

Western Australian Bird Notes

Quarterly Newsletter of the WA Group
Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union

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SQUARE-TAILED KITE IN SUBURBS

On December 24th 1989 at 9.30 am in the suburb of Queen's Park, I was on my way to the corner shop to buy a newspaper. As I was passing a vacant block of land, a large raptor flew low over my head.

The wings were long and upswept, very dark on the upper surface. The tail was long and square cut. It appeared to be the Square-tailed Kite seen previously in the area earlier in the month.

The bird swept over me but turned sharply when it had passed a small tree ten metres away. As it banked around to the left its face was seen to be white, confirming its identity.

It approached very slowly keeping about 3 metres off the ground. Almost stationary, it thrust its legs into the side of the tree and appeared to drop in. Just as easily, the bird lifted off and moved to perch in a nearby larger tree.

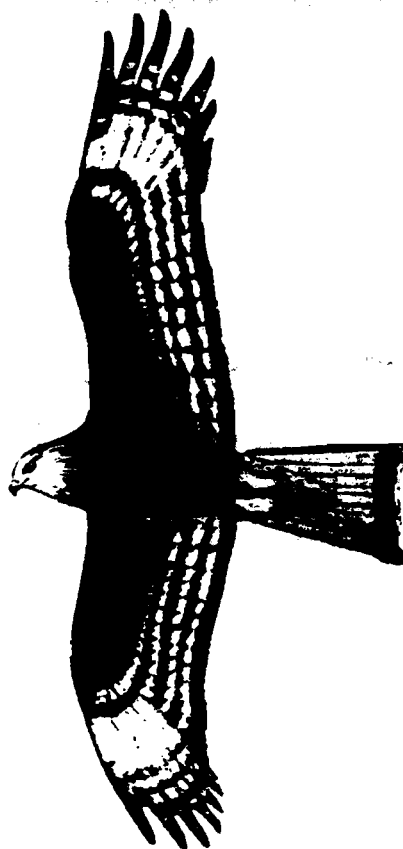
I went over to get a closer look and it was then I realised the Square-tailed Kite had made a kill. I went to get my binoculars, telescope and camera and when I returned the bird was in the same position in the process of tearing up and eating its meal.

I set up the telescope quietly hoping to avoid disturbance. The Square-tailed Kite stopped to watch but once I was set up it continued with its meal. The prey appeared to be a Laughing Turtle-dove judging by the plumage and was eaten in its entirety. At one stage the Square-tailed Kite tried to swallow a wing whole: however, after a few attempts gave up and tore the wing in half before swallowing.

J. Hunt

J. Hunt also writes of having seen a Square-tailed Kite over Queens Park on 4 December 1989 where it was mobbed successively by Australian Magpies, Australian Ravens and attacked by an Australian Kestrel.

(Ed.)



Square-tailed Kite by Nicholas Day from "The Birds of Australia" by Simpson K, Day N (1984) L. O'Neill Pty Ltd, Victoria

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 October 1989 to February 1990.

Compiled by Rodney Vervest.

DOWN SOUTH

Great-winged Petrel - 1, 18/10/89, City Beach: beach-washed remains - GMi

Cattle Egret - 1, 16/10/89, Stirling Road swamp, Forestdale - DJ

Great Egret - 20, 27/11/89, Coolinup Swamp, Esperance: 25 nests with eggs and young - RV

Eastern Reef Egret - 1, 7/1/90, 0.5km north of Whitfords Sea Sports Club - GL * 2, 29/1/90, Moore River, Guilderton - CW, JP

Rufous Night Heron - 27/11/89, Coolinup Swamp, Esperance: 60 nests with eggs and young - RV
Little Bittern - 1, 11/6/89, Kogolup Lake - DJ
Australasian Bittern - 2, 10/11/89, Bengier Swamp - ES
Glossy Ibis - 1, 5/12/89, Amarillo Pool - JH, CW
Straw-necked Ibis - 60, 27/10/89, Great Southern Highway between Beverley and York - KS
Royal Spoonbill - 1, 10/1/90, Amarillo Pool - JH * 1, 10/2/90, Herdsman Lake - CW et al
Freckled Duck - 5, 26/11/89, Crackers Swamp (Gingin): two adults and 3 young - RS
Chestnut Teal - 1, 1/1/90, Karriburyup Reserve: male bird - JS, HS * 1, 14/1/90, Herdsman Lake: male bird - RN
Square-tailed Kite - 1, 19/10/89, Yanchep National Park - AB * 2, 24/11/89, near Cosy Corner, south of Hamelin Bay - AB * 1, 19/12/89, Walpole, Hazelvale Road - JS, HS * 1, 4&13&24/12/89, Queens Park - JH
Black-breasted Buzzard - 1, 6/9/89, Peak Charles area - SN
Brown Goshawk - 1, 3/12/89, Stony Brook, Roleystone: nest used by Goshawks during the last two summers - RS
Collared Sparrowhawk - 1, 26/10/89, Harvey District: dead bird - FO
White-bellied Sea-Eagle - 1, 3/12/89, Vasse Estuary: nesting with small chick - BBa, MC * 1, 28/12/89, Amarillo Pool - JH, TK, PW * 1, 1/1/90, Karriburyup Reserve: a second year bird - JS, HS
Wedge-tailed Eagle - 2, 4/2/90, Malaga: flying with model plane DW
Little Eagle - 2, 9/12/89, Lake Cooloongup: one light phase, one dark phase displaying together - RAOU outing * 1, 23/12/89, Bickley valley - JS, HS * 1, 7/2/90, Deepwater Lagoon, Gingin: light phase bird - RV
Spotted Harrier - 1, 2/2/90, Herdsman Lake - EMC
Peregrine Falcon - 2, 10/9/89, NE of Kalgoorlie: pair nesting - MG * 1, 20/11/89, Mandurah Road, near Lake Cooloongup - GMi * 1, 10/1/90, Amarillo Pool - JH * 1, 10/1/90, Alfred Cove - JH * 1, 13/1/90, top of Wesfeeds silo, Bentley - JH
Mallee Fowl - 26/10/89, Dunn Rock Nature Reserve: one active and two old mounds - MG * 2/11/89, Tarin Rock Nature Reserve: one active and one old mound - MG
Stubble Quail - 3&17/12/89 Kelmscott area - GM
Buff-banded Rail - 1, Dec 89? Frankland area: dead bird brought in by cat - RW * 3, 6/12/89, Canning River, Riverton Bridge - JH
Australian Crane - 3, 26-28/11/89, Eucla sewage pond - APB
Pied Oystercatcher - 41, 7/1/90, Alfred Cove - JH
Lesser Golden Plover - 1, 13-14/11/89, Alfred Cove - GMi, PRH
Red-kneed Dotterel - 11, 17/12/89, Hurstview Lake - BBu
Hooded Plover - 104, 26/10/89, Dunn Rock Nature Reserve: included immatures - MG
Large Sand Plover - 3, 22/11/89, Alfred Cove - JH
Black-fronted Plover - 30+, 5/12/89, Amarillo Pool - JH, CW * 9, 27/1/90, Ballanup Lake - RS
Red-necked Avocet - 300+, 10/12/89, mouth of Murray River - JS, HS * 81, 16/12/89, Amarillo Pool - JH, TK * 2, 12/1/90, Kwinana Beach - RN
Whimbrel - 1, 9/12/89, Penguin Island - RAOU outing
Wood Sandpiper - 7, 26/11/89, Amarillo Pool - JH, TK * 50+, 5/12/89, McLarty Lake - JH, CW * 8, 17/12/89, Hurstview Lake - BBu

