

Western Australian Bird Notes

Quarterly Newsletter of the Western Australian
Branch of BirdLife Australia

No. 163 September 2017





Buff-banded Rail adult and juvenile in the bulrush. Remote sensor photo, 8 January 2017 (see report, page 4), Vasse. Photo by Alan Clarke



Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo, ssp. samueli, Nalbarra Station (see report, page 41). Photo by John Baas



Australasian Bittern, Kulunilup Swamp (see report, page 19). Photo by Robyn Pickering

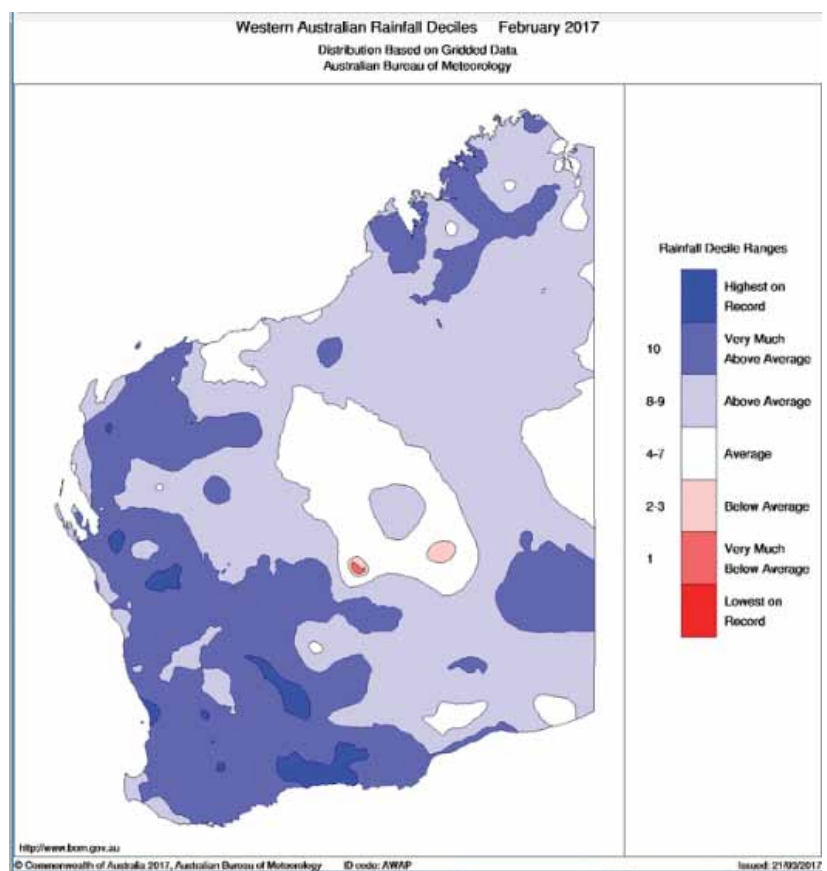


Fig. 1. Highest rainfall on record for February 2017 (see Hooded Plover report, page 16).

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BirdLife Western Australia is the WA Branch of the national organisation, BirdLife Australia. We are dedicated to creating a brighter future for Australian birds.

General meetings: Held at the Bold Park Eco Centre, Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat, commencing 7:30 pm on the 4th Monday of the month (except December) – see 'Coming events' for details.

Executive meetings: Held at Peregrine House on the 2nd Monday of the month. Communicate any matters for consideration to the Chair.

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Notes for Contributors

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- WABN uses BirdLife Australia recommended English names;
- except for Observations, contributions will be published unless the contributor is informed to the contrary;
- Full Editorial Policy is in WABN 74:10-12;
- WABN is not peer reviewed.

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Buff-banded Rail, Claremont. Photo by David Free

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AN AUSTRALASIAN BITTERN AND OTHER WATERBIRDS ON THE VASSE RIVER MARSHES

In an earlier article (Jaensch *et al.* 2017) we reported revisiting—30 years on—the site of the only previous record of an Australasian Bittern *Botaurus poiciloptilus* on the Vasse-Wonnerup wetlands at Busselton. During six hours of searching of emergent sedge and samphire in mostly knee to thigh deep water on 22 and 25 November 2016, we found small numbers of waterbirds, a few broods of ducklings, 9–10 nests (mainly of crakes and from previous years), and an abundance of snakes, but no bitterns. We also noted that, due to the sand bar at the mouth of the system being closed at the time of survey, the water level in Vasse Estuary was perhaps 40–50 cm higher than on 22 November 1986, the date of the previous bittern sighting. As this higher level could perhaps have been the reason for the apparent absence of bitterns during our November 2016 surveys, we decided to resurvey the area a month later, when the water level would be lower and depths in potential bittern feeding areas probably more suitable.

On 22 December 2016, two of us (AC & JL; RJ having returned to Queensland) conducted a third survey, with one eye looking for waterbird nests and the other, as before, scanning for bitterns. The water level, as measured at the floodgates, was now approximately 20 cm lower than a month before. As reported in our previous article, we encountered ibises, herons, egrets, spoonbills and crakes (heard only), plus many ducks and coots. We also found several empty swamphen and coot nests, a Swamp Harrier nest with eggs (this appears to be the first Vasse-Wonnerup breeding record), three Wedge-tailed Eagles near the fresh remains of an Australian White Ibis, many Slender Tree Frogs (*Litoria adelaidensis*) perched in samphire shrubs, and an abundance of tadpoles, macro-invertebrates and small fish in shallow, clear, vegetated fresh waters. The highlight though, was an Australasian Bittern which, at 1125 hrs, flushed from an area of mixed sedge, rush and samphire and flew west towards a tall patch of *Typha* before disappearing from view.

The bird we saw appeared to have dark plumage, suggestive of an adult. It flew strongly and determinedly, without any audible vocalisation, while we watched with both 10x40 binoculars and naked eye. The bird flushed from a position approximately 20 metres in front of us. Here there was a simple platform of fine sedge in a small open area with water 15 cm deep. A search of the surrounding area revealed a large robust platform of *Typha*, but no sign of bittern, bittern eggs or young.



(above) Baillon's Crake was not detected, except by remote sensor camera, 4 January 2017 and (below) sedge, grass and shallow channel habitat, 19 January 2017, Vasse. Photos by Alan Clarke



On 23 December, JL installed two stakes in the Vasse River channel so that the water level at this end of the estuary could be more-precisely monitored (it is more than 5 km from the gauge at the floodgates).

Five days later, on 28 December, AC installed four remote sensor cameras in the vicinity of the latest bittern sighting, at shallow water sites in various vegetation types, over a distance of approximately 150 m. The aim was to see how much use the bittern or bitterns were making of the area, and the types of habitats being utilised and for which purposes, without causing frequent disturbance. During the installation process, some bittern feathers and the fresh remains of a tadpole were found, shortly before a second flushing of an Australasian Bittern, this time from a narrow strip of dry land with surface water on both sides. Again, the bittern flew westwards, and across a nearby road alignment, before landing in a small patch of rushes.

On 4 January 2017, having left the location undisturbed for a further week, AC returned to check the four cameras for photos and survey the area to the west, where the bittern had landed in December. None of the areas examined to the west of the Ford Road alignment seemed suitable for bittern feeding at this time. Areas with surface water were too deep or too open; muddy areas appeared too bare, and channel banks appeared to be too steeply shelving. After returning to the cameras and downloading photos from three, AC walked east towards another location assessed in November–December as having potentially suitable

bittern habitat—and once more flushed an Australasian Bittern, this time from an area of fine sedge, low open *Typha* and sporadic samphire shrubs, in a water depth of 7–8cm. This bird flew further east, towards AC's originally intended destination. AC altered course and, after progressing another 240 m, was stationary while assessing habitat suitability when the bird again flushed just 5 m from him, and approx. 40 m from where it had appeared to land. It seems the bittern had walked 35 m to this new position. Interestingly, this time the bird flew west, again in the direction of Ford Road, rather than east towards the far more extensive expanses of Vasse estuary. Perhaps this is an indicator of relative suitability for feeding or refuge, as assessed by the bittern? AC installed a fifth remote sensor camera at this latest flush position.

A review of camera downloads back in the office later that day (4 January) revealed many photographs of waterbirds, including flightless juveniles, but no bittern. This was somewhat surprising as there was clearly at least one bittern active in the area and similar use of cameras by AC on wetlands near the south coast had produced many positive results (Pickering *et al.* 2015). So on the following day, five more remote sensor cameras were installed, now over a total distance of 350 m.

No further visits were made during the next two weeks, so that any bittern present would be totally undisturbed (by people at least; foxes could be another matter) and hopefully passing in front of the carefully positioned cameras. On 19 January, AC returned to download photos from the cameras and survey on foot the few remaining patches of standing water (the water level in the adjoining river channel had dropped 25 cm since the first bittern flushing). To the west of Ford Road there were 40+ White-faced Herons, 30+ Yellow-billed Spoonbills, 30+ Purple Swampheas, c. 30 Glossy Ibis flying low, 12 adult and eight fully-fledged (flying) juvenile Nankeen Night-Herons, two Black Swans and 11 cygnets, an Australian Reed-Warbler nest with three eggs, a male Blue-billed Duck, egret and other waterbirds. To the east of the road alignment there were large numbers of White-faced Heron, Australian White Ibis, Yellow-billed Spoonbill and some Great Egrets in the channels, but the marshes were mostly dry and only one waterbird, a Buff-banded Rail under a large samphire shrub, could be found. The channels did not appear suitable for bitterns, as they lacked fine sedges and there were only low numbers of tadpoles and frogs. However, they did hold water, so two cameras were moved to one of them, while the other cameras, now over dry ground, were removed.

On 23 January, AC and JL jointly surveyed the northernmost area of the Vasse River marshes, between the main channel and Layman Road. Some very shallow patches of water remained, but most of this area was dry. White-faced Herons and White Ibis were conspicuous, but there were no indications of a bittern being present. We also walked some distance to the west of Ford Road, but again, no bittern.

Four days later AC revisited the two channels and encountered many White-faced Herons, White Ibis, Great Egrets and Purple Swampheas. The two remaining cameras were now no longer over water (the water level

had dropped another 6 cm since 19 January), so these too were removed.

