989 of Large Sand and Mongolian Plovers at close range and in the same field of the binoculars.

Transequatorial waders are no longer a certainty for the reserve as can be seen from the list below. Only one record of a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, only two records each of Red Knot and Great Knot and seven of Curlew Sandpiper were obtained.

A paper in The Western Australian Naturalist (Bailey & Creed 1989) compares bird lists made at Pelican Point since 1971 with lists made by Job in 1966-68, Serventy in 1936 and Alexander in 1921. Somewhat surprisingly, Serventy recorded Grey Plover as a new species for the Swan River in 1936.

M. Bailey et al.

#### References:

Bailey, M. & Creed, K.E. (1989) *Observations of bird species at Pelican Point*. West.Aust.Nat. 17, p229-232.

#### Bird species showing Number of weeks present

Silver Gull	40	
Crested Tern	34	
Laughing Turtle-Dove	33	
Little Pied Cormorant	32	seen >75% of weeks visited
Black-winged Stilt	32	
Welcome Swallow	32	
Singing Honeyeater	32	
Pacific Black Duck	31	
Caspian Tern	31	
Grey Teal	28	
Pied Oystercatcher	28	
Little Black Cormorant	24	seen 50-75% of weeks visited
Red-capped Plover	22	
Grey Plover	21	
Tree Martin	21	
Great Cormorant	19	
Australian Pelican	18	
Red-necked Stint	18	
Variegated Fairy-wren	17	
Brown Honeyeater	14	
Australian Magpie	14	seen 25-50% of weeks visited
Rainbow bee-eater	13	
Red Wattlebird	12	
Large Sand Plover	10	
Greenshank	10	
Fairy Tern	10	
Darter	9	
Bar-tailed Godwit	8	
Red-necked Avocet	7	
Curlew Sandpiper	7	
White-faced Heron	6	seen 10-25% of weeks visited

Port Lincoln Ringneck	6	
Rufous Night-heron	5	
Osprey	4	
Spotted Turtle-Dove	4	
Pied Cormorant	3	
Sacred Ibis	3	
Australian Shelduck	3	
Mongolian Plover	3	
Galah	3	seen 5-10% of weeks visited
Mallard	3	
Common Sandpiper	2	
Red Knot	2	
Great Knot	2	
Laughing Kookaburra	2	
Australian Raven	2	
Australasian Shoveler	1	
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	1	
White-tailed Black Cockatoo	1	
Little Corella	1	
Rainbow Lorikeet	1	
Willie Wagtail	1	seen <5% of weeks visited
Western Gerygone	1	
Striated Pardalote	1	
Silvereye	1	
Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	1	
Australian Magpie-lark	1	

Total of 57 species present in 40 weeks of visits

	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
Nº of 1 3 2 4 5 4 5 4 4 4 2 2 weeks visited												

#### GURAGA : A Footnote

In West Australian Bird Notes No. 51 September 1989 an article on observations at Lake Guraga was included. The article contained some speculation on the length of time the lake has been important to Australian Shelduck because of the name Guraga (being Aboriginal for the bird).

Shortly after this I was surprised to find, on talking with an inhabitant of the locality for over thirty years that locally Guraga had no name, although generally referred to as 'The Salt Lake'. Being a lake with no outlet, compared to some others nearby, this appellation was understandable, but being unnamed, when it is clearly marked Guraga on the published maps of the district was a surprise.

I am indebted to G.M. Storr of the Western Australian Museum for informing me that the name Guraga was suggested by him to the Lands Department "a few years ago". He took the name from the aboriginal word for Australian Shelduck in Serventy D.L. and Whittell H.M., *Birds of Western Australia*, UWA Press, Perth, knowing the lake to be important for the birds.

B. Buchanan

#### AUSTRALIAN HOBBY TAKES BUDGERIGAR

On 1st November 1988 towards dusk, Bev Wilcox and I had just left home by car when we saw a raptor in a dead tree on the edge of the West Australian Golf Course, Yokine. We returned to get binoculars through which the raptor was soon identified as an Australian Hobby by its buff partial collar and forehead and small size. It appeared to be an immature because of its overall browner appearance with rufous tinge, having a dark brown crown and brown upperparts. Hollands (1984) states immature birds have their upperpart feathers edged with brown

and a tawny crown.

After a minute or two it flew at canopy height parallel with the road along the southern edge of the golf course (Raymond Street) to perch on top of a telegraph pole about 90 metres away. We approached in the car and pulled onto a nature strip and watched the bird for some little time. Suddenly it flew from the pole at a small bird whose yellowness at first puzzled me. Although the low position of the sun did not make observation ideal, the small bird called and this, together with its manner of flight, enabled it to be recognised as a Budgerigar. The Australian Hobby and the pursued flew over the road and into the front yard of the nearest house, which contained possible cover in the form of several small eucalypts, but before reaching cover the Australian Hobby had caught the Budgerigar.