Marsh Sandpiper - 45, 5/12/89, McLarty Lake - JH, CW
Terek Sandpiper - 1, 10/11/89, Woodman Point - DN * 1, 16/1/90, Alfred Cove - JH * 2, 16/1/90, Pelican Point - MB, KC, PB
Red Knot - 5, 10/11/89, Woodman Point - DN
Long-toed Stint - 5, 26/11/89, Amarillo Pool - JH, TK * 17, 5/12/89, Amarillo Pool - JH, CW * 3, 14/12/89 Alfred Cove - TK
Pacific Gull - 1, 18/8/89, rocky coast near Gingin - MO
Kelp Gull - 1, 26/10/89, Lucky Bay, Alfred Cove: mature adult in breeding plumage - FW
White-winged Tern - 20, 1-13/1/90, Thompsons Lake - MB, KC
Common Tern - 21, 5/12/89, Mandurah boat harbour - JH, CW
Roseate Tern - 2, 26/11/89, Mandurah boat harbour - FO
Fairy Tern - 200, 26/11/89, Mandurah area: nesting - FO
Crested Pigeon - 6, 30/10/89, Greenlands Road, Pinjarra - GMi
Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo - 50, 14/11/89, Wungong Dam - PRH
Little Corella - 2, 11/11/89, 20/11/89, Kelmscott area - GM
Rainbow Lorikeet - 2, 31/12/89, Applecross garden: one adult and one fledgling - KH
Purple-crowned Lorikeet - 3, 19/12/89, Pelican Point - MB, TD, KC, PB * 12, 13-14/1/90, Dalkeith Reserve - PB
Cockatiel - 1, 9/2/90, Bibra Lake - RV, JR
Crimson Rosella - 1, 14/1/90, Lake Joondalup South - RN
Pallid Cuckoo - 3, 19/12/89, Walpole - JS, HS
Fan-tailed Cuckoo - 2, 26/10/89, Nanga Mill camping area - FO
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo - 2, 19/10/89, Dryandra - GMi
Fork-tailed Swift - 100+, 9/2/90, Lake Valley Drive, Edgewater - GL * 50, 10/2/90, Bold Park - JH et al
White-backed Swallow - 2, 29/9/89, Merilup Reserve, north of Nyabing - MG
White-winged Triller - 2, 9/1/90, Queens Park - JH
Scarlet Robin - 2, Edgewater: with 3 fledglings - AT
Western Yellow Robin - 3, 1/12/89, Stony Brook, Roleystone: two adults and 1 immature - RS
Crested Shrike-tit - 1, Dec 89? Cowaramup area - BBa, MC
Variegated Fairy-wren - 3, 21/10/89, Douglas Road, Gosnells - FO
Red-winged Fairy-wren - 1, 16/12/89, top car park, Canning Dam - JS, HS
Yellow-throated Miner - 1, 15/10/89, Old Bunbury Road - GMi
Red-eared Firetail - 2, 22/10/89, Etmilyn Siding (Hotham Valley Railway) - HF * 2, 26/10/89, Nanga Mill camping area - FO * 1, 28/12/89, Bickley Reservoir - RS
Black-faced Woodswallow - 10/1/90, Bibra Drive near Bibra Lake - JD
UP NORTH
Chestnut Rail - 1, 30/9/89, Cockburn Creek - KO
Redshank - 1, 4/8/89, Gascoyne River mouth, Carnarvon - RG
Emerald Dove - 1, 30/9/89, Cockburn Creek - KO
Common Koel - 2, 4/11/89, Dunham River Gorge - KO
Channel-billed Cuckoo - 2, 4/11/89, Dunham River Gorge - KO
Dollarbird - 1, 7/10/89, Mandorah (Northern Territory) - KO

* 2, 22/10/89, Wyndham - KO

Shining Flycatcher - 2, 4/11/89, Dunham River Gorge - KO

Purple-crowned Fairy-wren - Aug 89, Drysdale River Station - AT

Spangled Drongo - 1, 4/11/89, Dunham River Gorge - KO

Grey Butcherbird - 4, 1/10/89, Cockburn Creek - KO

KEY TO OBSERVER CODES

AB - Allan Burbidge	JP - Julian Pegler
APB - Agric Protection Board	JS - John
AT - A Turner	JR - John Rogers
BBa - Bryan Barrett	KC - Kate Creek
BBu - Bruce Buchanan	KH - Katherine Highman
CW - Chris Wilder	KO - Kimberley Observer
DJ - David James	KS - Kath Shadbolt
DN - Doug Nash	MB - Max Bailey
DW - David White	MC - Margery Clegg
EMc - Eric McCrum	MG - Mal Graham
ES - Eric Sedgewick	Mo - Margaret Owen
FO - Frank O'Connor	PB - Phyllis Bentley
FW - Frank Walker	PRH - Peel Howden
GL - Graham Little	PW - Paul Wyke
GM - Greg Marston	RG - Ray Garstone
GMI - George Miller	RN - Richard Nowotny
HF - Helen Frederiksen	RS - Rod Smith
HS - Helen Start	RV - Rodney Vervest
GL - Graham Little	RW - Rita Watkins
GM - George Miller	SN - Simon Nevill
JC - Jim Chance	TD - Tom Delaney
JD - Jack Donohoe	TK - Tony Kirkby
JH - Jack Hunt	

WATERBIRD STUDIES

ANNUAL WATERFOWL COUNT

10 - 18 MARCH 1990

The March count, (first for the decade!), is scheduled for the period 10-18 March 1990. I hope all will be available for surveys in your block/s.

I am currently processing data from the November 89 Count. Over 200 observers were involved and in excess of 1000 data sheets will soon be entered on computer. If you have not sent in your data for November can you please post it in as soon as possible.

We are still eager to hear from more country people, particularly those that can help in areas including Bremer Bay, Hopetoun/Ravensthorpe and Esperance. Outlying parts of the study area are difficult to cover and any assistance would be much appreciated.

Any new recruits should contact, as soon as possible please, the RAOU, 218/15 Ogilvie Road, Canning Bridge 6153, telephone 364.6202 (all hours).

R. Vervest,
Chief, Duck Department

SCOPEWEST

We are now well underway with the new waterbird project and thanks are due to all SCOPEWESTERS for their survey efforts.

Many of you discovered new wetlands during the inaugural survey in October 1989 and in many cases I have adjusted the list to incorporate those wetlands. We have now finalised this list and it will remain fixed for the duration of the project.

Response to the questionnaire generally reflected that most people are satisfied with allocations and that there are few problems with the data booklet or survey sheets. I am usually available to discuss any aspects of SCOPEWEST, so please ring the office if you have any questions.

I had hoped to report in more detail but due to time restraints and other project commitments, a typed report will be sent prior to the April count. Remember SCOPEWEST will be on the agenda for the March meeting.

If you have any outstanding data or you feel dissatisfied with your allocation, please contact me quickly.

Volunteers are still needed for SCOPEWEST so now is the time to get behind this important and interesting research. Our wetlands and our waterbirds need your active involvement.

R. Vervest

OBSERVATORY REPORTS

BROOME BIRD OBSERVATORY

On Tuesday, 16th January Gail was driving in the early morning when she saw two Blue-winged Kookaburra on the ground near the road. As she drove they flew in front of the car and to her astonishment one was carrying a beer can in its beak. It was carrying it vertically. We wondered whether it had its upper mandible jammed in the top opening, but decided the angle precluded that. We have no explanation as to why the Blue-winged Kookaburra was "carrying the can".

At BBO, we have had Grey-crowned Babblers come to drink at the bird bath on several occasions. Never the whole group, simply one or two, while others feed in the tree above. They take a long drink on each occasion. Can any readers comment on whether this is usual behaviour. We have never seen Grey-crowned Babblers drinking elsewhere in Australia.

We've come to expect Gallinago Snipe sp. to turn up around Broome at the onset of the 'Wet' - and had 3 at the sewerage ponds during December. However we were surprised to find one on the town oval at 10.00 am early in January. It was literally surrounded by activity but seemed unperturbed until we tried to get close enough for a photograph.

Some of our Great Bowerbirds are excellent mimics and often display their lilac crown and run through their extensive repertoires when bathing at the birdbath. We've got one splendid adult who mimics at least a dozen other birds including White-bellied Sea Eagle, Brahminy and Whistling Kites, Pied Butcherbird and Restless Flycatcher, including their occasional grating growl. It also does a good cat and throws in a dog as well.