At the time of writing (May 2017) we haven't been back to the Vasse River marshes, as the area is now mostly dry and appears unsuitable for Australasian Bitterns. We have, however, been studying the thousands of photographs taken by the ten remote sensor cameras. Between 28 December 2016 and 27 January 2017, these cameras photographed the following 17 bird species: Grey Teal, Pacific Black Duck, White-faced Heron, Nankeen Night-Heron, Australian White Ibis, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Purple Swampheas, Buff-banded Rail, Baillon's Crake, Australian Spotted Crake, Spotless Crake, Black-winged Stilt, Splendid Fairy-wren, White-browed Scrubwren, Australian Magpie (perched briefly on a camera post), Australian Reed-Warbler and Little Grassbird. The Nankeen Night-Heron photos were of adults and fully-fledged juveniles, the streaked and mottled brown plumage of the latter causing them to superficially resemble an Australasian Bittern.

The cameras also photographed flightless juveniles, including downy chicks, of Purple Swampheas, Buff-banded Rail and crake (species undetermined). The only birds to appear in night-time photos were Pacific Black Duck, Nankeen Night-Heron (adults and fully-fledged juveniles), Yellow-billed Spoonbill and Black-winged Stilt. Nankeen Night-Herons did not appear in any day-time photographs.

Two of the three species of crake photographed by the cameras were not sighted during our November 2016 to January 2017 surveys. Spotless Crakes were determined to be present by their calls, but the cameras provided the only evidence of Baillon's Crake being present. In RJ's experience, Baillon's Crake rarely, if ever, makes readily recognisable calls.

Several species of introduced mammals appeared in the photos. These were Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), House Mouse (*Mus musculus*) and rats (probably *Rattus rattus*). The only native mammal photographed was the Quenda or Southern Brown Bandicoot (*Isodon obesulus*). The rodents and Quenda appeared only in night-time photographs.

Although Rakali (*Hydromys hydrogaster*) and their middens have occasionally been seen on Vasse-Wonnerup, including at the City of Busselton's Pioneer Cove bird hide, less than one kilometre upstream, none were 'captured' by the cameras. Given the proximity of the site to residential areas, it would also not have been surprising to have recorded a stray cat (*Felis catus*) or perhaps even a wandering domestic dog, but none were photographed or seen.

No Tiger Snakes (*Notechis scutatus*) or Oblong Tortoises (*Chelodina oblonga*) were photographed by the remote sensor cameras, despite many Tiger Snakes being encountered in the marshes in November 2016 and tortoises having occasionally been recorded in other parts of Vasse-Wonnerup in the past. The remote sensor cameras that we used are triggered by infra-red radiation motion sensors sensitive to the movement of objects warmer than their surroundings. Tiger Snakes and tortoises are perhaps too cool to be photographed, unless sun-warmed or particularly active.

On one night only (7 January, at 2337 hrs), many frogs were photographed on an area of bare, sloping, muddy ground with some cover provided by adjacent vegetation, principally samphire shrubs. All 10+ individuals appear to have been Motorbike Frogs (*Litoria moorei*) and it seems clear that the camera was triggered not by them, but by a passing rat. Just two photos were taken, one second of time apart, and the seemingly unfazed frogs were motionless as the hot-blooded rodent scurried by.

On 28 December 2016, fresh paw prints, with the appearance (including claw marks) of those made by a fox, were found on the narrow strip of recently-exposed damp ground between the river channel and shallowly-inundated marshes to the north. On 17 January, with the water level in the river channel approximately 16 cm lower, a Red Fox was photographed amongst the *Typha* and samphire on the now dry ground in this northern marsh area.

Many largish tadpoles (*Litoria moorei*?) were encountered while wading in the marshes in both November and December 2016. Their presence was most obvious in very shallow water vegetated by fine sedge, as they bumped into the sedge stems while swimming away from us, causing the stems to tremble and shake. In the latter month we saw wriggling masses of 'taddies' in several small and disconnected patches of heavily vegetated shallow water and it seemed likely to us that they would attract a bittern's attention. It was not at all surprising, therefore, when on 28 December 2016 AC found fresh tadpole guts and characteristically patterned Australasian Bittern body feathers near the most-recent bittern flushing site.

No Australasian Bittern calls (typically 'deep resonant booms': Marchant and Higgins (1990)) or other vocalisations (less audible gasps or croaks) familiar to us were heard during our daytime visits to the marshes, and RJ and JL did not hear any calls when they visited the site to listen at dusk on 24 November 2016. Note that 'boom' calls are somewhat similar to the 'oom' calls of the Common Bronzewing and the bellowing calls of cattle, both of which are common in the Busselton district. Cattle calls are audible from the Vasse River marshes.

Was the bittern we saw observed by anyone else? Well, perhaps. Soon after 4 pm on 1 January 2017, local ornithologists Dick Shore and Jeni Jones were observing birds from the bird hide at Pioneer Cove, 500 m upstream of Ford Road, when they noticed what they dismissed at the time as a juvenile Nankeen Night-Heron flying east to west, low over the melaleucas on the opposite bank. A little later they saw what they think was the same bird, flying back to the east, towards the marshes. They thought it unusual, as they had never before seen a Nankeen Night-Heron in that area during daylight, despite more than ten years of observations at this locality. No other birds were in the air at the time, so it didn't appear to be a bird that had been startled into flight. While Dick and Jeni do not claim this as a record of the Australasian Bittern, after reading our article in *WABN* **161**, they do now wonder (pers. comm., 30 March 2017).

Despite its proximity to roads and residential areas, we saw no human activity, or signs of recent human activity, on the Vasse River marshes during our visits.

During late summer and autumn, when the marshes are dry, there is some off-road vehicle activity in bare areas. Unfortunately, this is difficult to manage given the 'unallocated Crown land' status of the river channel and most of Vasse estuary, despite its status as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance. The Western Australian Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) has recently renewed its effort to have these unallocated areas reserved for conservation and hopefully this will be achieved in the not-too-distant future. On the upside, some of the sites where we located a bittern, are within a nature reserve for which DBCA has management responsibility.

In the meantime, we will be endeavouring to determine how much use is made of the marshes by bitterns. Is it occasional, by one or two birds, for a few weeks when conditions are 'just right', or is it more substantial? Based on our experience here and elsewhere, it seems likely that the former is the case. We will, however, be having another very close look at the area, primarily with remote sensor cameras, when it next fills. In time, these should 'capture' any bittern that makes significant use of the area. They also have the added benefits of recording use by other waterbird species and their young, and of threats that could warrant management attention, such as the persistent presence of foxes or cats.

The Vasse River marshes pose some interesting questions for both managers and ornithologists.

Jim Lane, Alan Clarke and Roger Jaensch

References

- Jaensch, R., Clarke, A. and Lane, J. (2017). Vasse River marshes revisited 30 years on. *Western Australian Bird Notes* **161**, 4–5.
- Marchant, S. and Higgins, P.J. (Eds.) (1990). 'Handbook of Australian, New Zealand & Antarctic Birds. Vol. 1, Part B: Australian Pelican to Ducks'. (Oxford University Press: Melbourne).
- Pickering, R., Clarke, A., Comer, S., Sullivan, D. and Graff, J. (2015). Big brown boomers, the Australasian Bittern. *Landscape* **31**(2), 16-21.



Australian Spotted Crane were seen and heard, and photographed by remote sensor cameras, 6 January 2017, Vasse. Photo by Alan Clarke

Letters to the Editors

Dear Editors

Contrary to my early demise prognostication, I seem to be doing well enough. I can now point to my age as an excuse, which is helpful, as its inexorable advance defies my efforts to prevent it.

As you will know I joined the BirdLife WA Executive Committee. It is not proving particularly pleasurable for a number of reasons, the most significant being my lack of sympathy with the incorrect, badly worded material from National Office. The most recent: "The Helena and Aurora range will be developed into 4 km of open cut iron ore mines. Gone will be the range's unique, ancient landforms and vital habitats—only to be replaced with a lifeless landscape of desolate mine pits..."

Very few in WA ever visit the Helena and Aurora Range, it is over 9 km in length and mining companies are obliged to restore their mined areas (not always pursued by Government), so the above hyperbole leaves me unmoved. And it might benefit one of the more depressed areas of WA—Southern Cross.

As you will know one of the more ludicrous claims of National Office is that their KBA nominated places "are the most important for life on Earth". I suggested to the Committee that the most important places for life were those generating electricity (without which no water, sewage disposal, no trains, lights, lifts, heating cooking, etc). I felt I was fortunate to leave alive.

Bruce Buchanan

Dear Editors

Being a completely non-scientific person, I have two idle questions for *WABN*:

Rainbow Lorikeets

We lived with these gregarious (but pugnacious) little birds for many years in eastern Australia in their natural habitat. Their populations seem to be kept in balance. How anyone considered why these birds are so successful here on the west coast, where their population is out of control?

Interference of an electronic nature to migratory birds

In relatively recent years cyberspace has become a new dimension in our atmosphere. Does this affect the activity of birds as they move up, down or across their time-honoured pathways? I am also curious about all night street-lights now common across the world. To look down from an aircraft window from 39 000 feet as one jets across the Earth during the night, it is easy to see myriad illuminated townships and cities. There is understanding that migrating birds navigate by stars, magnetic fields and with a collective memory, so my question is: are our marvellous migrants affected by these visible and invisible man-made recent introductions into their world?

Sue Kalab

BirdLife WA 2018 Calendar

The 2018 calendar is now available at the BirdLife WA office for \$10 each (over the counter) or \$13.00 including postage. All photographs are by BirdLife WA members and photographs were chosen by professional wildlife photographers Jiri and Marie Lochman. It's absolutely stunning once again!

You can order calendars from the office by phoning 9383 7749 or emailing wa@birdlife.org.au. Payment can be made by cash, direct deposit or posting a cheque. Calendars will also be sold at the Monday monthly meetings and some bird excursions between now and the New Year.



All profits aid the BirdLife WA Australasian Bittern Project.