In view of its yellowness and location in a suburb of Perth, the Budgerigar was probably an escapee of the domestic yellow variety, rather than a wild bird, which is mostly green and yellow. The Australian Hobby paused briefly on the guttering of the house, about 25 metres from the telegraph pole, with its prey in its talons before flying back over the trees and into the golf course where it was lost from view. Several seconds later what was possibly another Australian Hobby was seen briefly over the golf course coming from another direction, before also disappearing from view.

Hollands (1984) states that the attacks of the Australian Hobby are almost always directed against other birds. The observation described above was in the late afternoon when the sun was low although it was not sunset. Hollands (1984) makes the interesting point that the Australian Hobby has a "noticeably large eye and it is not surprising to find it hunting in the half light of dawn and dusk when potential victims become more vulnerable as they move from or to their roosts, hampered by their inferior vision" (p.158). He also describes the hunting of big flying insects, probably beetles, in fast fading light until darkness.

#### I. Standring

##### Reference:

Hollands, D (1984), *Eagles, Hawks and Falcons of Australia*, Nelson, Melbourne.

The following 3 contributions were held over from WABN N° 51 because of lack of space.

#### LAKE MCLEOD

I have continued to visit Lake McLeod over the past few years. Roland Hill, Marie Gullin and myself have visited a total of 7 times since the RAOU expedition (see WABN N° 44, December 1987).

We really love the place, though our birding efforts are hampered by lack of a boat. We walk to the same point each time and observe what is feeding there. A most interesting visit was over the June long weekend. The southern upwelling was perfectly still, whereas we have always been able to discern it in the past. Also, the lake itself seemed to be much lower.

We saw many clouds of stilt (?) over the mudflats, and at least 100 Australian Pelican. In close, the only birds of note were 8 Curlew Sandpiper feeding on the lake's edge and 30-40 Red-capped Plovers. We also saw about 20 Ruddy Turnstone and (as we usually do) Caspian Tern and Little and Great Egret.

#### R. Duffy

#### LITTLE BITTERN FLUSHED BY HORSES

While carrying out a waterbird survey of South Kogolup Lake on the 11th June 1989 (2.30 pm), I was standing beside a dense thicket of typha, looking across the typha at open water further out. Several horses galloped past my position alongside the shoreline. A very pale coloured Little Bittern flew up from immediately in front of me and fluttered across the typha reeds to drop out of sight approximately 8 metres further away. The weather was cold and overcast which may account for the presence of the bird at the margin of the lake at that time of day.

D. James

#### RETURN TO BILLYACATTING

The 1988 RAOU outing to Billyacatting nature reserve was not the success everyone had hoped due to wet weather. Three of the party who attended made plans to re-visit the area at a later date. In June of 1989 these plans were realised.

Billyacatting nature reserve is 270 kms north-east of Perth in the Kunnunoppin-Muckinbudin area. Vegetation is a mixture of low dense scrub with taller trees and mallee interspersed with rocky outcrops. Billyacatting is surrounded by farmland which gives the impression that the area is a reserve by default owing to its unsuitability for farming. The land is owned by CALM but no ranger is present. The ranger at Narrogin assumes responsibility for the area. We saw 40 species of birds, with a number of drier country residents. A species of note was Malleefowl. Some were seen crossing the road together some distance off. Unfortunately we never saw them again. These birds are said to wander through the gates onto farms quite often according to the local farmers and appear to be relatively common.

A pair of White-fronted Chat attempted to draw us with a broken wing display, the reason being two young unable to fly. We felt surprised that breeding had taken place so early and a record of this was sent to the Nest Record Scheme.

Southern Scrub-robins were secretive as always but surprisingly common considering the number and size of cat paw prints in evidence.

Raptors were few, only a group of Wedge-tailed Eagles and a Brown Falcon were seen.

Due to camping being discouraged on nature reserves (quite rightly so) we made camp at the base of Yarragin Rock close by. Habitat here was more open being adjacent to cleared areas. We soon realised that although close to Billyacatting, the bird species differed and as a result the two areas were surveyed independently.

As the name suggests, Yarragin Rock is a large granite boulder and being so close we had excellent views of a number of raptors using thermals produced to gain height. Wedge-tailed Eagles were seen most days. Others seen were Australian Kestrel, Australian Hobby, Whistling Kite and a glimpse of a pair of Spotted Harriers in the distance. Mulga Parrots were seen most days. Redthroat and Southern Whiteface were seen regularly and Zebra Finches were occasional visitors.

A pair of Chestnut-rumped Thornbill were seen paying particularly attention to a dead limb of a tree. We soon realised the limb was hollow and they were preparing a nest inside.

Night birds picked out with a spotlight were Tawny Frogmouth and Southern Boobook. An Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo was the only cuckoo identified although we were sure we had heard a Black-eared Cuckoo. Fifty species were seen at Yarragin Rock.

The five days spent at Billyacatting nature reserve and Yarragin Rock were very enjoyable. However, we feel that early spring would be a far better time to revisit, during nesting

time. Anybody planning to do some camping/birdwatching not too far away couldn't do much better than this area and they would be helping to build up a picture of species use of this not so well known nature reserve.