Hearing a bird obviously involved in mimicry in our *Ventilago viminalis* tree recently, we expected a Great Bowerbird but found an adult Olive-backed Oriole instead. It lacked the variety of the Great Bowerbird, but its mimicry was easily recognisable. It specialised in parrots - e.g. Red-winged Parrot and Red-collared Lorikeet, but its Pied Butcherbird was also excellent.

The Little Ringed Plover is still at the Wildlife Park, but it has almost completed its moult into breeding plumage and looks a very different bird from the one we first saw in September last year and every month since then.

Our first course list and Broome brochures are now finished write to BBO or pick one up at the WA Group Office.

G. Hooper and B. Wells

NOTICES

COMMITTEE 1990

Chairman	B Wilson
Vice-Chairman	J Blyth
Secretary	C Wilder
Treasurer	B Hale
Committee Members	A Burbidge R Denny A Jones D Kingston R Smith R Van Delft

RAOU CONGRESS 1991

The Conservation of Australian Birds

The 1991 Congress will be held in Perth at Kingswood College, one of the residential colleges of UWA, which offers a wide range of accommodation from air-conditioned twin rooms with communal facilities to those with private facilities and air-conditioning.

The university campus is on the Swan River near Pelican Pt., a good birding site, and backs on to Kings Park. Early risers can choose between bush and water birds for their pre-breakfast walk. The campus is within easy reach, by bus or car, of Perth city and the South Perth Caravan Park.

The campout following the congress will be centred around Albany (approximately 400km from Perth). It commences on September 22nd and concludes on September 27th.

Mark your calendars now and to give the organiser an early estimate of numbers attending please inform:

The Organiser
RAOU Congress 1991
Room 218, 15 Ogilvie Road
CANNING BRIDGE WA 6153

Anyone wishing to present a paper is invited to do so and should contact Allan Burbidge via the above address.

NON PROTECTED FAUNA

The Government Gazette of 5 January 1990 gives notice that certain birds "shall not be protected fauna throughout the whole of the State".

Essentially the list is of introduced species and includes, Spotted Turtle-dove and Laughing Turtle-dove (both common, particularly in the Perth metropolitan area) and Chestnut-breasted Mannikin (also reported from time to time in the Perth metropolitan area). The other species listed do not appear to be established in the wild in WA.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

The Department of Conservation and Land Management, South Coast Region is seeking volunteers to assist with a project to translocate Noisy Scrub Birds in June/July 1990.

If you are interested contact Alan Danks 098-464276 or Terry Passmore 098-417133 for further information.

CORRECTION

The correct address of Roger and Sue-Ellen Jaensch is:
4 Lorong 5/4C, 46000
PETALING JAYA
MALAYSIA
(i.e. NOT 5/AC, 4600 as in WABN No 52 December 1989.)
BIRD BANDING IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA - 1990

CSIRO Division of Wildlife and Ecology is studying avian populations in remnants of vegetation and road verges in the wheat-belt of Western Australia.

Dr Denis Saunders is in charge of the research programme while Perry de Rebeira is the Senior Technical Officer running the bird banding project within the major programme.

Anyone wishing to acquire or extend their experience in bird banding techniques are invited to join Perry on banding trips to the study area near Kellerberrin.

Field trip dates for 1990 are:-
19-23 March
21-25 May
18-22 June
23-27 July
17-21 September
5-9 November

Transport and accommodation on field trips is provided free of charge. A Field Allowance of \$10/day will be paid to volunteers. The maximum number of volunteers per trip is three.

Enquiries can be directed to:-

Perry de Rebeira
CSIRO
LMB 4, P.O.
MIDLAND WA 6056
AUSTRALIA
Telephone: (09) 252 0107
Fax: (09) 252 0134

SOUND REVIEW

DAWN CHORUS

Australian Bird Calls Series-5

Stereo Cassette by John Hutchinson

Price \$11.00 (\$13.00 posted).

Brockman St, BALINGUP 6253.

All of John's discs and cassettes have been of high quality but this is undoubtedly his best so far. Dawn choruses are often confusing to listen to on tape but by careful stereo recording Hutchinson has produced a series that makes pleasant listening and provides nostalgic memories of past encounters with birds around the country.

This is one of the few cassettes in my collection that I can listen to for pleasure and relaxation. At the same time it provides a challenge of identification, for some birds present are not mentioned in the accompanying data sheet and some that are included are not heard. This is particularly notable in Side-2, Cooloola National Park, where I could not hear the Noisy Friarbird but the Little Wattlebird, though not mentioned, was conspicuous.

Among the many fine recordings of individual birds, that of the Splendid Fairy-wren in the opening chorus is outstanding and on quality alone this ranks as among the best commercial cassette of bird song so far produced in this country.

F. Robinson

MEMBERS CONTRIBUTIONS

EXTENSION OF THE RANGE OF THE THICK-BILLED GRASSWREN

On the 18 September 1989 I located a nesting pair of Thick-billed Grasswren on the west side of the Great Northern Highway some thirty kilometres south of the Overlander Roadhouse. This is about 150 km south of Denham where I had seen them on previous occasions.

The country was flat, open dry mulga scrub. The birds had a nest built in a mulga shrub one metre from the ground. The nest was deep, cup shaped and made of grass, quite unlike other nests that I had seen at Denham. There was no attempt at a dome; the nest was not unlike that of a Pied Honeyeater. The nest contained two eggs which were being incubated. The sitting bird could not be approached closer than a few metres before it dropped to the ground to run swiftly across the open to the shelter of dense mulga scrub.

R. Garstone

SOME BIRD OBSERVATIONS MADE AT WHITE WELLS STATION

During the RAOU excursion to White Wells Station north-east of Wubin in mid-September 1989 some 85 species were recorded. Earlier in the year many of these species had been seen about the area, together with a few others, giving a total list of 91 species sighted - a good result in this dry country for a short period of observation without much surface water about.

Most of White Wells Station is situated within the grid of Lat.29.30 South + Long.116.30 East and checking the list with the data available in *The Atlas of Australian Birds*, (Blakers et al 1984) shows 23 not there recorded and with a further 20 shown to breed. This result probably indicates the limited earlier records. Little is published about the range and seasonal movement of many species that inhabit the belt of inner pastoral country that extends all the way around the edge of the north-eastern wheatbelt, from the lower Murchison River to Bullfinch.

In this inner pastoral belt, intermingling of Eyrean dry country species and the mixed Bassian/Eyrean species of the wetter wheatbelt country occurs. Much of this belt, which extends out to the Mulga/Eucalypt line (see Serventy & Whittell 1976) from Talling Peak around through Mt Singleton and Lake Moore then eastwards beyond Mt Jackson, is still relatively unchanged by pastoral activity and is often densely vegetated, a very fertile area for those interested in avian bio-geography.

The White Wells area, including the Mt Gibson Range nearby, has examples of all the main habitats of the region. The area has large areas of sandplain and acacia woodland, extensive salt lake country at the northern end a more limited area of open eucalyptus woodland and mallee, with occasional laterite 'breakaways' and granite rock exposures. Given reasonably intensive observation over say five years, including one or two wet seasons, it would not be surprising if considerably more species were to be found to utilise the area at one time or another, many being waterbirds.

A few species first recorded last year are of particular interest. The sighting of Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters and Grey-fronted Honeyeaters in open eucalyptus forest extends their previously known ranges one degree north for the former and a degree west for the latter. The unconfirmed sighting of a White-cheeked Honeyeater places it a degree further eastward than usual; it does move further south on occasions. It was not surprising to find Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters (?from the

west) and Black and Pied Honeyeaters (?from the north) about the flowering bush of the sandplains. Many of these species of birds appear to move beyond their more usual area of occupation into this belt of country, probably influenced by the flowering of plants. However, very little is accurately known of the timing and direction of their movement.