Book review

AUSTRALASIAN EAGLES AND EAGLE-LIKE BIRDS

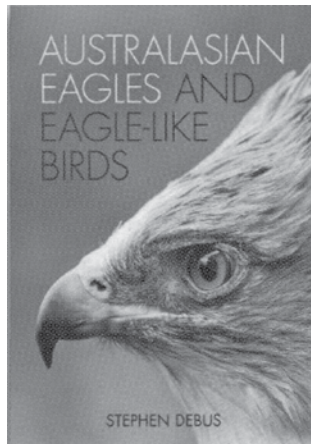
By Stephen Debus

2017. Published by CSIRO Publishing, Clayton South, Vic. xxii plus 168 pages, 245 x 170 mm, more than 70 colour photographs. Paperback, \$40.00 - 50.00, depending on source. ISBN: 9781486306923.

Eagles have been important in culture and religion for millennia, and have featured strongly in heraldry for centuries, being considered the 'King of Birds'. Today, they are even more important because, being at the top of the food chain, they are sensitive ecological barometers of human impact on the Earth's ecosystem services, and many eagles around the world are threatened or near threatened. We would do well to learn more about them—as Stephen Debus says in the epilogue to this carefully researched book, "if the bell is tolling for eagles, it is really tolling for us".

This book describes the ten eagle and eagle-like species from Australia and Melanesia—seven eagles (three from Australia and four endemic to Melanesia) and three large, eagle-like hawks from Australia (Black-breasted Buzzard, Square-tailed Kite and Red Goshawk). After a brief introduction to the eagles of the world and the rationale for species selection and the plan of the book, each of the ten species is given a separate chapter. Each chapter is an update of the standard texts—HANZAB (1993) for Australia and global treatments such as the 'Handbook of the Birds of the World' (1994) for Melanesian species. The final chapter is a summary of the conservation status, research requirements and future prospects for these magnificent and intriguing birds. The long list of sources that follows is a reflection of the meticulous research that has gone into the compilation of this book.

The chapter for each species covers field identification, habitat, distribution and population (but, curiously, no maps), movements, food, social organisation, social behaviour, breeding, bare parts, measurements, weights,



geographical variation, and commentary. Advice on field identification is particularly useful for this group of birds which so often create ID challenges, even for experienced birdwatchers. Because there has been so much work done since the early 1990s (albeit mostly in eastern Australia), many readers will find the updates and interpretations in this book to be more than adequate, especially given the quite recent additions to the published knowledge of less common species such as the Little Eagle and Square-tailed Kite. For some people, however, reference also to earlier texts will be required to provide detail of earlier work. In the Wedge-tailed Eagle chapter, for example, there is no reference to the

published work by CSIRO's Michael Ridpath and Michael Brooker, a study which still contains some of the most comprehensive and detailed knowledge on this species' ecology. But overall the book is a meticulous summary of the literature on Australasian eagles from the last 20-odd years, and will be an invaluable tool in further study, even for the serious investigator or researcher. Finally, and with respect to conservation and sustainability, the epilogue provides an extremely detailed, accurate analysis of the bigger picture, drawing attention to the ways this magnificent group of birds can guide us to better our custodianship of the land. As Debus states so powerfully in the concluding remarks: "A true patriot would not do or condone the sorts of things that are now happening to the eagles' country, and to ours."

As the publishers say, 'Australasian Eagles and Eagle-like Birds' is an invaluable resource for raptor biologists, birdwatchers, wildlife rescuers and carers, raptor rehabilitators and zookeepers.

Allan Burbidge and Simon Cherriman

Ed: The BWA Library has ordered this publication to be added to the collection and available on loan.

Quality of digital photographs

IMPORTANT —PLEASE READ!

When submitting photos for use in WABN, please send a high quality image, eg, 300 ppi, **with a file size of at least 600 kb (preferably over 1 mb).**

It is suggested that the settings on your digital camera be changed to the maximum resolution (setting).

Another area that could cause a problem is that some e-mail programs automatically reduce the file size, so these settings could be adjusted to maintain the original file size.

When e-mailing images, please attach them to an e-mail and not embedded in a Word document or in the e-mail itself.



Observations

This list has been compiled by the WA Records Officer with input from the WA Records Committee. Metropolitan suburbs or shires are in parentheses. Please report interesting observations the WA Records Officer, John Graff (wasightings@birdlife.org.au) or to the BirdLife WA office (9383 7749). Sightings are included on the BirdLife WA sightings page (<http://birdswa.org.au/sightings.htm>) as soon as possible, and the most interesting are selected for inclusion in the next *WABN*.

HIGHLIGHTS

A relatively quiet quarter for unusual sightings, as is often the case during the southern winter. The highlight from the south-west was a **Dollarbird** seen briefly at Anstey Swamp just south of Perth in May. Unfortunately, it couldn't be relocated after the initial sighting.

A very good wet season in the Kimberley has seen large numbers of waterbirds move into the region. These have included several species rarely recorded in the north of the state, such as **Freckled Duck**, **Australasian Shoveler**, **Chestnut Teal** and **Dusky Moorhen**. Several **Oriental Pratincoles** were also recorded near Broome, an unusual record for this time of year. The most unusual record in the north was a **swiftlet** seen briefly with **Tree Martins** near the Broome Bird Observatory, considered most likely to be an **Edible-nest Swiftlet**, based on the paleness of the rump, shallow tail fork, small size and fluttering flight. However, the brief views make certain identification impossible.

METROPOLITAN (UBD STREET DIRECTORY)

Spotted Harrier – 1, 27/05/17, Rottnest Island (Rottnest Island) – PC & LT * 1, 07/07/17, near Causeway (Rottnest Island) – PW (vagrant to Rottnest Island)

Red-kneed Dotterel – 2, 15-16/07/17, Garden Lake (Rottnest Island) – LT & PC * 1, 05/07/17, Garden Lake (Rottnest Island) – PC (vagrant to Rottnest Island)

DOLLARBIRD – 1 juvenile, 22/04/17, Anstey Swamp

(Karnup) – NH *et al.* (vagrant to south-western Australia; photographs)

Yellow-plumed Honeyeater – 1 adult, 26/05/17, Ascot Waters (Ascot) – PK * 1 juvenile, 28/05/17, Ascot Waters (Ascot) – PB *et al.* (rare visitor to Swan Coastal Plain, primarily autumn-winter)

SOUTH WEST (SHARK BAY TO CAPE ARID)

Black Bittern – 1, 07-08/07/17, Donnelly River Village (Nannup) – MC (rarely reported resident; photographs)

Lesser Noddy – 1, 24/05/17, White Elephant Café, Gnarabup (Augusta-Margaret River) – AD (rarely reported in the south-west; photograph)

ARID ZONE

Black Falcon – 1, 20/05/17 & 03-04/06/17, Wandagee Station (Carnarvon) – RH & LG (rare in Western Australia outside of the Kimberley; photographs)

KIMBERLEY

Freckled Duck – up to 7 (two adult males, 5 immatures), 14-28/05/17, Lake Eda (Broome) –



Dollarbird, Blue Gum Lake. Photo by Robyn Pickering (BWA Digital Library)

GS, CGM *et al.* (rare visitor to the Kimberley region)

Australasian Shoveler – up to 2 (one male, one female), 14/05-20/06/17, Lake Eda (Broome) – GS, CGM *et al.* * 5, 05/07/17, Duck Lake, Roebuck Plains (Broome) – NJ (rare visitor to the Kimberley region)

Chestnut Teal – 1 immature male, 20/05/17, Ungani Lakes (Broome) – CGM & GS * 2 males, 02-05/07/17, Kidney Bean Claypan (Broome) – EL *et al.* (rare visitor to the Kimberley region; photographs)

SWIFTLET sp. (possible Edible-nest) – 1, 10/07/17, Roebuck Bay near Broome Bird Observatory (Broome) – JG & NJ (any swiftlet species vagrant to Western Australia)

Dusky Moorhen – 1 immature, 14/05/17, Lake Eda (Broome) – GS & CGM * 6+ immatures, 28/05/17, Lake Eda (Broome) – NJ *et al.* * 2 adults and 2 chicks, 04-18/07/17, Lily Creek Lagoon, Kununurra (Wyndham-East Kimberley) – WM *et al.* (vagrant to the Kimberley region; photographs)

Australian Painted Snipe – 1 adult male, 1 adult female, 09-25/02/17, Roebuck Plains along Great Northern Hwy (Broome) – GS *et al.* * 1 adult male, 1 adult female, 25/03/17, Taylor's Lagoon (Broome) – CGM * 1 adult, 28/03/17, Roebuck Plains along Great Northern Hwy (Broome) – CG * 2 adults, 3 chicks, 23/04/17, Roebuck Plains along Great Northern Hwy – AF * up to 3, 08-17/05/17, Roebuck Plains along Great Northern Hwy (Broome) – CGM & GS * nest with 4 eggs, 16/05/17, Roebuck Plains along Great Northern Hwy (Broome) – CP * 1 adult male with four recently-hatched chicks, 20/05/17 & 05/06/17, Ungani Lakes (Broome) – CGM, GS *et al.* * 1 adult with 3 chicks, 22/05/17, Lake Campion (Broome) – CGM * 2 juveniles, 22/05/17, Roebuck Plains along Great Northern Hwy (Broome) – GS * 7, 31/05/17, Roebuck Plains (Broome) – NJ *et al.* * up to 10, 25-30/06/17, Kidney Bean Claypan (Broome)

– NJ *et al.* (unusually large numbers present; breeding rarely reported in Western Australia; photographs)

Oriental Pratincole – 2, inc. 1 adult breeding plumage and 1 adult non-breeding plumage), 04/07/17, Kidney Bean Claypan (Broome) – JG *et al.* * 1 adult breeding plumage, 14/07/17, Kidney Bean Claypan (Broome) – JG *et al.* * 2 adult breeding plumage, 16/07/17, Roebuck Plains East (Broome) – GS (rare in Australia during southern winter; photographs)

White-browed Woodswallow – 1, 16/05/17, Roebuck Plains along Great Northern Hwy (Broome) – JR * 1, 01/06/17, Broome Bird Observatory (Broome) – NJ (rare in Western Australia)

CHRISTMAS ISLAND

Black-winged Stilt – 1, 16/05/2017, Christmas Island – NHa (rare visitor to Christmas Island; photographs)

OBSERVERS

AD = Ann Delroy
AF = Arthur Ferguson
BBO = Broome Bird Observatory
CG = Connie Grohmann
CGM = Clare & Grant Morton
CP = Chris Purnell
EL = Emilia Lai
GS = George Swann
JG = John Graff
JR = Jane Robinson
LG = Les George
LT = Lana Tinsley
MC = Martin Cake
NH = Nick Hart
NHa = Neil Hamilton
NJ = Nigel Jackett
PB = Plaxy Barratt
PC = Peter Coyle
PK = Peter Kyne
PW = Pauline Wittwer
RH = Richard Huggett
WM = Wayne Merritt

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!!See birds in stunning breeding plumage!!