L. Harris, J. Hunt, C. Wilder

### NALLAN STATION REVISITED

I visited Nallan in late October 1987 (WA Bird Notes N° 45). By visiting a month earlier this time, I hoped for more breeding records. Winter rains had been good so not only was Nallan Lake full but the adjacent claypans, on either side of the Great Northern Highway were flooded. The wildflowers were out in profusion and most trees were bearing fruit.

Breeding was well underway with most species feeding young already out of the nest. Nomadic species such as Pied and White-fronted Honeyeater and Crimson Chats were common. Interesting breeding records included Pink-eared Duck with six ducklings and a young Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo being fed by Slaty-backed Thornbill.

A Buff-banded Rail active in the homestead garden at dawn and dusk was only the sixth record for the Gascoyne region and the only inland record, all previous being in the vicinity of Shark Bay (Storr 1985). This bird was probably on passage as it vanished after being observed for a week.

I recorded 72 species for the eight days I spent at Nallan and combined with my 1987 visit, the total species list now numbers 94 for the station. The highlight of this visit was a party of ten Inland Dotterels. Other good sightings included Black Honeyeater, Diamond Dove, Spotted Bowerbird and Bourke's Parrot. A side trip to Jungar Pool turned up Little Button-quail, Red-backed Kingfisher and Wood Sandpiper.

A full species list, notes and mud maps are at the RAOU office.

J.R. Boughey

### Reference:

Storr, G.M. (1985) Records of the WA Museum Supplement No. 21, *Birds of the Gascoyne Region, Western Australia*. W.A. Museum, Perth.

### Nallan Station Species List -

Emu - common and widespread  
Hoary-headed Grebe - breeding at Nallan Lake and flooded areas  
Pacific Heron - one or two in flooded areas  
White-faced Heron - one or two in flooded areas  
Straw-necked Ibis - highest count - four birds  
Pacific Black Duck - small numbers in flooded areas  
Grey Teal - Small numbers  
Australasian Shoveler - two birds  
Pink-eared Duck - breeding (six ducklings). Small numbers  
Hardhead - two birds  
Maned Duck - small numbers. Highest count - six birds  
Wedge-tailed Eagle - two birds soaring  
Brown Falcon - two birds  
Australian Kestrel - one sighting  
Buff-banded Rail - one active in homestead garden at dawn and dusk. Vanished after one week.  
Eurasian Coot - two birds  
Banded Lapwing - common on flat, stony, sparsely vegetated area near 'Marshall's Well'.  
Red-kneed Dotterel - small numbers in flooded areas  
Inland Dotterel - party of ten birds near 'Marshall's Well' on sparsely vegetated, stony plain  
Black-fronted Plover - common in flooded areas  
Black-winged Stilt - highest count - six birds

Whiskered Tern - one bird at Nallan Lake in breeding plumage

Feral Pigeon - one sighting of three birds

Diamond Dove - small numbers: Acacia scrub and thicket areas

Common Bronzewing - small numbers in Acacia scrub

Crested Pigeon - common and widespread

Galah - common and widespread (especially near wells).

Breeding

Cockatiel - small numbers

Port Lincoln Ringneck - small numbers

Mulga Parrot - common breeding (often using old water pipes for nesting)

Bourke's Parrot - small numbers. Late afternoon near Judas Well

Black-eared Cuckoo - one sighting

Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo - one young bird being fed by Slaty-backed Thornbill

Welcome Swallow - common near water

Tree Martin - fairly common near water

Fairy Martin - common near water. Breeding

Richard's Pipit - small numbers

Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike - one sighting

White-winged triller - common in small groups, widespread

Red-capped Robin - common, widespread. Breeding

Hooded Robin - small numbers

Rufous Whistler - common and widespread

Grey Shrike Thrush - fairly common and widespread

Crested Bellbird - common and widespread

Willie Wagtail - fairly common

Grey-crowned Babbler - common

White-browed Babbler - common

Rufous Songlark - common at Nallan Lake only

Splendid Fairy-wren - fairly common

Variegated Fairy-wren - fairly common

White-winged Fairy-wren - two birds near Marshall's Well

Chestnut-rumped Thornbill - common

Slaty-backed Thornbill - fairly common. Breeding

Yellow-rumped Thornbill - fairly common

Southern Whiteface - common and widespread

Varied Sitella - one bird only

Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater - common

Yellow-throated Miner - common. Breeding

Singing Honeyeater - common

White-plumed Honeyeater - common

White-fronted Honeyeater - common in Acacia scrub. Breeding

Black Honeyeater - one male only

Pied Honeyeater - Fairly common. Widespread

Crimson Chat - common near Marshall's Well. Uncommon elsewhere. Breeding.