There is some evidence that White-fronted Honeyeaters, also quite common here, move in mass across the eastern wheatbelt. Both Black and Pied Honeyeaters appear to move south-eastwards in the wheatbelt fringe country as the flowering of most shrubland seasonally moves south in late spring, at least as far as Southern Cross, but such movements are not known to be regular. The sighting of a Hooded Plover near Lake Monger shows this bird must move a good deal about the often dry lake systems of the region.

It was also interesting to find Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Elegant Parrot and Purple-crowned Lorikeet this far north, and a Shining Bronze-cuckoo a bit further eastward than usual of its generally accepted migration area. It is quite possible that new records of these birds may be made further north in this belt over winter and spring.

Finally, two much more sedentary birds were of interest in this fringe country. Southern Scrub-robin and Western Yellow Robin were found in thick tea-tree scrub adjacent to a small breakaway. Northward there is quite a gap in sightings until the birds are reported in similar dry country near Mary Springs north of the Murchison River Bridge. A few still may remain in the gap, possibly in the country from Rothsay to Gullewa. Other sedentary species yet to be reported in the general area surrounding Lake Monger (at the limits of their range) are Shy Hylacola to the south and Chiming Wedgebill to the north.

There is much still to be learned about the birdlife of the area and further south in the Eastern Goldfields towards Lake Johnstone. Some species can be frustratingly hard to find and sometimes not there at all when they are expected. Life can be hard out there for birds and birdos alike. However, Bruce Boucher's hospitality can make birding very pleasant at White Wells and I thank the organisers for the very interesting excursion they organised for us.

J. Masters

Emu		Change of status to Breeding
Straw-necked Ibis	1°E	
Whistling Kite	1°E	Fills gap
Brown Goshawk	1°E	Breeding in area
Collared Sparrowhawk	1°E	Fills gap
Spotted Harrier	1°E	Fills gap
Brown Falcon		Change of status - breeds in area
Hooded Plover		Not previously recorded in area
Common Bronzewing		Change of status - breeds in area
Purple-crowned Lorikeet	1°E	
Regent Parrot		Change of status - breeds in area
Bourke's Parrot		Change of status - breeds in area
Elegant Parrot	1°N	
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	1°N	
Shining-Bronze Cuckoo	1°NE	
Red-backed Kingfisher	1°E	
Sacred Kingfisher	1°E	
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike		Change of status - breeds

	in area
Southern Scrub-robin	1°N
Hooded Robin	1°E
Jacky Winter	1°E Fills gap-breeds in area
White-browed Babbler	Change of status - breeds in area
Splendid Fairy-wren	Change of status - breeds in area
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	Change of status - breeds in area
Southern Whiteface	Change of status - breeds in area
Varied Sittella	1°E
Rufous Treecreeper	Change of status - breeds in area
Yellow-throated Miner	Change of status - breeds in area
Yellow-plumed Honeyeater	1°N
Grey-fronted Honeyeater	1°W
Brown-headed Honeyeater	1°E
White-cheeked Honeyeater	1°E (unconfirmed)
White-fronted Honeyeater	1°E Fills gap
Tawny-crowned Honeyeater	1°E Fills gap
Black Honeyeater	1°SW
Pied Honeyeater	1°E Fills gap
White-fronted Chat	Change of status - breeds in area
Striated Pardalote	Change of status - breeds in area
Zebra Finch	Change of status - breeds in area
Grey Butcherbird	Change of status - breeds in area
Pied Butcherbird	Change of status - breeds in area
Australian Magpie	Change of status - breeds in area

References:

Blakers M, Davies S J J F, Reilly P N (1984), *The Atlas of Australian Birds*, RAOU: Melbourne University Press
 Serventy D L and Whittell H M (1976), *Birds of Western Australia*: UWA Press, Perth

"DEAD DUCK" DISPLAY BY MALE CHESTNUT TEAL

Human presence within three metres of a duck family can lead to the male of the family feigning injury whilst the female paddles away with her brood of ducklings. This was last observed by myself at Lake Joondalup, south of Ocean Reef Road one November early morning when a male Freckled Duck put on an impressive display whilst a female and her brood moved off.

I had not before witnessed a "Dead Duck" display. Recently at Yarawindah Pool south of New Norcia on 26 November 1989 at 7am such a display was performed by a male Chestnut Teal.

The male lay flat on the water surface, tail, neck and bill, but paddling slowly forward. The male was about 1.5 metres from the female which was shepherding six ducklings aged about ten days.

Once we passed by, the male resumed upright swimming posture and led the way for the ducklings to follow with the female in the rear.

M.H. Bremner

UNUSUAL AUSTRALIAN RAVEN BEHAVIOUR

During the recent Christmas holidays, from our caravan hide in C.A.L.M.'s Coalmine Beach caravan park within the Walpole-Nornalup National Park, 1.5km south of Walpole, we observed an Australian Raven. It was a young dark-eyed bird which was eating food scraps left on a tree stump adjacent to our caravan. Having eaten a number of food scraps the Australian Raven selected another morsel, held it in its beak and flew into one of the camp site's peppermints (*Agonis flexuosa*).

The food morsel was pushed into a crevice formed at the horizontal branch on which the Australian Raven was standing and one of the vertical trunks. The food was then covered with leaf litter obtained from the horizontal branch. The bird then preened and flew away.

The "larder" was located at an estimated height of 4 metres. Retrieval of the stored food was not observed.

Is this normal behaviour or one induced by the abundance of food left by the camp's residents?

G. Marston

GURAGA AGAIN

Visiting Guraga in November 1989 (for the Great Duck Count) two further species were seen - Hooded Plover and Large Sand Plover.

There were three Hooded Plovers, not quite in adult plumage, which together with other northerly sightings, adds weight to the idea that there is a group of Hooded Plover breeding and resident in the northerly sandplain lakes.

One Large Sand Plover was seen among a large group of Red-necked Stints and Red-capped Plovers.

This brings the waterbird species total to 51, thus making Guraga equal 6th of the 197 Reserves reported in the South West Waterbird Survey Jaensch R.P., Vervest R.M., Hewish M.J. 1988 *Waterbirds in Nature Reserves of South-Western Australia* 1981-1985 RAOU Report No. 30.

B. Buchanan

AUSTRALIAN RAVENS AND DUCKLINGS

Regarding Australian Raven taking baby ducks (see WABN No. 52 December 1989 p.7). I have witnessed this with Maned Duck, Australian Shelduck and Pacific Black Duck. With the Australian Shelduck and Maned Duck the Australian Raven dropped a duckling after the tooting of a car horn in one case and after the firing of a rifle in the other.

The Australian Shelduck duckling was taken home and successfully raised and released to the wild. The Maned Duck duckling was placed on a dam and adult birds came to it about ten minutes later.

In the Pacific Black Duck case, two Australian Ravens were swooping on ducklings as an adult duck led them to water along a fence line. An Australian Raven seized a duckling but in take off the Australian Raven hit a wire fence and dropped the duckling. The Australian Ravens were frightened off and the duckling was apparently none the worse. I watched the ducklings to the water and there was no further attack.

I have also witnessed Australian Raven killing Australian Magpie-lark chicks and also young finches. Being opportunistic, many young birds may be vulnerable to attack by Australian Raven as well as Grey Butcherbird and Laughing Kookaburra.

N.J. Tyer

SOME OBSERVATIONS OF COLLARED SPARROWHAWKS AT WANNAMAL

My attention was first drawn to a clump of Marri trees (*E. calophylla*) by loud bird calls - "kikiki". As I approached a male and a female Collared Sparrowhawk (the sex determined by noticeable size difference) flew out over my head, both calling. It was mid September 1988.

As the calls came from the trees quite frequently I thought nesting might be in progress, an idea supported by the remarks of Pizzey (1980). After a considerable time in searching in the clump (70 metres x 30 metres and with 35 living trees and a number dead) I finally found the nest. Obvious when seen, it could only be clearly discerned from the ground from two locations, both with a narrow angle of view. The understorey was mainly an open wild oat area, with some low re-growth of marri, casuarina and jam trees.