Walks depart at 8am & 3pm every day from the 4th Saturday in August to the 4th Saturday in October from Stirling Range Retreat's office.

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CHAIR'S REPORT

Preparing a report every three months is a good opportunity to take stock of what has been going on. Annette Park and Helen Bryant in the office, aided by a bevy of volunteers, and our project officers, keep things ticking along, and it would be nice to think that the Chair and Executive Committee can simply bask in reflected glory; but there always seem to be things to do. In the words of Gilbert and Sullivan, I've prepared a little list, and it looks something like this.

New project officer. We have funds for a new project officer to coordinate community engagement and make more people aware of the bird in the world around them, and how important they are. Helen Bryant and Sue Mather will have interviewed applicants by the time *Bird Notes* is published, and we may even have appointed someone to the role. This will be our third more or less full-time project officer to be squeezed into our office!

A new national system of accounts. We are in the process of shifting to a new accounting system that will achieve consistency across the BirdLife Australia family. Frank O'Connor, our Treasurer, and Erica Brock, our part-time book-keeper, are labouring away with National Office staff to make this happen.

Grants. Helen Bryant, with others, are always on the look-out for sources of money to keep existing projects running and to take up new opportunities. Grants are our main source of income and the conversation around grants is already including what we will need in 2019.

Planning for business. BirdLife Australia and BirdLife WA have grown and changed so much in the last few years that the Executive Committee has decided it is time to develop a concrete business plan. We already have a somewhat dated strategic plan, but we recognise that this needs revision and that no-one should be in any doubt that BWA is a business. And a business needs a plan.

Accommodation. The possibility of new accommodation has been on the agenda for over three years; and it remains there. While no immediate change is likely, we are struggling to fit into the current building and are occasionally reminded that it is only supposed to be a temporary structure, especially when computers wobble in one room when someone walks past in another. We are definitely open to any ideas and offers in regard to accommodation.

Sales. Sales of merchandise at events have long been a regular source of income, and we are looking to develop in this area. One possibility being investigated is e-sales through some sort of cooperative arrangement with National Office. While the details are sketchy this is an important way to extend our reach.

Meetings. With the change in government, we have been able to meet with the new Environment Minister to discuss issues of concern to us, and twice with the

Department of Premier and Cabinet. The 'Green Growth Plan' for Perth and the Peel region has dominated these meetings, and much of the conversation has been about the fate of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo in our region. I have also secured a place on the Urban Forest Advisory Panel, a local government initiative with a very self-explanatory name. With an ever-growing city, there is increasing interest in the role of biodiversity in the urban landscape, and even the role of urban landscapes for conserving biodiversity, and this is going to be a growing theme in BWA activities.

Projects. These are almost certainly reported on elsewhere, but the entire organisation can take pride in the completion of the Great Cocky Count for 2017. Other projects happening, and some nearing completion, relate to the forest black-cockatoos, Australasian Bittern, Great Western Woodland and Shorebirds 2020. We are about to begin some new work in the Wheatbelt and in timber plantations, while the Birds in Backyards project will soon begin to roll-out in WA. Meanwhile, the Community Education Committee continues its activities, and the excursions program is brimming with opportunities. Even when going on a gentle birdwalk, however, there is more happening than might meet the eye. With the new Birddata phone app, it is possible to instantly enter bird observations onto the national database, with these data then being available for researchers and for the annual 'State of Australia's Birds' report.

Membership of the Executive Committee. Bruce Buchanan joined the Executive Committee this year but found the travel from Bunbury a hardship and has resigned. Of course, we wish him well and more time for birding. Meanwhile, my three-year stint as Chair is drawing to a close. I am writing a formal 'job description' that may be taken up by BirdLife Australia nationally as a guide to branches and what is involved in being Chair, but I would encourage anyone who is interested in the position to give me a call. The position of Chair gives you the opportunity to guide a major branch of what is becoming a very significant and influential conservation organisation. It is frequently satisfying and occasionally challenging. Birdwatching skills are helpful, but more important is the ability to see 'the big picture' and having the people skills to help others see this too!

Mike Bamford

WA BRANCH REPORT

Ornithology in the Gunduwa region

Christine and I had signed up for BirdLife's August 2017 five day 'Ornithology in the Gunduwa region' course, to be conducted by Tegan Douglas.

The course is designed to give novice, or less experienced birders, the chance to extend their knowledge and bird identification skills, to the point where participants are able to take on their own bird surveys.

The venue was the Charles Darwin Reserve homestead (formerly White Wells Station) where we enjoyed 'more than adequate' accommodations in two ATCO dongas, with five rooms in each. These were together and totally enclosed by external walls and roof. The area dividing the dongas was very serviceably furnished with a huge stove, two big fridges, a wood fire and plenty of tables, chairs, etc. A small veranda completed the ambience; hot showers and toilet blocks were adjacent. 240V continuous power was another luxury.

We arrived early afternoon, together with our five fellow trainees, to be greeted by Tegan, and Nic Dunlop (who together with his crew of Kate and Kelly was undertaking mist netting). We were briefed about safety protocol by Will of Bush Heritage (the organisation that runs CDR). We were a mixed 'crew' ranging from young to young at heart split 50/50ish on gender.

Shortly after the briefing we began our birding, that first afternoon comprising three rambles around the homestead. These were productive and that night we counted our first 24 species, the absolute highlight for me having been a solitary Common Sandpiper on a (disused) dam.

The next three days we were immersed in the various habitats of the reserve, which include mulga scrublands, medium and tall (Salmon and York Gum) woodlands, with mosaics of samphire covered salt lakes and extensive low granite outcropping. The 'mulga/woodland' line divides the property into southern and northern ecologies.

Under Tegan's guidance our skills were perceptibly improving daily, and a contingent highlight was participation in the mist netting program. Evenings were spent very convivially, the friendly banter being interspersed with extremely interesting talks from both Tegan and Nic.

Day two was spent at Edna Springs in the morning, where the mist nets had been set; birding over and around granite outcrops, with the afternoon being spent in beautiful mature Salmon Gum woods. Two points of interest shown to us by Nic were a superbly preserved Stick Net Rat's nest in a cave location, and a petroglyph on a rock representing the local Aboriginal people's totem, the Echidna.

Day three, which was gusty and rainy; a front coming through, was productively spent with workshops in the morning and a field afternoon in the mulga. A number of new birds were counted in an extensive samphire lake system, despite the weather.

On the last full day of the course we broke into separate parties to conduct formal bird surveys. Surprisingly to me (and possibly most of us) we were able

to 'get' sufficient birds for the records to be formally accepted and entered!

In all, we counted a very rewarding total of 72 species for the week, located in numerous habitats, and via extended 4WD'ing over most of the reserve. We all 'had a ball', learnt lots, and Kate won the prize for best estimate of the count. Best 'birdie' was Will's puppy (collie/kelpie cross), Sky.

Thanks again Tegan, and to you too Nic, Kate and Kelly, for a fantastic week of birding, and for so generously sharing your skills and knowledge. Also thanks to our fellow birders for great company and good humour.

John Baas and Christine



Southern Whiteface, just prior to release following mist netting, White Wells Station. Photo by John Baas



Common Sandpiper on Homestead Dam, White Wells Station. Photo by John Baas (see also p55)



White-throated Honeyeater, White Wells Station. Photo by John Baas

Birdlife WA End of Year BBQ

10th December 12:00 - 2:00pm

WHO: Members, family and friends are invited to our new venue for an opportunity to meet with each other.

WHERE: Variety Pavilion, Saw Avenue, Kings Park.



WHAT TO BRING

Food, drinks, chairs or blanket.

This venue has been booked and we look forward to meeting you there.

Birdlife Executive

WA BRANCH PROJECTS

Great Cocky Count, 2017

The 2017 Great Cocky Count (GCC) was the biggest yet. 895 registered volunteers surveyed 469 sites throughout the south-west of WA. When comparing these numbers to 2010 (250 volunteers and 187 sites) we've come a long way in a short space of time. In that time, the number of sites surveyed in regional areas has grown from four to 124. This has been the result of a conscientious effort by BirdLife to make the GCC a truly state-wide event.

The final tally is below:

- 17 457 white-tailed black-cockatoos at 124 occupied roosts
- 10 248 Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos in the Perth-Peel Coastal Plain
- 436 Carnaby's and 1744 Baudin's Black-Cockatoos in the Northern Darling Scarp and Plateau
- 5029 white-tailed black-cockatoos in regional areas
- The percentage of triplets to pairs of white-tailed black-cockatoos (37%) is similar to previous years.
- 2989 Forest Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos (FRT) at 95 occupied roosts (1934 in the Perth-Peel region).

The 'mega roost' is still there, with a count of 3528 Carnaby's in pines east of Yanchep. 73% of all Carnaby's roosted in pine associated roosts. This is an increase on previous years and shows the importance of pines as a feeding and roosting resource. Unfortunately, the future of this resource is bleak; Forest Products Commission will be accelerating harvesting rates in the area this year and the pines could be all gone by 2019. Last year the second largest roost was cleared in Pinjar and the powers that be seem reluctant to make any changes to their plans within an adequate timeframe. BirdLife is continuing to campaign and lobby on this issue.

Trend analysis shows that Carnaby's are declining at 5-11% per year in the Perth-Peel Coastal Plain and white-tailed black-cockatoos are declining at 18% per year in the Northern Darling Scarp and Plateau.

FRTs are increasingly roosting on the Perth-Peel Coastal Plain. Their numbers increased from an average of 550 (2014-2016) to 1934 this year. The reason for this is unclear. It is more likely to be a redistribution of birds from forested areas than a population increase. This may be due to a greater availability of food resources (such as Cape Lilac, FRT fast food!). Time will tell if this is a permanent move or whether they return to the forests in times when Marri and other native foods are more available.