Zebra Finch - Abundant near water. Breeding

Spotted Bowerbird - small numbers

Australian Magpie-lark - fairly common. Breeding

Masked Woodswallow - groups of up to 20 birds

Black-faced Woodswallow - small groups

Pied Butcherbird - breeding near homestead

Australian Magpie - pair breeding near homestead

Little Crow - common and widespread

### INTERSPECIES AGGRESSION

On 16th September, I was driving along the Mogumber-Moora Road, about 14 kilometres south of Wannamal. There was a dam to the right with lots of winter wet both sides of the road.

An Australian Raven flew in front of the car. A largish object about 6-8cm long and fluffy, hung from the raven's beak.

Immediately behind the raven, and perilously close to the car bonnet, flew a Pacific Black Duck. It was very agitated and called loudly. I looked towards the raven. In the moment before

it dropped its food and both descended into the paddock from view, I realised that the 'food' was a very young duckling. The parent duck flew down after them. As the duckling was limp, I have no idea whether it was alive or dead.

Have any readers witnessed this before? I would be interested to hear.

**D. Kingston**

#### **NOCTURNAL BIRDSONG**

In WA Bird Notes N° 48 November 1988, I posed the question, why does the Willie Wagtail call at night? No explanations have been offered.

Another, apparently infrequent night calling bird (in my experience), is the Pallid Cuckoo. One evening, 8 July 1989, near Lake Wannamal, a male Pallid Cuckoo called at 9.30 pm. It was an overcast, very dark night. The call was repeated at about hourly intervals and they were generally oft reiterated, seventeen repetitions being the highest noted. The final call was at 3.20 am. At that time, after nine repetitions, a female Pallid Cuckoo responded and thereafter the male calls ceased. It did not rain the following day.

**B. Buchanan**

#### **MEMO FROM MALAYSIA**

Greetings and best wishes to our RAOU friends in Western Australia! Our departure from Perth was sudden, but it was time to move on to new challenges and experiences. Life in Kuala Lumpur has been busy, settling into work with Asian Wetland Bureau, discovering new tastes, smells and sounds and making new friends - Malay, Chinese and Indian.

We live in a comfortable bungalow in a quiet, leafy suburb. From the porch we see golden orioles in our rambutan and papaya trees and flame-crested woodpeckers drilling the coconut trunks. Nightjars, swiftlets and migrating hawks occupy the air above us.

Not more than twenty minutes away we can stalk tiger and tapir on rainforest paths, though more likely we'll see malkohas, minivets and barbets. Yellow Bitterns and Purple Herons live in overgrown tin-mining ponds around the city and the coastal mangroves and rice fields, which are an hour away, are good for shorebirds.

The assignment with AWB involves development and coordination of wetland research from Korea to Kalimantan and Karachi. Current projects, all involving local agencies or volunteers, include surveys of traditional uses of wetland plants, management of peat swamp forests and shorebird refuges, national training courses in wetland studies, and the Asian Water fowl Census.

We take this opportunity to thank all who helped and befriended us during our time with RAOU in WA. Every success with your activities!

**Roger & Sue-Ellen Jaensch,  
4 Lorong 5/AC, 4600  
Petaling Jaya, MALAYSIA**

## **EXCURSION REPORTS**

#### **WEEKEND AT MT LESUEUR**

Following on from a visit by Margery Clegg and Bryan Barrett in July, members of the RAOU spent a weekend in the Hill River district early in September.

Eighteen observers in small groups attempted to count birds in areas around Mt Lesueur, Mt Michaud, Mt Peron, Cockleshell Gully and the proposed coal mine/power station site.

We were accompanied by several members of the Lesueur Wildflower Society, a branch of the West Australian Wildflower Society and this proved to be of mutual benefit to everyone. Bird species were counted and breeding evidence recorded by each party during Saturday and Sunday. The Hill River district covers many square kilometres, therefore we were unable to survey the whole area over a weekend. However 67 species were counted in all, including Australian Bustard, Australian Owlet-nightjar, Southern Boobook and a Square-tailed Kite seen eating nestlings.

Thanks to local people and members of the Lesueur Wildflower Society for assistance with maps and information and to those who contributed with their time and vehicles.

It is planned to make similar visits during different periods in 1990.

**C. Wilder**

#### **WHITE WELLS STATION CAMPOUT**

A campout was held at White Wells Station owned by Bruce Boucher who kindly gave permission to a keen group of birders to 'take over' his place for a week. The station of 72,850 hectares is approximately 380 km from Perth. Eighteen people, including 2 from New Zealand, enjoyed weather that varied from rain showers and cold, to fine and windy.

Mr Boucher was very accommodating, taking all who were interested to the various parts of his station and several areas of granite outcrops and breakaways. The station abounds with wildflowers of many colours along the tracks; heath and woodland comprise the rest.

Time was spent exploring around the windmills waiting for birds to come into drink. Mulga and Bourke's Parrots and Port Lincoln Ringneck were seen regularly. Red-capped Robins and Zebra Finches made a marvellous spectacle right beside the B.B.Q. area. Crested Bellbird, Rufous Whistler and Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike were all very active feeding and protecting their young. A Jacky Winter's nest was not far from the homestead.