Both male and female birds sat on the nest, which was quite deeply cup-shaped, the male when sitting almost lost to view, the female very obvious, with tail, body and head clearly visible. This was the use of the nest of another species: Collared Sparrowhawks build platform nests (Serventy & Whittell 1976).

I was only able to visit the site at week-ends but noticed that each week-end morning at least (at about 5.30am) a Collared Sparrowhawk would fly from the trees to a Flooded Gum (*E. rudis*) some 30 metres away and always on the side of the tree furthest from the nest, break off a twig with leaves, apparently by walking along until the twig broke or by pulling with the bill while flapping the wings vigorously (usually this second method). The leafy twig was taken to the nest where the fresh leaves could be clearly seen around the nest edge - the nest being about 12 metres from the ground. As sitting continued matters seemed promising, but in late October 1988 (the last weekend) no Collared Sparrowhawk was sitting and they were not seen at the nest again.

Hollands (1984) had not recorded the re-use of a nest by the Collared Sparrowhawk (though others have done so), so I did not have great hopes of a return.

However on 3 September 1989 similar loud calling from the same group of trees prompted investigation. Two Collared Sparrowhawks were calling to each other while fluttering about upper branches. The following week-end this behaviour was again occurring (9 September) and the male Collared Sparrowhawk was observed calling persistently from a tree fork where a number of small sticks appeared to have been placed about a dead branch, fallen and jammed in the fork. To my surprise and pleasure on 10 September I saw the 1988 nest was re-occupied and the female bird sitting.

The 1988 pattern was now repeated. Both sexes sat on the nest and about 5.15am each week-end morning fresh leaves were collected from the same Flooded Gum, in the same manner and from the same place.

This sitting pattern continued through October and into November. During the first weekend in November the female was observed carrying prey back to the nest area where the male was sitting, but I did not see whether the prey was passed on to the sitting bird. I was beginning to seek what literature I could find on the incubation time for the Collared Sparrowhawk as Serventy and Whittell's (1976) nineteen days was, at this time apparently well exceeded.

The next week-end, the nest was apparently deserted and no bird was found sitting despite frequent visits. It seemed to be as in 1988, when, not long before returning to Perth, I saw a female Collared Sparrowhawk standing on the edge of the nest, reaching down into it and jerking her head up and down. The following week-end (25 November) revealed no sign of life at

the nest despite frequent visits, nor were any adult birds seen. Consequently I was delighted to see three Collared Sparrowhawk chicks in the nest during the 2 December week-end, being attended by the female. Two of the chicks had brown streaked heads and brown crescents down each side of the breast (resembling a Tawny-crowned Honeyeater breast markings), their wings and back being brownish but otherwise covered in a cream-buff down. The third chick had no noticeable brown at all, entirely cream-buff down. After deciding I was a menace and swooping at me, following a loud "kikiki" call, (the female looked huge approaching through the binoculars and I ducked early), the female settled to brood the chicks, apparently having some difficulty in fitting them in the space, from the shuffling and movement.

The male bird brought prey which was exchanged in the air off the nest about 30 metres from it. On one occasion after this exchange the male circled slowly upward on a thermal, though to no great height, before gliding from view. Hollands (1984) describes this behaviour as territorial.

Next week-end the all cream-buff chick had developed the Tawny-crowned Honeyeater markings, while the other two were much more fully marked brown right across the breast. The adult pair exchanged food off the nest, which provoked considerable noise from the chicks. The female still brooded the chicks from time to time and swooped at me from a branch near the nest, this time without warning call.

On 15 December the two older (?) darker plumaged birds were fluttering heavily in adjacent trees (one eating a bird) while the third, still not as dark as the others remained in the nest. The following day (16 December) all three chicks were on nearby trees and flapping laboriously from one tree branch to another. The male swooped at me.

By the following week-end all three young birds were flying more strongly and on the morning of 23 December all were engaged in what could be described as early morning flying exercises. The birds flew through the home clump of trees, swooping low and twisting between and round branches, calling continuously and apparently at times chasing each other. This behaviour continued daily until 5 January (I was then on holiday and could observe daily). The birds were accompanied in their morning flying by one parent on most occasions, once by both.

"Exercises" usually started about 5.15am and lasted about ten minutes.

Between 23 December and 5 January the young birds noticeably increased in flying strength and agility. While awaiting food during the day the young birds also "exercised" but less vigorously, and it was interesting to see how their skills in alighting and security in perching increased over the same period. One feature was the apparent wish to perch on one leg, which all the chicks frequently attempted, even in the face of 20 knot winds (usually with little success) and which seemed to be associated with periods of less alertness.

Other features of the growth to independence were the hawking of insects, swooping on leaves blown from the marri trees and chasing other birds on small trees about 30 metres from the "home" clump. Generally Port Lincoln Ringnecks were either attacked by a sudden irruption from a branch or by flying slowly over trees containing them, to flush them from cover, then to give chase. The Port Lincoln Ringnecks seemed alarmed and gave loud warning calls but their flight speed, even from a standing start, was greatly in excess of the young Collared Sparrowhawks. Interestingly, while awaiting food and engaged in hawking insects, leaves and bird chasing Western Gerygone and Silvereye came into the "home" clump of Marri trees on several occasions. Their calls could be clearly

heard, but without any apparent interest from the young Collared Sparrowhawks in the same trees.

Both parents fed the chicks, the prey being exchanged out of the trees. On all occasions seen the prey delivered was partially plucked and headless.

On 27 December the young birds which had often flown to the ground for short periods earlier now commenced spending a good deal of time on or near the ground (on branches about half a metre off the ground). Generally at least two would go to a nearby clump of overgrown fruit trees 100 metres from the nest, one of which being a mulberry laden with fruit was continuously beset with Silvereyes. However no apparent effort to catch the Silvereyes was seen.

A further change occurred on 1 January when all the young commenced flying to about 150+ metres from the "home" clump at tree top height, often loudly calling which, when settled in other tree tops, made location easy. Receiving food from a parent did not diminish the calls, which were made even having received food while perched with a bird under one foot and between mouthfuls.

On one occasion only were all the three young birds seen with food at the same time. Generally one only would be feeding, while another sat nearby calling steadily, presumably waiting to seize anything left over. On one such occasion, the prey having been consumed except for the legs (yellow) and a scrap of skin, the waiting bird, coming too close was given a different kind of "peep" and the young bird in possession mantled over the remains.

On several occasions both parents performed the "territorial thermal" behaviour, the female being accompanied on one occasion by a young bird, which returned to base as the female swooped away.

By 4 January excursions up to 300 metres from home base were common. A particularly warm day (42 degrees C) the young birds cooled by holding their wings up a little while facing the breeze and at the hottest time two roosted along (not across) a shady branch like domestic fowl.

By 6 January parental feeding seemed less and while food was delivered, late that day both adults flew past the home base calling, which led to the three young birds flying out after them and calling also.

Whether or not this was the parental farewell I was unable to determine, as holiday over I could not observe again until the 12 January. The parents were not seen again after the 6th. On the 12th January only two of the young birds were present and one was seen with a bird prey, with noticeably more feathers than when the parents delivered.

On 14 January one young bird was seen with a recently killed female or immature Rufous Whistler (a female or immature bird being fed by a male Rufous Whistler had been seen nearby the day before).

On 19 January only one young bird remained still calling loudly and often. It was seen with prey on the 20th January. This bird was still swooping about the home area and calling on 21st January.

On 26th January, the next week-end, all the Collared Sparrowhawks had left the area.

Hollands (1984) comments that the "Collared Sparrowhawk is as little known as some of Australia's very rarest birds of prey" (p.67) and further that observers do "not see them unless they choose to be seen (p.68). They are certainly very difficult to find when not moving or calling as I discovered when trying to locate three young Collared Sparrowhawks in quite a small clump of trees.