Thanks again to all our counters; we couldn't do it without you!

The report will be launched at the Threatened Species Forum in Geraldton on 7 September.

The 2018 GCC will be on Sunday 8 April, so save the date! GCC campouts are in the planning stages, watch this space.

Adam Peck
Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Project Coordinator

Southwest Black-Cockatoo Project

We are pleased to announce that the position of the Project Coordinator for this project has been filled by Rebecca Boyland.

Her selection was made from a strong field of candidates for this exciting part-time position. She will be based at Peregrine House and will begin with us on 18 September 2017.

BWA is in the position of being able to progress this work as a result of a successful State Natural Resource Management grant.

The primary role of this position is to lead BirdLife Australia's recovery effort for the endangered Baudin's Black-Cockatoo and the Forest Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo, collectively referred to as Forest Black-Cockatoos. This role will build upon the foundations laid through the Cockies in Crisis Lotterywest funded project and include the development of a new citizen science initiative to determine black-cockatoo population density across the south-west.

The WA Branch welcomes Rebecca to a great team of staff and volunteers who work together to make our conservation efforts a success.

Helen Bryant
WA Program Manager



*Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos, Lake Goolelal (see report, p41).
Photo by Caroline Mynott*

Results of the Western Australian Hooded Plover survey, February 2017



Introduction

The aim of the annual Western Australian Hooded Plover survey is to check on the size of the Western Australian Hooded Plover population, the distribution in south-western Australia and the recruitment of juveniles. The survey coincides with the national Shorebird 2020 survey and this year was held on 4 and 5 February 2017.

The survey contributes to one of the conservation strategies listed in the Hooded Plover Management Plan (Raines 2002): to collect data that will help focus and prioritise management effort further at sites of importance to Hooded Plovers and locate other, as yet undiscovered, sites of importance in Western Australia.

The information collected by our volunteers during the survey supplements information obtained in previous years (Singor 2016), helps identify conservation threats and highlights variations in population densities. It shows the congregation sites favoured by Hooded Plovers over summer.

Results

Most of the surveys were conducted on the allocated weekend; however, as a large area needs to be covered, such as remote beaches and inland salt lakes, the surveys often continue into the following week(s).

The first week of February was favourable to surveys. The second week in February produced heavy rain and flooding in our most productive survey regions and resulted in some incomplete surveys for 2017. This year was the second year in a row that we experienced heavy summer rains across the south-west corner of Western Australia.

The three main areas affected were the inland lakes, Esperance and Hopetoun regions. See page 2 rainfall map for February 2017 (Fig. 1)

<http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/current/month/wa/archive/201702.summary.shtml>

The total Hooded Plover count this year was 364 (including 75 juveniles)—see Table 1 next page.

Details for each of the surveyed regions are summarised below.

Northern Wheatbelt

Small numbers of Hooded Plovers were sighted at Leeman Lagoon and at the Sandy Cape, Gypsum Mine. A colony of Fairy Terns was discovered at Leeman Lake. The exact number of breeding pairs was not established but five tern chicks were sighted.

Acknowledgements to Sean Plozza, Alanna Smith, Talitha Moyle, Hamish Longbottom and Ron Snook.

Perth

There were no sightings around the metropolitan region during the survey period.

Although a Hooded Plover was seen intermittently at Alfred Cove from October 2016 till February 2017, it was last seen there on 26 February 2017.

Acknowledgements to Colin Heap, Jennie Stock, Josh Greaves and Ken Glasson.

Mandurah

Martins Tank had the largest congregation of Hooded Plovers (31). (see photos, front page and p2)

A breeding attempt was made north of the Preston Beach causeway. The nest appeared abandoned on 8 February 2017. Foxes were still evident around Lake Clifton.

A small flock of Banded Stilts (175) was seen at Lake Clifton. A total of 1231 Red-necked Stint was seen at a number of different lakes in Yalgorup National Park.

Acknowledgements to Myalup Bird Observers Group, Bill Russell, Bob Paterson, Tony France, Errol Harwood and Kate Robinson.

Margaret River

Complete coverage of the Cape to Cape beaches was achieved this year. The Hooded Plover breeding season took place here between September and November 2016. Six breeding sites were identified: Gas Bay, Contos Beach, Skippy Rock, Gnarabup Beach, Moses Rock and Hillview Beach. The pair at Gnarabup Beach made three breeding attempts. A large flock of Sanderling (50) was present at Gnarabup Beach.

Rock Parrots were observed at Sarge Bay and Boyd Wykes made a rare sighting of a Broad-billed Sandpiper near Augusta.

No Hooded Plovers were found in Geographe Bay.

The City of Busselton arranged for volunteers to participate in the Hooded Plover survey. Acknowledgements to Jessica Worrall, Jenny Kikeros, Natalie and Colin Bell, Christine Fleay (DBCA), Janet Dufall, Jenny Smith, Jane Scott, Wally Smith, Boyd Wykes, Suzanne Hicks, Ian Rooke, Ron Glencross (Dunsborough Coast and Land Care), Jenny Buckley, Logan Anderson, Steven Castan, Jan and Bruce Macaulay, Jan and John James, Christine Berrill, James BurrIDGE, Dara Haddow, Albert Haak, Gillian Richmond, Greg Watt, David Winstanley, Kay Lehman (Meelup/Environmental Management Officer), A.R. Smith, Zac Webb (DBCA), Dan Clifton-Parks (DBCA), Alice Horan-Anderson, Deb Hook, Lorraine Todd, Bill James, Leah Carroll, Peter St Clair-Baker, A. Delroy, Rob and Sylvia Mutch and David Boykett.

Walpole-Denmark-Albany

The residential pair of Hooded Plover was seen at Windy Harbour, a known breeding location, with two juveniles. These were probably the same two chicks that were present on 19 January 2017.

Breeding was also confirmed at Mandalay Beach. An adult was seen with two runners on 11 February 2017. In William Bay National Park one runner was observed, indicating a successful breeding outcome. William Bay National Park produced a good overall count (11).

Table 1. Results of Hooded Plover survey 2017.

Areas	Numbers
Shark Bay to Perth	7 (including 1 juvenile)
Wetlands between Rockingham and Mandurah	0
Beaches from Mandurah to Leschenault Inlet	0
Yalgorup National Park. (Yalgorup HPMR*)	69 (including 8 juveniles)
Geographe Bay	0
Beaches from Cape Naturaliste to Augusta (Naturaliste-Augusta HPMR)	35 (including 4 juveniles)
Beaches from Augusta to Broke Inlet.	6 (including 2 juveniles)
Beaches from Broke Inlet (Walpole) to Beaufort Inlet (east of Albany, Walpole-Denmark HPMR)	16 (including 3 juveniles)
Beaches from Beaufort Inlet to Hopetoun (Bremer Bay-Hopetoun HPMR)	54 (including 6 juveniles)
Beaches, coastal- and inland lakes east of Hopetoun to Stokes Inlet	23 (including 9 juveniles)
Beaches Stokes Inlet to Cape Le Grande	0
Esperance Lakes (Lake Gore system to Mullet Lake, Esperance HPMR)	79 (including 27 juveniles)
Beaches east of Cape Le Grande	9
Inland lakes in south-west of the State	66 (including 15 juveniles)
Total	364 (including 75 juveniles)
Note: HPMR = Hooded Plover Management Region * juveniles not counted separately at Esperance HPMR	

The number of four-wheel drive vehicles accessing local beaches is making them unsuitable for beach birds. Beaches that are subject to heavy traffic are Bellanger Beach, Mutton Bird Beach, Perkins Beach to Cosy Corner, Two Peoples Bay Beach and Normans Beach. Four-wheel drive vehicles have even managed to get access to beaches near Quarram National Park, such as Boat Harbour, Eagles Nest Beach and Sharp Rock Beach.

Rock Parrots were observed at Windy Harbour Beach (2) and on Marlamup track (7).

A Musk Duck was seen swimming in the ocean at Windy Harbour, which was very unusual.

Black Point was not surveyed.

Acknowledgements to Tina Smith, Andrea Endacott, Christine Wilder, Mat Byer (DBCA), Fred and Anne Bondin, Michael Burns, Barry and Sue Goldsmith, Janine Liddelow, Brad Kneebone, Andrew Dickinson, Carol Trethowan, Kerry Logan, Lynn Charlesworth, Kym Phillips, Hidi and Alfred Lau, Geoff Taylor, Anna Steenhuizen, Shaun Welsh, Andrea Deegan, Tim Andrews, Barry and Leonie Loveday, Robin Day, Gary Schwab, Jeanne and Colin Steele and members from the William Bay National Park Association.

Bremer Bay

There were good numbers of Hooded Plover (29) where the Gairdner River opens into the Gordon Inlet. On the sandflats between the ocean and Gordon Inlet, a variety of shorebirds were seen, such as Red-necked Stint, Common Greenshank, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and Red-capped Plover.

On the salt flats at St Mary Inlet (23) Hooded Plovers were sighted and a similar number of Red-capped Plovers were present. On the beaches fronting onto the Fitzgerald River National Park Hooded Plovers were seen at Mylies Beach (4), Barrons Beach (2) and east of Culham Inlet (4). At Culham Inlet two Eastern Reef Egrets were sighted. On the eastern boundary of Fitzgerald River National Park incursions by quad bikes, four-wheel drive vehicles and dogs are becoming quite evident, especially on Barrens Beach and Four Mile Beach.

Acknowledgements to Rosemary Jasper, Ron and Jan Waterman, Anne Gadsby and Chris Biddulph.

Hopetoun

Hooded Plovers were absent from the lake systems that cover the region from the Jerdacuttup Lakes Nature Reserve to Lake Shaster Nature Reserve. The three western lakes in the Lake Shaster Nature Reserve had joined into one large lake due to the floods. John Tucker noted some interesting Hooded Plover behaviour that he observed at a salt lake located west of Starvation Boat Harbour. Every time a Grey Butcherbird called from a nearby dune all Hooded Plovers (12) flew 40-50 metres towards the centre of the salt lake and grouped together. John had seen this behaviour before in response to raptors, but not in response to the call from a Grey Butcherbird.