Honeyeaters aplenty, Crimson Chats, Black-eared Cuckoo are a few of the birds seen in the heathlands. Wedge-tailed Eagle, Brown Falcon, Brown Goshawk, Collared Sparrowhawk were observed. 91 species were seen altogether on the property.

**H. & T. Harty (NZ)**

#### **EMU ROCK-MCDERMID ROCK CAMPOUT**

During the first week of October a small group of hardy campers set out for various points east of Hyden. Areas to be explored included granite outcrops, salt lakes, woodland and sandplain.

The first two nights were spent at Emu Rock, approximately 70 km east of Hyden. This is an extensive area of granite outcrops, surrounded by small areas of thick casuarina and ti-tree growth, mallee, other taller timber and large areas of heath.

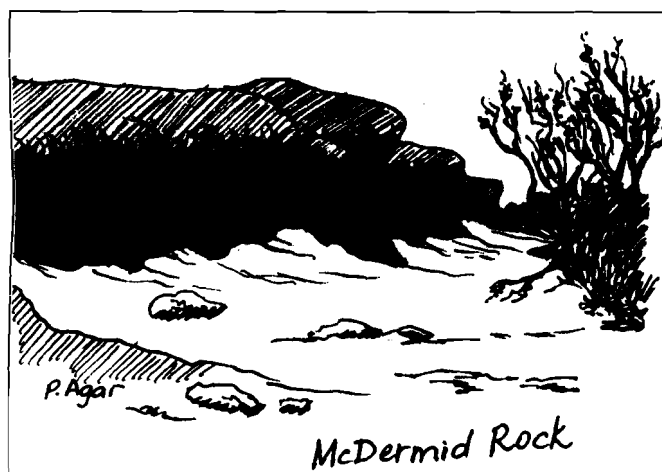
Despite cold, windy conditions there was a wealth of birds. The availability of water may have accounted for this. There was a salt-lake with a small quantity of water, three quite large rock pools (at least) one small dam located near the rock and a good sized farm dam not far away.

Species found breeding included Maned Duck, Grey Teal, Inland Thornbill, Jacky Winter, Red-capped Robin, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Brown Falcon, Australian Magpie-lark (sitting) and Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike (building).

Also seen were relatively recent Emu tracks across the damp mud of the salt lake bed - a single adult with seven chicks. There were Western Yellow Robin around the campsite, over a hundred Australian Shelduck on the lake and Spotted Nightjars hawking above the casuarinas at dusk.

Two members of the group re-visited the area again a week later and saw a single Budgerigar in flight at the north end of the lake and in the area around a farm dam, a pair of Tawny Frogmouth. Australian Magpie-lark, Yellow-throated Miner and Pied Butcherbird were all nesting in the area. Two of the last, both with birds sitting, were found within eight metres of each other.

On a drive along a track just south of Emu Rock, Hooded Robins were seen and Singing and White-cheeked Honeyeaters (none of which were seen at the rock area), together with excellent close views of a dark phase Brown Falcon.



After leaving Emu Rock en route to McDermid Rock a group of seven Wedge-tailed Eagles was seen and most in the party saw an Australian Bustard. At the junction with the Southern Cross-Lake King road fledgling Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters were seen and a Willie Wagtail was nesting in an exposed position on dead branches about a metre from the ground. White-browed Babbler nests were numerous but no other evidence was seen of breeding by this species.

Extremely windy weather hindered the group's search for Gilbert's Whistler, but they were compensated by a sighting of a Crested Shrike-tit which was feeding in a eucalypt.

The next two nights were spent at McDermid Rock, another granite outcrop roughly 200km east of Hyden, reached via a reasonably good unsealed road, though caution was necessary in one or two sandy spots.

Despite the continuation of cold windy conditions, in the vicinity of McDermid Rock interesting sightings included Blue-breasted Fairy-wrens, a display of aggression (?) among three Brown Falcons and nightjars (Owlet?) flying over camp in the early evening. Rufous Tree-creepers were common in most areas as were Purple-crowned Lorikeets many of which were breeding. Rainbow Bee-eater were heard.

From this base several other areas were visited. At Scamp Rock, beside Lake Johnston, honeyeaters were well

represented. Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters were particularly common, and vocal, among flowering calothamnus shrubs. Also seen moving through flowering calothamnus and settling among the upper branches was a large python.

While walking through woodland some distance from Lake Johnston, excitement mounted temporarily, attention shifting from a Mulga Parrot to a potential Gilbert's Whistler, but a sighting was not verified. An attempt at spot-lighting later that evening revealed nothing more exciting than one Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike and another (its mate?) which would not be disturbed from its nest.

An area of mature woodland, where Lake Johnston almost meets the road, proved very fruitful with sightings of Western Rosella, Tawny Frogmouth and Australian Hobby, as well as Yellow-throated Miner, which were otherwise only seen at Emu Rock. A Grey Butcherbird's nest with three young was found and evidence of Chestnut-rumped Thornbills breeding, but the highlight (for some) was the sighting of Chestnut Quail-thrush feeding among clumps of blue-bush.