However, an article in the Australian Bird Watcher by

Czechura et al (1987) gives a considerable amount of information I was unable to find elsewhere (I am indebted to A. Burbidge for obtaining this article for me).

Czechura et al (1987) comment on the bringing of fresh leaves by both sexes up to the fledging stage and the breaking of twig methods I observed are recorded also.

The incubation period is suggested as 34-35 days. Frith (1967) suggested 19 days, as does Serventy & Whittell (1976). If the sighting of the female on the nest edge on 19 November 1989 was actually feeding young birds (as seems likely) nineteen days prior would be 31 October. However, sitting was first observed on 10 September. If sitting continuously on the one clutch this would make incubation an unlikely 65-70 days, but if a 1989 clutch failed (as seemed to occur in 1988) and a second clutch laid, the observations would fit a 30-35 day incubation period.

Czechura et al (1987) mention hawking after insects about 10 days after fledging. I observed two birds off the nest on 15 December and insect chasing on 25 December. The distance flown from the nest up to 1km within two weeks (Metcalf 1982 quoted in Czechura et al 1987) did not occur, something like 400 metres being the maximum observed prior to the birds leaving the area. It seems possible that the distance in early flying depends on the vegetation and features of the surrounding area. Just under 200 metres west of the nest was a swamp (400 metres wide) which none of the young birds attempted to fly over, 250 metres east a main road and heath/farming country, 200 metres north more swamp and a railway and 400 metres south open farming country. The swamp and farming areas may have limited the youthful exploration.

Czechura et al (1987) list the birds taken by Collared Sparrowhawk in a number of locations. They do not record Rufous Whistler.

B. Buchanan

References:

- Czechura G V, Debus S J S and Mooney N J (1987) *Australian Bird Watcher* 12, p35-62.
Frith H J (ed) (1969) *Birds of the Australian High Country*, A H and A W Reed, Sydney.
Hollands D (1984) *Eagles, Hawks and Falcons of Australia*, T Nelson, Melbourne.
Pizzey G & Doyle R (1980) *A Field Guide to the Birds of Australia*, Collins, Sydney.
Serventy D L and Whittell H M (1976) *Birds of Western Australia*, UWA Press, Perth.

COMMENT ON 'DECLINE IN NUMBERS OF AUSTRALIAN MAGPIE', R J & M N BROWN WABN NO 52

There appears to have been an apparent decline in the number of Australian Magpies in the vicinity of my home in Harvey. When we moved here in 1962 Australian Magpies frequently visited our garden and soon became very confident. My wife used to feed them with meat. This persisted until 1969 when I noted:

24 October 1969 - The whole behaviour of the Australian Magpie in the vicinity has changed: they no longer visit the garden to procure food.

4 November 1969 - Mr Kernow, a neighbour has also observed change in the behaviour of Australian Magpies - they no longer visit him. He seems to think a 'chicken hawk' (? Black-shouldered Kite) may have caused the change.

7 December 1969 - Three birds have paid brief visits to the garden in late evening. No male birds have been seen since 21 October.

10 January 1970 - The distress calls of a Red-capped Parrot - apparently captured by a cat, though I could not confirm this - attracted a notable 'mobbing': three Australian Magpie, Australian Magpie-larks, Red Wattlebirds, Willie Wagtails and more surprisingly, Port Lincoln Parrots and Red-capped Parrots.

8 February 1970 - Magpie position unchanged. There appear to be only three in the vicinity. These rarely visit but, at least sometimes, roost in the tristania near the front gate. Since the change noted on 28 October 1969, I have not seen the Black-shouldered Kite which was long resident.

1 May 1970 - Three birds, and three only, still present and coming sometimes for food. These comprise two fully plumaged males and a female. Today a 'mobbing' took place: the Australian Magpies, Australian Magpie-larks, Grey Butcherbirds and one or two Red Wattlebirds taking part. Finally, a Barn Owl flew from the tristania near the gate to the camphor trees where it seemed fairly successful in shaking off the 'mobbing'.

31 July 1970 - The three Australian Magpies have now been joined by a relatively young bird, which sometimes accompanies the others to the house, but is less confident.

19 September 1970 - Short burst of calling at 2150 hrs - moonlight.

31 January 1973 - Birds in garden included a young bird - apparently a bird of the year. This appears to be the first young bird produced by the group since 1967 when a sudden reduction of the flock took place.

30 December 1974 - At least one young bird is being fed. Details have not emerged because the group is no longer centred upon our garden: birds only occasionally appear here.

The local position does not appear to have improved greatly. The number of trees in the vicinity has been reduced by 'progressive' development. Nocturnal calling has not been apparent this year - nor for two or three years preceding. What I have recorded above may have been purely local. I have no evidence of a complete recovery.

The Australian Magpie is hardly a threatened species. It would seem that fluctuations in populations occur - sometimes without obvious reasons. More study is required.

E. Sedgewick

(This is the only response received in answer to the request by R J and M N Brown, WABN No 52, December 1989. Ed.)

BBBO

1. Is species diversity in any area more related to the diversity of plant species or the structural diversity?
2. What is Bergmann's rule?
3. What is Gloger's rule?
4. You see a spoonbill feeding. What feeding technique differentiates the two species?
5. What is the approximate total weight of insects consumed by birds per hectare per year?
6. What are the sexual differences in the foraging behaviour of Rufous Whistlers?
7. The number of bird species and the total number of individuals in pine forests is reduced by comparison with eucalypt forests. By what percentage?
8. How many years before bird life in clear felled forest recovers to be similar to unfelled areas when revegetated with native trees?

9. What is the approximate annual mortality rate of Brown Honeyeaters and New Holland Honeyeaters?

10. What percentage of Australian land birds are co-operative breeders?

EXCURSION REPORTS

NEERABUP NATIONAL PARK

The excursion to Neerabup National Park on the 13th August 1989 was a great success. Over 30 birdwatchers were present and were divided into two groups. Some of the highlights were Shining-bronze Cuckoos displaying, a Pallid Cuckoo and a Wedge-tailed Eagle.

Later in the day the group had lunch at the north end of the park (Romeo Road) and then continued to Pippidiny Swamp and the surrounding heath. Tawny-crowned Honeyeaters and White-winged Fairy-wrens were among the birds seen.

It was a pleasure to have some of the "Friends of Neerabup National Park" join us.

Altogether 40 species were seen in the park. Thanks to those who came along to make it an enjoyable day.

J. Pegler

BENGER SWAMP/HOFFMAN MILL

A group of 15 interested amateur ornithologists met at Swamp Road, Benger, at 10.00 am on Saturday 25th November. Swamp Road lived up to its name, starting as a narrow, rough road, turning to a gravel track, then disappearing under the waters of a flooded swamp.

We were told the swamp water level is controlled by local farmers using a sluice mechanism to enable irrigation of potato crops in the drier months. Then, with a diverse range of boots, waders, thongs and bare feet, into the swamp.

Waterbirds were common and several raptors were noted. Two Marsh Harriers were disturbed at a kill. The remains of a smallish bird were found; the skull was taken for identification. A Peregrine Falcon performed a fine aerobatic display.

The southern side of the swamp, which has previously contained Freckled Duck was surveyed, but none were seen.

On the northern side, where Southern Emu-wrens have been reported none were seen, but several groups of Splendid Fairy-wren were observed. It was here that Chris Wilder and I heard what sounded like a Red-capped Parrot, but investigation showed it to be a Grey Butcherbird, making a very passable imitation.

On leaving, some for an overnight at Hoffman Mill others for home, on the road to the South West Highway, several Elegant Parrots were seen and three White-winged Trillers.

At Hoffman Mill, spotlighting along the Bibbulmun Track revealed nothing, though a Southern Boobook was heard.

The following morning a walk round the campsite (before heading again along the Bibbulmun Track) produced, among others, Spotted Pardalote and White-breasted Robin. My favourite, however, was a male Splendid Fairy-wren which was totally tail-less. It did not seem to be affected in any way, and it hopped and flew as quickly as the tailed wrens which were present.