Acknowledgements to John Tucker.

Esperance

The largest congregations of Hooded Plover (75) were found at Davies lakes along the Coolgardie-Esperance Highway located to the south-east of White Lake. On

an adjacent lake there were Chestnut Teal (91).

The wetlands surrounding Lake Warden and Lake Gore were inaccessible and not surveyed.

Other sites not covered were Stokes Inlet, Cubinup Lake, Alexander Bay and the Cape Le Grand National Park beaches.

Acknowledgements to Ken and Jean Read, Mary Hoggart, Mike Gibbs, Claudia Magana (South Coast, Natural Resource Management Inc.), Dylan Gleave, Tilo Massenbauer, Caitlin Jackson, David and Dale Johnson, Darryl Davies, John Lizamore, Kim Norris, Jo Shalders and Kim Breach.



Road washed away, Lake King, February 2017. Photo by Steve Elson

Inland lakes

During the survey weekend, the Wagin Lake system was dry or nearly dry for all but one lake. At the Katanning Lakes and Lake Coyrecup water levels were low and no Hooded Plover were seen. The following week all the roads to these lakes were flooded.

The February rainfall resulted in Lake King being the fullest since the 1980s, Newdegate Lake systems completely flooded, and north Pingrup Lake system full. Cranbrook Lakes did not receive the same amount of rainfall and on 19 February 2017 there were 49 Hooded Plovers present at Tom South Lake.

Acknowledgements to David Secomb and Steve Elson.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank everyone who generously donated their time to the survey of our beaches and salt lakes. The staff contributions from the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions and Southcoast, Natural Resource Management Inc. were greatly appreciated. Apologies to anyone who may have been overlooked.

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A Bird Lovers' Paradise.

Rangeland research surveys on Bulga Downs Station, 16-30 July

Twenty-two volunteers from BirdLife Western Australia participated in the annual rangeland surveys. This year the surveys were conducted on Bulga Downs Station, situated to the south of Sandstone. Members of the McQuie family were gracious hosts for the first nine days of the surveys in locations near the Bulga Downs homestead and to the south in the banded iron formations of the Ida Valley-Mt Forrest Conservation Reserve and portions of the Cashmere Downs Range. BirdLife WA donated a copy of the new Australian Bird Guide to Vicki McQuie, who is a keen birdwatcher. The group then stayed at the Sandstone Caravan Park to conduct the surveys on the northern sections of Bulga Downs, previously known as Dandaraga Station.

In total, 93 species were recorded, with Jill Rowbottom winning the contest for the nearest pick. Interesting species included Orange Chat, Peregrine Falcon, Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush, Bourke's Parrot, Tawny Frogmouth, White-browed Treecreeper, Australian Owlet-nightjar and Red-backed Kingfisher.

The overall purposes of the surveys were to:

- 1) develop a comprehensive list of the birds present in the Bulga Downs area;
- 2) determine if the bird species and occurrences could be used to assess the grazing potential of the rangelands;
- 3) document birds present in banded ironstone range habitats and compare them with nearby mulga woodlands;
- 4) document birds on the section of the former Dandaraga Station that may become a Conservation Reserve managed by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions.

The campout had a varied and interesting group of evening discussions with Sue Abbotts talking about birding sites throughout Australia, Xenia Dennett conveying her knowledge about bird migration in the eastern states and Ralph and Lynne Darlington presenting information about bird photography with images of many of the birds from their travels in Australia. Dave McQuie talked to us about the history of Bulga Downs Station and his methods of rangeland management and Vicki McQuie talked about her involvement with the School of the Air and her role in the management of the station. Thanks are also due to Chris and Dianne Reidy, who organised the campout dinner at the Sandstone Hotel.

David and Roma Bell



Australasian Bittern (see also p2). Photo by Robyn Pickering

Rejuvenating the Australasian Bittern Project

What a glorious year 2016 was to rejuvenate the Australasian Bittern Project! There was good water in wetlands across the south-west which meant there were some wetland choices available for bitterns wanting to breed.

BirdLife WA has been actively researching the Australasian Bittern since 2007 with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. The BirdLife aspect of the project is currently a volunteer project as the only funding for the past few years has been from the BirdLife WA calendar sales and the Twitchathon. However, some funding from State Natural Resource Management has become available to host a conference or workshop in 2018. Stayed tuned for that!

Monitoring in spring-summer 2016

In all, six Song Meters were used to record audio at Swan Coastal Plain wetlands and the Muir-Unicup wetlands (east of Manjimup). These Song Meters were bought using funds from the Lotterywest grant (2010 to 2012) and calendar sales.

The Song Meters were deployed in late September at six wetlands and then collected and re-deployed in November at another six wetlands. The wetlands monitored are shown in Table 1 (see next page). The Song Meters were programmed to record for a two-hour period in the pre-dawn period. This survey time has been found to be the time that Australasian Bitterns call most frequently (Graff 2014).

The Song Meters provided a scary 1014 hours of recordings that needed to be reviewed for Australasian Bittern and Australian Little Bittern calls! A team of volunteers were trained in using Audacity and Song Scope software and reviewed the recordings visually. We soon realised that we should only process audio recorded on nights when the wind speed was low to moderate! This considerably reduced the number of recordings needing to be processed to 345 hours. The review work took our volunteers a total of approximately 202 hours to complete.

Bittern records for 2016

There were some very interesting results from the monitoring. This was mainly due to this being the first year that we used the Song Meter survey method on a large scale.

One of the main difficulties in analysing the data from the Song Meter monitoring is determining how far the Australasian Bittern calls are travelling to the recorder. It appeared that the calls of some individual Australasian Bittern were being simultaneously recorded by the two Song Meters at 'Muir

Table 1: Wetlands monitored in 2016 using Song Meters.

Swan Coastal Plain Wetlands	Timing	Muir-Unicup Wetlands	Timing
Thomson's Lake	Sept-Nov	Geordinup West Swamp	Sep-Nov
Forrestdale Lake	Sept-Nov	Kulunilup Swamp	Sep-Nov
Benger Swamp	Oct-Dec	'Muir Highway'	Sep-Nov
Kogolup Lake	Nov-Dec	Byenup Lagoon	Nov-Dec
South Lake	Nov-Dec	Cobertup Swamp	Nov-Dec
Jandabup Lake	Dec-Jan	Yarnup Swamp	Nov-Dec

Table 2: Bittern records 2016 from BirdLife WA volunteer surveys.

Wetland	Australasian Bittern Records	Australian Little Bittern Records
Benger Swamp	0	1
Byenup Lagoon	4 (7)	2
Cobertup Swamp	0 (1)	4
Forrestdale Lake	0	0
'Geordinup West Swamp'	1 (4)	1
Herdsmen Lake	0	3#
Jandabup Lake	0	0
Kogolup Lake	0	0
Kulunilup Swamp	2	4
'Muir Highway'	3 (5)	4
North Lake	0	2#
South Lake	0	2
Thomson's lake	0	0
Yarnup Swamp	0 (3)	0

Table notes: # David Secomb September-October 2016. Australasian Bittern records are noted, for example, as 1 (3) meaning that 1 bittern was attributed to the wetland, however, another 2 were recorded from a distance and are probably in other nearby wetlands.

Highway' and 'Geordinup West Swamp'. It appears some of these same individuals were then sometimes recorded by the recorder at Byenup Lagoon after the Song Meters were re-deployed in November.

This unknown distance of recorded Australasian Bittern also produced a curious set of results from Yarnup Swamp. This wetland once had good habitat for the Australasian Bittern but salinisation has destroyed most of the wetland sedges (Lane *et al.* 2010). A recorder was placed there as it has been a long term monitoring site and it was a time-friendly deployment for the volunteer! The Yarnup Swamp Song Meter recorded three Australasian Bitterns that were calling from some distance away. The audio frequency of these calls indicates that only one may have been recorded at the nearby Kulunilup Swamp Song Meter. It is unknown

where the Australasian Bitterns recorded by the Yarnup Swamp recorder were located.

The bittern records from 2016 are summarised in Table 2. This table shows data from the Song Meters and records reported in other surveys.

It was disappointing that no Australasian Bitterns were recorded on the Swan Coastal Plain, especially as Benger Swamp has had bitterns calling there many times since 2007. It's possible that the availability of water meant that they chose other sites to breed in 2016.

Other news

In 2017 a BirdLife WA Australasian Bittern Project committee was established. This committee has been formed to provide direction to the BirdLife WA project and to ensure the project's integrity and longevity.

In June 2017, at a meeting in Albany arranged by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions we assisted in a review of the near-final draft Recovery Plan for the Australasian Bittern in Western Australia. The recovery plan is close to completion but will still take some time to finalise.

Future work

The new BirdLife WA Australasian Bittern Project Committee is assessing available funding grants, further reviewing the 2016 survey data, planning the 2017 surveys and preparing for the 2018 conference/workshop. In June 2017 BirdLife WA applied for a

large federal government Threatened Species Fund grant and is waiting to see if the application is successful.

In June 2017 another two Song Meters were bought with Twitchathon donations and calendar sales funds. It is intended that these will be deployed at the Muir-Unicup wetlands in 2017. One aim for the 2017 surveys is to place the monitors in a linear transect between 'Muir Highway' and Byenup Lagoon to assist in working out how far bittern calls can travel to the Song Meters.

We also plan to trial the new Kaleidoscope software to see if this software provides better results using programmable call recognition than the Song Scope software does. This may provide an opportunity to vastly reduce the work of our volunteers.

Can you help the project?

The project is looking for more volunteers in 2017/18 to deploy Song Meters and review the sound recordings. To assist with the audio processing it is useful if you have your own computer and know how to use Microsoft Excel. If you think you can assist with this work please contact Robyn by email (robyn.pickering@birdlife.org.au).

Thank you to our volunteers

Thanks to David Secomb, Gareth Pickering, Julia Gross, Linda Oates, Linda Wotherspoon, Mandy Strano, Morgan Pickering, Nick Brown, Peter Taylor and Xenia Dennett who helped with Song Meter deployment or with reviewing the audio recordings.