On a brief visit to Bank Rock a little further north, a single Banded Lapwing was seen. We then agreed to return to the areas already visited rather than continuing as had been planned to Peak Charles and Frank Hann National Parks.

So the route was retraced. At a fascinating area of breakaways where species were less numerous, Australian Kestrel and Striated Pardalote were found nesting on or in the rock walls and a Tawny Frogmouth was nesting nearby. Regent Parrots were also spotted and a probable Red-backed Kingfisher.

Just west of the breakaways turn-off, an active Malleefowl mound, within five metres of the main road, caused considerable excitement. It was a complete dome with evidence of very recent scratchings all round but no sign of the bird. On our return to the crossroads area conditions were still extremely cold and windy and a search for the elusive Gilbert's Whistler and the Chestnut Quail-thrush again proved fruitless.

Lake Cronin, a little to the north, was visited and was more rewarding. Sightings included a number of waterbirds - White-faced Heron, Red-necked Avocet, Chestnut Teal and several family groups of Grey Teal - possibly not common sightings for the area as we were told the lake does not always contain water. Fledgling Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters were seen, together with glimpses of either Malleefowl or Australian Bustard.

Believing in both luck and perseverance we made a third visit to the crossroads area. One of the party commendably searched several hectares of bush with care, covering every metre, except for the few closest to the cars. Here another member of the group finally made the only sighting of the elusive Gilbert's Whistler.

A Chestnut Quail-thrush was also sighted (though not by those who desperately sought them!) while the majority of us had to be content with White-winged Trillers. At our final lunch stop among sandplain flowers beside a small cleared area, we saw a pair of very plump Common Bronzewing as well as White-fronted Chats and nesting Red Wattlebirds. Overall it was a particularly interesting trip covering a variety of habitats and which offers ample scope for future excursions, hopefully under better weather conditions.

G. & P. Agar

## MEETING REPORTS

### 25 SEPTEMBER : CORRIDOR RESEARCH IN THE WHEATBELT

A goodly number gathered to hear Dr. Denis Saunders of CSIRO give a vivid but all too brief overview of work he and others have been carrying out on vegetation corridors in the Wheatbelt. With well over 90% of the original wheatbelt vegetation destroyed, much of what remains is in small areas, isolated from each other, except by tenuous 'corridors' of original vegetation along roadsides and fences.

The research of CSIRO is aimed at discovering whether the corridors, if developed and augmented, will assist otherwise isolated bird populations to mingle, interbreed, develop and survive. The work is based on careful observations and extensive bird banding.

Thus far, while matters are promising, it cannot be stated with certainty that corridors are the answer. It is possible that while allowing passage, the establishment of territories in corridors may block or hinder the movement of the same or other species of birds. While birds have been shown to fly over considerable distances of open, cleared land to move to another remnant bush area, it seems likely such species are in a minority. Unfortunately lack of funds may hinder the bringing of the study to full fruition. A most interesting talk.

Following immediately, a Malaysian visitor showed a number of slides of Malaysian rainforest birds, the majority taken from a hide at nests. The fine colouring of the birds and interesting features were seen. Those who have attempted bird photography will have appreciated the quality of the work.

## COMING EVENTS

### Sunday 14th January

#### Bold Park/Floreat Beach

Meet at 8am in the car park at the top of Reabold Hill for early morning birding followed by a visit to Floreat Beach to look at White-winged Fairy-wrens and White-browed Scrubwrens and a swim.

Leader: Ron van Delft

### Monday 5th February

#### Annual General Meeting

Herdsmans Lake Wildlife Centre

7.45pm for commencement at 8.00pm. See NOTICES.

### Saturday 10th February

#### Twitchathon

The rules and conditions for the 1990 Twitchathon have been considerably changed to encourage a greater number of members to participate in a "fun" competition.

TEAMS will be of no more than three (3) adults. Children under the age of 16 should be encouraged to take part and will not be counted as team members.

SIGHTINGS must be made on the 10th February 1990 and recorded on the RAOU standard National Parks Card. Sightings must be confirmed by at least 2 team members. Cards to be handed to the organizer no later than 7.30 am on 11th February at the Breakfast in Kings Park.

RESULTS will be announced at the conclusion of the breakfast. All cards will be entered into the RAOU DATABASE. There will be six (6) separate areas and teams

can concentrate on one or two areas or put in cards for all the areas. The entry fee will be \$1 per area per team payable at the time of handing in the cards. Separate prizes will be given for the maximum sightings in each area and the major prize for the team submitting the highest total of sightings.

The judges have the right to ignore recordings of Comb-crested Jacana, Dollarbirds and Scarlet Honeyeaters while teams listing Palm Cockatoo in John Forrest N.P. will be immediately disqualified.