On the track we saw Western Yellow Robin, a White-naped Honeyeater feeding young and several Red-tailed Black Cockatoos.

A thoroughly enjoyable weekend.

J.G. Little

HOFFMAN MILL/BIBBULMUN TRACK BIRD LIST

Laughing Kookaburra	Golden Whistler
Port Lincoln Ringneck	Grey Fantail
Little Wattlebird	Australian Raven
Silvereye	Tree Martin
Inland Thornbill	Western Gerygone
Western Yellow Robin	Striated Pardalote
Rufous Treecreeper	Varied Sittella
Red-capped Robin	Shining Bronze-Cuckoo
Scarlet Robin	Fan-tailed Cuckoo
Splendid Fairy-wren	Yellow-rumped Thornbill
Spotted Pardalote	White-tailed Black Cockatoo
Red-tailed Black Cockatoo	New Holland Honeyeater
Little Eagle	White-naped Honeyeater
White-breasted Robin	

EXCURSION TO THE ROCKINGHAM AREA, 9 DECEMBER 1989

About thirty members gathered at Mersey Point at 9am to catch the ferry to Penguin Island. On the way to the island we detoured via Shag Rock and Seal Island and were able to observe twelve Australian Sea Lions on the beach at Seal Island, as well as watch three more swimming.

On Penguin Island we saw Bridled Terns at close quarters, noting many birds sitting on eggs. The large Silver Gull population also made its presence known. Our first Fairy Penguin was large and in moult and in a limestone recess on the western side of the island. We soon found many more sitting under the wooden walkway which runs over the dunes at the southern end of the island.

The total number of waders seen was small, but at least one individual of each of the following species was seen: Common Sandpiper, Ruddy Turnstone, Whimbrel, Great Knot and Pied Oystercatcher. On the roof of one of the old settlement buildings (now being dismantled) we saw several immature Welcome Swallows being fed by a parent. One of the most interesting aspects of the visit was watching skuas harrying Silver Gulls over the sandbar.

We left Penguin Island about 2pm to visit Lake Cooloongup. On the way we stopped opposite Fairy Tern Island, a small sandbank in Safety Bay. We had noted a number of Fairy Terns around Penguin Island and wondered if they were attempting to breed there again. Telescope inspection revealed a number of Fairy Terns, so follow up monitoring may be worthwhile.

We paused at an ephemeral swamp between Lakes Cooloongup and Walyungup and observed several Sacred Ibis and White-faced Heron. We were delighted to see about a dozen Regent Parrot fly into trees adjoining the swamp.

After parking at the picnic area at the northern end of Lake Cooloongup, we walked to the northern tip of the lake. Some swans and ducks were seen, most at considerable distance. At the water's edge we noted Red-capped Plover, Red-necked Stint and Curlew Sandpiper. A late summer visit would no doubt be more fruitful.

In the Tuarts fringing the northern edge of the lake we observed two Little Eagles (one light phase and one dark phase) engaging in aerobatics. They repeatedly folded their wings and plummeted making a chirruping call during the display. On this interesting note, the excursion ended at about 4.30pm.

NOTE: Members are reminded that access on Penguin Island is restricted to the beaches and wooden walkways over the dunes. Visitors are not permitted on the central dunes and the limestone plateaus which are the main seabird breeding areas.

Please note the CALM signs which indicate the restricted areas.

P. Wilmot

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 JUNE 1990 ISSUE IS 20TH APRIL 1990

PUBLICATIONS

YOU CAN BUY THE FOLLOWING at the RAOU Office. Add the cost of postage and packing if you are not calling to pick up purchases. Items are also usually available for purchase at RAOU meetings and excursions.

- * The Atlas of Australian Birds (produced by the RAOU: shows distribution of bird species) \$49
- * overlays for the Atlas \$6
- * Methods for Censusing Birds in Australia-1982 (produced by the WA Group, RAOU) \$5
- * Report of the Middlesex Study Centre \$5
- * WA Bird Report 1982 \$5
- * A Pocket List of Australian Birds (a handy checklist; produced by Canberra Ornithologists Group) 70c
- * RAOU check list of Birds of WA \$1 for 10
- * A Field Guide to the Birds of Australia, by G. Pizzey (1985 reprint, paperback; small format) Postage in Zone 15 \$2.60 plus 40c envelope \$19
- * The Birds of Australia, by Simpson & Day (1984, large format; text and plate facing each other) Postage in Zone 15 \$2.60 plus 55c envelope \$30
- * Field Guide to the Birds of Australia, by Simpson & Day, small format \$22
- * Every Australian Bird Illustrated (large format; 563 colour photos) \$22
- * In Quest of Bower Birds, by N. Chaffer (large format; text and photographs of all species) \$26
- * A Field Guide to the Birds of WA by Storr & Johnstone (WA Museum 1985 edition; solely birds of WA) \$15
- * The Birdlife of Rottnest Island, by Saunders and de Rebeira (1985; text; colour plates; maps) \$8
- * Eyre Bird Observatory: Report 1981-83 \$5
- * RAOU Calendar 1990 \$10
- * Bird-call tapes (3 choices; mostly WA birds; announced version) \$11
- * 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 by Michael Morecombe	\$55
* Shorebirds in Australia, Brett Lane (Postage in Zone 15 \$2.60 plus 55c envelope)	\$45
* 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 John Bransbury	\$30
* A Guide to the Flora and Fauna of the Rockingham Offshore Islands and Cape Peron W.A. Naturalists' Club (KRMB)	\$10
* Waterbirds in Nature Reserves of South-Western Australia 1981-1985 by Jaensch, Vervest and Hewish	\$35
* Eyre Bird Observatory Report 1986/87	\$6

If you have suggestions for titles that we could obtain, please give details to the WA Office. Please bear in mind that the W A Group is reluctant to spend money on bird books that do not sell readily. As few local publishers/distributors give a discount on bird books, 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 (Large \$1.50 Small \$2)

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

COMING EVENTS

Sunday 1st April

Half Day Excursion - Lake Gwelup

Meet at 2pm at the Scout Hall on corner of Gwelup Street and Huntriss Road (north of Karrinyup Road).

Leader: Geoff Shannon

Friday 13th-Monday 16th April

Easter Campout - Dwellingup

This campout will be held at Jan and Rob Hill's property near the Murray River, State Forest and the Bibbulmun Track. Around 40 species of birds have been seen on the property. Enjoy birdwatching, bushwalking, canoeing and swimming. Self sufficient camping, water, shower and toilet available. For details contact Jan or Rob Hill 450-1563.

Monday 23rd April

Meeting - Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre, 8 pm

Study of Lake Claremont

Saturday 5th-Sunday 6th May

Campout - Mt Lesueur area

A further visit to the Mt Lesueur area to add to the information gathered in July and September 1989. Accommodation will be at the Apex Recreation Camp, Jurien. For details contact organiser Chris Wilder 401-8329.

There will not be a general meeting in Perth on 28th May

Saturday 2nd June

Meeting - CWA Hall, Serpentine Road, Albany

6.30pm-7.30pm

Display of RAOU projects, national and local, with members available to answer questions. Literature, cards, car stickers and other items may be purchased from the trading table during this time.

7.30pm

Part 1 - Alan Danks speaking on Noisy Scrub Bird recovery.

Part 2 - Allan Burbidge speaking on Ground Parrots.

To coincide with the Albany meeting, a campout and excursion programme has been arranged for the long weekend, as follows:

Campout at the Oyster Harbour Caravan Park, Elizabeth Street, Lower King, approximately 10 kms east of Albany town hall. Telephone 098-447164 or write to Mr Cuscuna to secure your accommodation (preferably before the end of April). Rates for unpowered campsite are \$9 per night for 2 persons, powered site \$10 per night for 2 persons and onsite caravan \$26 per night for 2 persons with \$3 extra per person. A deposit is payable.

Oyster Harbour Caravan Park may be reached from the main roundabout, into North Road, left into Ulster Road, follow into Lower King Road and turn left at Elizabeth Street. If you reach King River you have gone too far. The caravan park is situated near bushland where Red-winged Fairy-wrens and White-breasted Robins have been seen.