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Robyn Pickering

Across the Nullarbor: news from National Office

ROAMING REGENT RETURNS

Last year, a captive-bred Regent Honeyeater, released in the Chiltern–Mt Pilot National Park in north-eastern Victoria, was seen at Outtrim, in South Gippsland, 270 km away, creating a record for the distance travelled by a captive-bred Regent. Now the record has been smashed, as the bird (dubbed 'Yellow–Yellow', after the combination of colour-coded bands attached to its legs) has returned once more to Chiltern.

"This 540-kilometre journey sets a new benchmark for the longest confirmed distance travelled by a release bird," said Dean Ingwersen, BirdLife Australia's Regent Honeyeater Recovery Co-ordinator.

"Previously, [captive-bred] birds have been sighted up to 100 kilometres from their release site," he said.

On his return to Chiltern, Yellow–Yellow was seen courting several female Regent Honeyeaters that had been released into the wild last April.

BRISTLEBIRDS ARE WINNERS

With habitat a key requirement for the survival of the Endangered Eastern Bristlebird, BirdLife Shoalhaven was dismayed to discover that an 11-hectare patch of prime shrubby heathland adjacent to Jervis Bay NP was to be auctioned off. Forming part of the Jervis Bay Key Biodiversity Area, it has been estimated that the immediate area supports 10 per cent of the region's bristlebirds.

BirdLife Shoalhaven lobbied the NSW State Government for the land to be withdrawn from sale, recommending

that it be incorporated into the adjacent national park—and they were successful! The government purchased the parcel of land to expand the national park, thus preserving an important piece of the jigsaw that is necessary to protect this declining population of bristlebirds.

PLASTIC PERIL DEADLY FOR SEABIRDS

Many seabirds, such as shearwaters, petrels and albatrosses, regularly eat plastic debris that they find floating in the ocean. A new study of seabirds in Australia and New Zealand has shed some light on the magnitude of the problem.

Of 1700 dead seabirds examined, 37 per cent had plastic in their digestive systems. It clogs their digestive tracts and slowly poisons them as toxic chemicals leach into their tissues. They starve and get poisoned simultaneously.

The seabirds are fooled into eating the plastic by the smell it gives off after floating in the sea for a while. It's the same smell emitted by algae when it's being eaten by krill, a major food source of seabirds. As seabirds often detect their prey by smell, they're attracted to the plastic and eat it by mistake. Some even feed it to their chicks.

We can all make a difference—use less plastic; dispose of it properly; and pick up plastic washed up on the beach. It's not too difficult.

Naming of birds

BABLERS—POMATOSTOMIDAE

The word babbler means one who utters meaningless chatter. This chattering is not meaningless to these birds—they use this as a means of communication and a way to keep contact with the rest of the group. Two babbler species occur in Western Australia.

Grey-crowned Babbler – *Pomatostomus temporalis*.

The genus name is derived from the Greek *poma*, meaning cover, and *stoma*, mouth. This refers to the horny covering over the nostrils, hence 'covered mouth'. The specific name *temporalis* comes from Latin *tempora*, meaning temples. Fraser and Grey point out that the broad white eyebrow of this bird extends down past the temples. 'Templed covered mouth'. Over the years there have been numerous common names for this bird, e.g., Twelve Apostles, Barker, Chatterer and Happy Jack.

White-browed Babbler – *Pomatostomus*

***superciliosus*.** *Superciliosus* is Latin for eyebrow, and also means haughty. This refers to the white eyebrow. 'Eye-browed covered mouth'. The common names mentioned above also apply to this babbler.

SITTELLAS—NEOSITTIDAE

There is only one member of this family in Western Australia.

Varied Sittella – *Daphoenositta chrysoptera*. The genus name originates from Greek *daphneos*, meaning reddish, and *sitta*, which was the name given to European nuthatches. The genus was named for the Black Sittella of New Guinea which has a reddish forehead, chin and tail tip. Swainson, who named this bird, thought that the Australian birds were the ecological counterpart of the European nuthatches. *Sittella* is the diminutive of *sitta*. The specific name *chrysoptera* comes from Greek *khrysos*, gold, and *pteron*, wing. This refers to the orange wing bar. 'Golden-winged reddish nuthatch'.

CUCKOO-SHRIKES AND TRILLERS—CAMPEPHAGIDAE

Cuckoo-shrike is a combination of bird names from totally different orders which does not seem to make much sense, as though the early taxonomists could not decide which drawer to tuck the family in. The Linnaean family name, *Campephagidae*, at least, is completely apt. It comes from Greek *kampe*, worm or caterpillar, and *phagein*, to eat. Hence 'caterpillar eaters'. The name 'triller' is descriptive of the long rolling, rattling call.

Ground Cuckoo-shrike – *Coracina*

***maxima*.** *Coracina* has its roots in the Greek word for crow, *korax*, and *korakinos*, young raven. Young ravens of the sort that occur in

Europe can appear to have a blueish tint to their feathers when the sun strikes at the right angle. Perhaps Vieillot who named the bird in 1816 imagined that the blue/grey of the cuckoo-shrike was similar to the blue tint of a young northern hemisphere raven. *Maxima* comes from Latin *maximus*, large. The Ground Cuckoo-shrike, at about 35 cm, is the largest of the species that occur in WA, whereas the others range from about 26 to 30 cm. 'Large young raven'. It has also been called a jay.

Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike – *Coracina*

***novaehollandiae*.** The species name here refers to the old name for Australia, namely New Holland. 'New Holland young raven'. Also called Blue Jay, Grey Jay and Shufflingwing, due to its habit of shuffling its wings when it lands.

White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike – *Coracina papuensis*.

The English name is a bit misleading as the Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike also has a white belly. The type locality for this species was in West Papua, hence the name *papuensis*, from Papua. 'Young raven from Papua'. Also known as Little Cuckoo-shrike.

Cicadabird – *Edolisoma tenuirostris*. The genus name appears to come from the French *edolio* which is the name given to the common cuckoo, and is also used as species name for some African cuckoos. Greek *-soma* refers to the body. *Tenuirostris* is from Latin *tenuis*, slender, and *rostrum*, bill. The Cicadabird has a more slender bill than the other *coracines*. The English name Cicadabird comes from the long insect-like call. 'Cuckoo-like slenderbill'. Other common names include Cricketbird and Caterpillar Catcher.

White-winged Triller – *Lalage tricolor*. According to Fraser and Gray the name *lalage* comes from Greek *lalex* meaning to chirrup. The word *tricolor* means three colours, and refers to the black, white and grey plumage of the male bird. 'Tricolour chirrupe'.

Varied Triller – *Lalage leucomela*. 'White and black chirrupe'. From Greek *leukos*, white, and *melas*, black. Other names include White-browed Caterpillar-eater or White-eyebrowed Caterpillar-eater, good distinctions from the White-winged Triller which does not have a white eyebrow.



White-winged Triller, North Lake. Photo by Ian Wallace (BWA Digital Library)

QUAIL-THRUSHES— *CINCLOSOMATIDAE*

The word quail-thrush seems to me to be another strange combination of two completely different birds, as though the RAOU, in 1926, could not decide where to stash this group of ground dwellers.

Chestnut Quail-thrush – *Cinclosoma castanotus*.

Cinclosoma comes from Latin *cinclus* which is used in nomenclature for many thrush-like birds, and Greek *soma*, body – ‘bird with a thrush-like body’. The specific name *castanotus* is from Greek *kastanon*, and *noton*, back, which gives us ‘chestnut-backed thrush-like bird’.

Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush – *Cinclosoma castaneothorax*. *Castaneo* is derived from Latin *castanea* which means a chestnut or chestnut tree, and *thorax*, chest. ‘Chestnut-breasted thrush-like bird’.

Cinnamon Quail-thrush – *Cinclosoma cinnamomeum*. The specific name is almost self-explanatory coming from Latin for cinnamon, *cinnamomum*. ‘Cinnamon thrush-like bird’.

WHISTLERS, SHRIKE-THRUSHES AND ALLIES—*PACHYCEPHALIDAE*

The name whistler no doubt arose due to the melodious whistles of this group.

Shrike-thrushes were so named for the song, similar to that of a thrush, and the shrike part refers to the heavy aggressive bill.

The genus name has its roots in Greek *pakhus*, thick, and *kephale*, head, meaning thickhead which is descriptive of their quite large and rounded heads.

Gilbert’s Whistler – *Pachycephala inornata*. The species name *inornata* comes from Latin *inornatus*, without decoration, meaning quite plain. It is thought that Gould, who named this bird in 1841, was using an immature or female specimen, as the male is not plain,

but has a rich, rufous-buff throat patch. ‘Unadorned or plain thickhead’. Other names are Gilbert’s Thickhead and Red-throated Whistler.

Rufous Whistler – *Pachycephala rufiventris*. ‘Rufous-bellied thickhead’, from Latin *rufus*, reddish, and *venter*, belly. Other early names include Orange-breasted Thrush, Rufous-vented Honeyeater, Joey-joe and Mock Whipbird. These latter two names are imitative of some of the many calls of this vocal bird.

White-breasted Whistler – *Pachycephala lanioides*. This inhabitant of low dense mangroves and similar waterside vegetation was given the species name *lanioides* because of its resemblance to the shrike family of the genus *Lanius*. The Latin suffix *-oides* means like or resembling. ‘Shrike-like Thickhead’. It is a large species with a heavy hooked bill.

Golden Whistler – *Pachycephala pectoralis*. The Latin name refers to the breast or chest, from *pectus/pectoris*, meaning chest. No doubt this was because of the beautiful yellow colour. ‘Thickhead with a breast’. Other early names include White-throated Thickhead, Yellow-breasted Thickhead, Golden-breasted Thickhead and for the Norfolk Island bird, the common name ‘Tamey’ is still used.

Mangrove Golden Whistler – *Pachycephala melanura*. *Melanura* refers to the tail which is black, as opposed to the Golden Whistler whose tail is darkish grey with black tips. From Greek *melas*, black and *oura*, tail. ‘Black-tailed Thickhead’. The Mangrove Golden Whistler also has a shorter tail and a heavier bill than the Golden Whistler. Earlier referred to as Black-tailed Whistler.