Areas 1) Kings Park

2) Bibra Lake

3) Herdsmans Lake

4) Perry Lakes/Bold Park

5) John Forrest National Park

6) Alfred Cove

Note: Wetland areas include the trees adjacent to the water or path around the water. All queries should be addressed to Clive Napier at the RAOU office or at our home phone 332.7265.

### Sunday 11th February

#### Breakfast - Kings Park

The annual social for this year will be a breakfast at the Arthur Fairall Playground to coincide with the end of the Twitchathon. Meet at 7.00am for breakfast.

Enter Kings Park in Poole Avenue off Winthrop Avenue and bear left at the Y junction into May Drive around to lake and grassed area. BBQ's are also available. Catered breakfast per person is \$5.00 (children \$2.50). Please contact the RAOU office by the end of January if you wish to have the breakfast. After the breakfast and presentation to Twitchathon winners, a demonstration of a 20 minute bird count will be conducted and information will be available on the RAOU ABC Project.

### Sunday 18th February

#### Half day excursion - Alfred Cove

Almost everything you wanted to know about waders but were afraid to ask. An opportunity to wader watch with several experienced birders on hand, with telescopes, to help you with the mystery birds. Meet at 1.30pm at the car park near Pt. Waylen, off Burke Drive (by radio mast).

### Monday 26th February

#### Meeting - Herdsmans Lake Wildlife Centre, 8 pm

A personal view of the RAOU Expedition to Band Honeyeaters in the Southern Nullarbor.

### Saturday 3rd March

#### Full day excursion - Lake McLarty

Meet at 9 am in Old Bunbury Road at the intersection of South West Highway, 5 kms south of Pinjarra. Please allow room for other cars to pull in. You may need your wellington boots. Quite large numbers of waders and ducks can be seen with some occasional rarities.

Leaders: Jack Hunt and Ian Standring

### 10 - 18 March

#### Great Duck Count

### Sunday 18 March

#### Half day excursion - Herdsmans Lake

The emphasis of this excursion will be placed on the behaviour of one or two species of waterbirds. Meet at 8 am at Floreat Waters car park.

Leaders: Mandy Bamford/Ron van Delft

### Monday 26th March

#### Meeting – Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre, 8 pm

Discussion and review of SCOPEWEST Project and Annual Waterfowl Count.

Speakers: Dr. Stuart Halse of C.A.L.M. and Rodney Vervest, R.A.O.U. Research Officer.

### Friday 13th-Monday 16th April

#### Easter Campout – Dwellingup

Jan and Rob Hill's property near the Murray River. See next WABN for further details.

## ADVICE FOR CONTRIBUTORS

The Editor requests contributors to note the following

- copy concerning W.A. birds may be published; sightings etc in respect of birds outside W.A. will not normally be included. \* write legibly or type, DOUBLE SPACED.
- use RAOU recommended English names for W.A. birds - a list is available at the W.A. RAOU Office.
- copy will be edited where considered appropriate.

**DEADLINE FOR MARCH 1990 ISSUE IS**

**19TH JANUARY 1990**

## PUBLICATIONS

YOU CAN BUY THE FOLLOWING ITEMS at the RAOU Office, Room 218, first floor, 15 Ogilvie Rd, Canning Bridge 6153, W.A.

Don't forget to add the cost of postage and packing if you are not calling to pick up purchases. Items are usually available for purchase at RAOU meetings and excursions.

This arrangement provides a service for members and much needed funds for the Group.

- The Atlas of Australian Birds \$49  
(produced by the RAOU: shows distribution of bird species)
- overlays for the Atlas \$6
- Methods for Censusing Birds in Australia-1982 \$5  
(produced by the WA Group, RAOU)
- Report of the Middlesex Study Centre \$5
- WA Bird Report 1982 \$5
- A Pocket List of Australian Birds 70c  
(a handy checklist; produced by Canberra Ornithologists Group)
- RAOU check list of Birds of WA \$1 for 10
- A Field Guide to the Birds of Australia, \$19  
by G. Pizzey (1985 reprint, paperback;  
small format) Postage in Zone 15 \$2.60 plus  
40c envelope
- The Birds of Australia, by Simpson & Day \$30  
(1984, large format; text and plate facing  
each other) Postage in Zone 15 \$2.60 plus 55c  
envelope
- Field Guide to the Birds of Australia, \$22  
by Simpson & Day, small format
- Every Australian Bird Illustrated \$22  
(large format; 563 colour photos)