Saturday 2nd June

Half Day Excursion to local birding area in Albany, to be advised. Meet at 12.45pm at the Oyster Harbour Caravan Park. Leader: Ray Garstone

Sunday 3rd June

Full Day Excursion - Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve

Meet at 7am at the picnic site at Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve, approximately 36km from Albany town hall. Within the reserve it is possible to see Noisy Scrub Bird, Western Bristlebird, Western Whipbird, Southern Emu-wren and Red-eared Firetail. Bring you lunch along.

Leader: Alan Danks

Seabirding may be on the programme on the morning of Monday 4th June, from land or boat (weather permitting). If

you are interested in seabirding please contact Chris Wilder.
For further information please contact:
RAOU office - 364-6202;
Pam Piesse, Albany & Districts Birdwatch Group 098-415076
(please allow time to answer); or
Chris Wilder 401-8329

Sunday 17th June

Half Day Excursion - Bickley Reservoir

Meet at 8am at the car park just below the Bickley Brook Reservoir wall. From Perth travelling on the Tonkin Highway, turn left into Gosnells Road East (Reservoir is signposted), then left into Reservoir Road and right into Maddington/Harding Road to the car park.

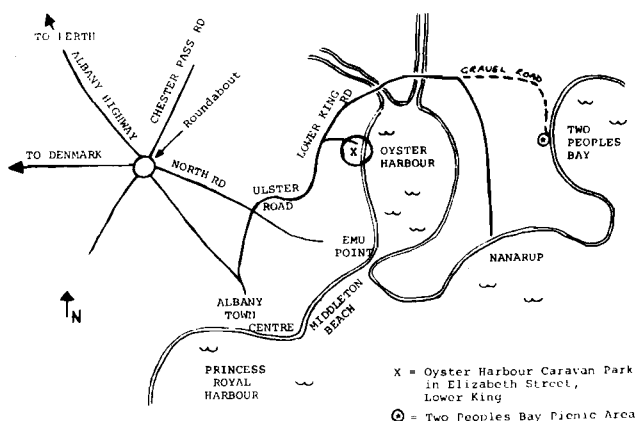
Leader: Rod Smith

Monday 25th June

Meeting - Herdsman Lake Wildlife Centre, 8 pm

Ospreys

MAP OF ALBANY



COATE'S WILDLIFE TOURS 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:-

COATE'S WILDLIFE TOURS

87 First Avenue

Mount Lawley W.A. 6050

Telephone: 271 7879 Fax: 271 5570

- BBQBQ - ANSWERS
1. Structural diversity
 2. Members of a species are larger in the cooler parts of their range. Willie Wagtail is 11% larger at latitude 38 degrees than latitude 12 degrees.
 3. Members of a species are paler in the drier parts of their range, e.g. Yellow-throated Miner (but not Australian Magpie)
 4. Yellow-billed feeds with a pendulum motion, Royal with a zig-zag motion.
 5. 30 kg!
 6. Males feed higher than females and more often in eucalypt trees
 7. About 50%
 8. Between 10 and 20 years, depending on growth of vegetation etc.
 9. Brown Honeyeaters 44%, New Holland Honeyeaters 45%.
 10. About 33%
- All questions derive from -
Ford, H.A. (1989) Ecology of Birds: An Australian Perspective, Surrey Beatty & Sons Pty Ltd, Chipping Norton, NSW.

SUPPLEMENT TO W.A. BIRD NOTES No. 53

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 1989

I have pleasure in presenting the Annual Report of the WA Group for 1989.

The group has continued to grow and a varied programme has been provided. The year started with a Champagne Breakfast at Perry Lakes, organised by the Committee with the help of Norah Brockman whom I wish to thank very much for her catering.

Ten monthly meetings were held at the Herdsman Wildlife Centre and one at Curtin University of Technology. Our thanks are due to Geoff Shannon for arranging speakers. The attendance on each occasion varied between fifty and sixty members and we were delighted to welcome overseas visitors from time to time. Chris Wilder took over from Phyllis Bentley the organisation of supper for these meetings and we are very grateful for her willing help.

The Committee met monthly at Perth Modern School. It was concerned in the first half of the year about the provision of office space, particularly lost funds were not forthcoming for a Western Australian project after the end of the Southwest Waterbird Survey which had formed a part of members' activities for so long. While alternative accommodation is still being investigated, it was a relief to learn in June that various WA government instrumentalities would provide monies for a three year study of waterbirds on the Swan Coastal Plain which enabled retention of the Ogilvie Road premises. Conservation matters, particularly with reference to Mt Lesueur and several environmental reports, were discussed and our concern about the former was expressed to the Premier.

As mentioned above, 1989 saw the final completion of the Southwest Waterbird Survey and the Group was represented at the launching of the impressive Report and its presentation to the Minister, Mr Ian Taylor. The completion of the project also meant the end of our close association with its Field Officer, Roger Jaensch, who soon afterwards left Perth to take up a position with Interall in Malaysia. I know all members were very sad to have to farewell Roger, but we all congratulate him on his appointment and wish him and Sue-Ellen well in their new life. A presentation of several bird books was made to Roger before he left.

1989 also saw the retirement of Stephen Davies from the position of RAOU Director. The Group contributed to a presentation for him and Brian Collins and Barbara Hale were able to attend his official farewell when they visited Melbourne for the February Council meeting. In July the Committee was pleased to meet the new full-time Director, Philip Moors, when he visited WA and to discuss the Group's participation in the Union's activities.

Chris Wilder did an excellent job organising the monthly excursions and campouts which included Mt Lesueur, Emu Rock and White Wells Station, as did the various leaders for giving us such a varied programme. In 1990 we hope to arrange a country meeting with speakers and a campout.

Bruce and Anne Buchanan have again been responsible for the editing and distribution of WA Bird Notes for which I thank

them. Its continuing high standard has made it a popular publication not only with Western Australians but also with interstate and overseas members.

The RAOU Birding Hotline again provided information about our activities and unusual sightings throughout the State. Our thanks are due to those who contributed regularly to this service.

The National Parks Project now has a substantial number of records which can provide valuable data for surveys. In 1990 the Committee will address the question of the use and distribution of this information amongst interested bodies.

Margaret and Brian Wilson have again publicised and raised money for the Group with the Trading Table. Stalls have been held at many suburban and country fairs. The most successful was probably the one at Kings Park during the Wildflower Festival. A big thank you to Margaret and Brian for all their work and organisation and also those who have helped staff the stalls. This has been the only fund raising we have done this year.

As in past years members have provided clerical assistance as well as input for the Southwest Waterbird Survey, the Great Duck Counts in March and November and the recently inaugurated Scopewest. Many have also joined the national ABC project and are sending information to its coordinator, Stephen Ambrose. Members were delighted when Rodney Vervest was appointed Field Officer for Scopewest and we look forward to working with him over the next three years of the study.

The Canning Bridge office has been staffed each weekday morning by volunteers organised by Wendy Napier and Claire Mercer. Thank you all for keeping things ticking over. As administrative costs rise it is great to have this back-up from such a dedicated group.

Bird Week this year coincided with Children's Week in Western Australia, 23rd - 29th October. This facilitated the distribution of information to government schools. Nineteen schools, eight of them in rural areas, requested speakers and except for one, Mukinbudin, it was possible to provide them from amongst our members.

The Council of the RAOU decided to introduce a special fee for student members to start from the 1990 membership year. This is something our group has pressed for and we are pleased to learn that several young bird watchers have taken out this type of membership. Council also approved the revised rules of the WA Group and copies were made available for all members.

In closing this report I wish most sincerely to thank all members of the Committee who have been a great support during the past year, especially our secretary, Claire Mercer, who is not seeking re-election. I thank Brian Wilson who so kindly and efficiently took over as Acting Chairman when I was unable to continue due to illness.

R.J. Denny
Chairman