- In Quest of Bower Birds, by N. Chaffer \$26  
(large format; text and photographs of all species)
- A Field Guide to the Birds of WA \$15  
by Storr & Johstone  
(WA Museum 1985 edition; solely birds of WA)
- The Birdlife of Rottnest Island, \$8  
by Saunders and de Rebeira  
(1985; text; colour plates; maps)
- Eyre Bird Observatory: Report 1981-83 \$5
- RAOU Calendar 1990 \$10
- Bird-call tapes \$11  
(3 choices; mostly WA birds; announced version)
- Western Australian Bird Notes \$2 per issue
- New Colour Guide to Hong Kong Birds by Viney & Phillips \$13
- Shorebirds, by Hayman, Marchant & Prater \$49
- The Slater Field Guide to Australian Birds \$28
- The Great Australian Birdfinder \$55  
by Michael Morecombe
- Shorebirds in Australia, Brett Lane (Postage \$45  
in Zone 15 \$2.60 plus 55c envelope)
- Birdlife of Murdoch, ed. B.D. Porter \$6
- Birds of Australia Logbook, Simpson & Day \$11
- The Shorebirds of Australia, Nat. Photo Index \$60
- The Seabirds of Australia, Nat. Photo Index \$55
- A Birders Guide to Japan, J.W. Robinson \$25
- \* Birding Sites Around Perth, Ron Van Delft \$10
- \* Where to Find Birds in Australia, by \$30  
John Bransbury
- \* A Guide to the Flora and Fauna of the \$10  
Rockingham Offshore Islands and Cape Peron  
W.A. Naturalists' Club (KRMB)
- \* Waterbirds in Nature Reserves of \$35  
South-Western Australia 1981-1985 by  
Jaensch, Vervest and Hewish

If you have suggestions for titles that we could obtain, please give details to the WA Office. Please bear in mind that the WA Group is reluctant to spend money on bird books that do not sell readily.

Also, few local publishers or distributors are prepared to offer a discount on bird books. Consequently our choices are rather limited.

### Other Items for Sale

- RAOU Emu badges \$3
- RAOU ties (Navy blue or maroon) \$15
- Rottnest badges \$2
- Cards, packs of 8 \$6
- Key rings - in box \$4
- unboxed \$3.50
- Car stickers \$1.50
- How to Attract Birds to a W.A. Garden 50c  
(or \$1 posted)

### Videos for hire from RAOU office

- The Language of Birds
- World of Birds Osprey
- Short-eared Owl
- Seabirds
- The Masterbuilders
- The Petersfinger Cuckoos
- Kingdom of The Lyrebird
- The Secret Reeds
- COST \$5 each plus postage

## BBCBQ

The third of 'Big Bird's Clever Birdo Quiz'.

1. Large heavy birds flap slowly relative to small light birds. How are they able to do this?
2. Which weighs the heavier, the bird's skeleton or the bird's feathers.
3. Which WA bird does what has been described as a trapeze display?
4. Why do Eurasian Coot splash down or run over the water on landing in water?
5. Most elevated perches on which birds alight are approached from below. Why?
6. Black Kites are known to turn on to their backs in a dive. Why would this be an advantage?
7. Which raptor has been known to raise the young of another species of raptor?
8. Why is night spot-lighting for Australian Owlet-nightjars difficult?
9. What ability do Ospreys share with the two harriers not possessed by other large Australian raptors?
10. Which waterbird was found to be the most widespread in occurrence and breeding in the "South-west Waterbird Survey"?

1. Large birds obtain lift on their upstroke as well as their downstroke (Ruppell)
2. Feathers (McDonald)
3. Laughing Kookaburra (Rowley)
4. Without web feet they cannot "ski/glide" into the water (Ruppell)
5. To provide natural "braking" or slowing of flight (Ruppell)
6. Higher speed. Upside down, the natural lift of the wings forces the bird down (Ruppell)
7. Black-breasted Buzzard (Hollands)
8. Their eyes do not reflect the spotlight (Fitzey)
9. Ability to leap upward from a perch (others have to gain flight speed by descending) (Hollands)
10. Australian Shelduck (Jaensch et al)

BBCBQ - ANSWERS

### References:

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## COATE'S WILDLIFE TOURS NEW 1990 PROGRAMME

You are invited to share the companionship of other enthusiasts on our wildlife tours:-

### 7-Day Christmas Island Nature Tour

26th July - 1st August and 2nd - 8th August 1990

For birdwatchers there is the chance to visit a Tropicbird colony, a Brown Booby rookery and opportunities to view the endemic landbirds such as the Christmas Island Thrush, Silvereye, Emerald Dove and Goshawk and the Imperial Pigeon.

### 22-Day Western Australia/South Australia Bird Watching Tour

5th - 26th October 1990

The attractions of this tour are many, including abundant birdlife to photograph. Our itinerary will be flexible to allow time to visit areas which may have had good seasons on the way and our trip will be at a relaxed pace with plenty of time for birdwatching.

### 25-Day New Zealand Botanical Tour

25th November - 19th December 1990

This tour is our newest and most exciting addition to our wildlife and nature program, and represents an in-depth introduction to the alpine flora and vegetation of both the North and South Islands.

### 3-Day Abrolhos Islands Birdwatching Tour

7th - 9th December 1990

Our tour will be mainly in the southern Abrolhos and will place special emphasis on sighting some of the abundant birdlife present at this particular time of year - a real treat for all birdwatchers.

For information on these and other tours contact:-

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