Little Shrike-thrush – *Colluricincla megarrhyncha*. This genus name is thought to come from Greek *kollyrion*, spelled by Linnaeus as *collurio*, perhaps meaning a shrike, and Greek *kikhle*, or *khinkhlos*, a thrush. Hence *Colluricincla*, a shrike-thrush. The Little Shrike-thrush is a small bird with a relatively large bill. The specific name spells this out, coming as it does from Greek *me-gas*, large, and *rhunkhos*, bill. ‘Large-billed shrike-thrush’. All the early names referred to the colour of the bird’s underparts, for instance Red, Red-breasted, Fawn-breasted or Rusty-breasted Shrike-thrush.

Grey Shrike-thrush – *Colluricincla harmonica*. *Harmonica* comes from Latin *harmonicus*, and Greek *harmonikos*, both meaning harmonious. ‘Harmonious shrike-thrush’. A much more descriptive name than simply ‘grey’, describing as it does the extensive rich, whistled notes and mellow calls.

Sandstone Shrike-thrush – *Colluricincla woodwardi*. Named for B. H. Woodward, an English geologist who came to Australia in 1899. He organised an expedition to the north of Western Australia where many skins were collected for museums here and in England.

Monticola



Grey Shrike-thrush, Stirling Range Retreat. Photo by Barry Heinrich (BWA Digital Library)

Obituaries

VERA PATTERSON

It is with sadness that we report the death on 8 May 2017 of Vera Patterson, at the age of 94.

Vera was involved with the saving of the Star Swamp Reserve from the beginning in 1977 and maintained an interest in the bushland and the natural world throughout her life. Vera was responsible for the bird surveys that contributed to the scientific case for reserving the whole 96 hectares and she would walk daily through what was then 'just a piece of bush' recording around 90 species of birds over several years. She was also very knowledgeable on the flora and the history of the area and will be missed.

Michael Hancock

WIN CARNABY

Win died on 4 May 2017 at the age of 100 years.

Her husband was Ivan Carnaby (1908-1974), a noted zoologist and naturalist. The Carnaby's Black- Cockatoo was named in honour of Ivan.

Christine Curry

Members' contributions

AUSTRALIAN PIED OYSTERCATCHER UNUSUAL PREY ITEM FEEDING BEHAVIOUR, ROTTNEST ISLAND

On 20 May 2017, I was photographing Australian Pied Oystercatchers from a small cliff top over a small beach (Latitude 32° 1'1.34"S, Longitude 115° 27'21.19E) immediately west of Mabel Cove on Rottnest Island. At 3:40:56 pm a mating occurred, establishing them as a likely monogamous pair (Menkhorst *et al.* 2017). Post mating they moved from a flat rock shelf to the sandy beach immediately adjacent to the east.

At 3:45:09 pm both birds commenced foraging along the debris line of the previous high tide. I noted a high frequency of beach washed Blue Bottles (*Physalia utriculus*) strewn amongst the debris line. Both of the oystercatchers repeatedly singled out these Blue Bottles by picking them up (most often deflating the animal in this process), walking down to the surging water wash zone and purposefully washing by dipping the Blue Bottle being held in the beak, walking back to the wet sand away from the surging water then stopping. Each time the bird would poke the Blue Bottle into the



Australian Pied Oystercatchers with bluebottles, Rottnest Island. Photos by Douglas Coughran



sand to about a depth of about half the beak length and push and pull the Blue Bottle in and out of the sand. Eventually standing up-right and vigorously shaking the Blue Bottle in its beak to rid it of the sand, the oystercatchers walked back down to the wash zone and once again rinsing/washing the deflated air bag and remaining body in the water, walking back out of the wash zone and eating the Blue Bottle.

This was repeated by both birds, with both consuming more than ten Blue Bottles each in succession during the observation. I speculated that the reasoning for this pre-eating processing was most likely to rid the Blue Bottle of stinging nematocysts (a specialised cell in the tentacles of a jellyfish or other coelenterate, containing a barbed or venomous coiled thread that can be projected in self-defence or to capture prey).

I took a progression of photographs of this behaviour to record the observation. To the best of my knowledge neither Australian Oystercatchers nor any other bird has been observed utilising this species of coelenterate as a food item or perhaps some other unknown reason, albeit chemical, medicinal or other.

Douglas Coughran AM

Ed. This behaviour has now been observed by the same observer at the same location on two further separate dates.

ANOTHER REASON TO LIKE WHITE IBIS

The introduced Cane Toad has now reached as far as the Fitzroy River system in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. This toxic species appears to have few predators. However, it has been suggested that many predatory Australian birds may be somewhat resistant to the toxin, due either to inheritance of resistance from ancestral species in Asia, or to genetic exchange with Asian populations where toad species with similar toxins are endemic (Beckman and Shine 2009). This partial resistance may help explain how some predatory Australian birds have learnt to use toads as a food source by devising means to eat only the less toxic organs (Donato and Potts 2004; Beckman and Shine 2011). In the case of crows this means turning toads over and just eating the less toxic organs from the belly. In contrast, we observed an Australian White Ibis using a different technique.

We were watching for Gouldian Finches coming in to a large puddle at the bottom of a stream bed in the Wyndham Caravan Park. There were two Australian White Ibis searching through the dirty, green water and its surrounds, finding the odd morsel which they immediately swallowed. However, one of the ibis had found a reasonable sized Cane Toad, with a body length about $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the length of its beak. We first observed it squashing it in its beak and smashing the toad against the ground a number of times until it was apparently dead. Then, instead of immediately swallowing it, the bird carried it several metres down to the water. The ibis picked up the dead toad and dropped it into the water several times and then swished it back and forth in the water a few times. The procedure lasted 15 to 20 seconds. Then it picked up the toad and swallowed it whole.

The same ibis was seen the next day, as determined by its slightly damaged wing. Another observer later saw the two ibis eating more Cane Toads using a similar technique. The birds did not seem to have been affected.

I have not seen other ibis washing food items in this way so it is possible that it has learnt to cause the toad to empty its toxin glands as it is bashed to death and to wash off the toxin to minimise toxin intake.

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Andrew Hobbs

IT'S LUNCHTIME—EVERYBODY DIG IN

On 9 April this year Gail and I were walking along the Blue Wren Trail in Dryandra National Park when we saw an Echidna with its spines raised, foraging in deep leaf litter about 20 metres to our right. It would stop, dig into the leaf litter, forage for termites, then move on and repeat the process. This is standard behaviour for Echidnas and often seen. What was unusual was the fact that it was accompanied by three Rufous Treecreepers who took advantage of its foraging and snapped up food whenever they could. There were times when we could only see spine tips because the treecreepers burrowed into the leaf litter with the Echidna. At other times one or two of them were in plain sight, eating as fast as they could, but they were more often head-down or out of sight. The Echidna showed no interest in, or aggression towards the birds, even though they were almost on top of it. Maybe the raised spines were a sign of displeasure. If they were, it didn't deter the birds.

Gail and Brice Wells

COCKY SEARCHES AROUND THE MYALUP AREA

It seems almost a truism that some of the best bird photo opportunities occur when one is the least prepared for them. On 1 May, at Logue Brook Dam when within camera range, eight Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos flew to the water's edge to drink. It occurred to me also that while many people associate 'red-tailed' principally with elevated native forests at the Darling Range, I have observed more white-tailed than Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos in the Harvey Hills. Moreover, neighbours and acquaintances continue to express their surprise at the near constant presence these days of red-tailed at the extreme western fringes of the Swan Coastal Plain.

I recently spoke to a near neighbour, living alongside the Myalup Beach Road, and was told that red-tailed had spent several days foraging at the site only a few hundred metres from the Indian Ocean.

A few days later, I was first alerted to the possible presence of cockies nearby by a carpet of leaf-and-nuts litter ahead of me on the sealed Lake Preston Road (about 1 km east of the Indian Ocean). I stopped the vehicle and immediately heard the repeated cries of several red-tailed.

Max, a neighbour, usually informs me whenever any cockies have been using his 100-acre property at east Myalup. He reckoned he had recently seen flocks of up to 120 birds in the area. By 11 am, I was driving a rough Myalup circuit. I was confident from the fact that it is much more common first to hear cockies' distinctive calls from thick cover well before catching sight of any of them.

Parcels of Harvey Shire land, roadside reserves and large private properties to the east of Forrest Highway show substantial remnants of native vegetation, mature Jarrah and Marri, and several banksia species. Extensive government pine plantations (on a roughly north-south axis) take up much more of the land east of Myalup. Three very wide fire breaks (signed respectively as west, central and east) also run on a north-south axis off Myalup Harvey Road. Just beyond the west fire break, where once during an annual survey I had counted a flock of 450 white-tailed black-cockatoos as group by group they flew across the break, I turned off the Myalup-Harvey road into the unmade Emu Drive, but stopped short to listen at the concrete bridge over the Harvey River Diversion Channel.

Sure enough, repeated and noisy cocky calls alerted me to the presence of a pair of red-tailed high in the shady canopy of the Diversion's native gallery forest. Just beyond Max's farm gate I alighted, and shortly heard repeated cries of red-tailed. Six birds eventually dropped down and flew off, but I could not get any photos.

To complete my Myalup area circuit, I retraced my way back to the west firebreak turnoff and drove north alongside the pine plantation, until I found the back entrance to the Freshwater Lakes Estate, its housing lots arranged around a large ornamental lake formed in the natural course of the Myalup swamp.

Then, from each side of the man-made lake I heard persistent cocky cries. Once again, the birds stuck to the high canopy, although I was able to identify one small flock as red-tailed and the other as six white-tailed. Throughout my red-tailed sightings, females predominated. My field trip reinforced observations by others about the frequency of red-tailed these days at the western fringe of the Swan Coastal Plain.

How long will it be before numbers of Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos are reliably reported to be found breeding regularly near the coast?

Tony France

PEREGRINE FALCON BATHING

During a visit to Billyacatting Hill Nature Reserve in late autumn this year, I was observing a group of White-browed Babblers foraging in a gully near the top of the hill when their behaviour indicated a threat. I did a quick scan and noticed a Peregrine Falcon flying in a circle around me but not calling or making aggressive manoeuvres. I sat down to observe better and the bird completed a couple more circles giving me excellent views of the markings on its breast and wings and the yellow around its eye. It then flew low over the rocks and landed on a flat area a few hundred metres away where there were some rock pools that had been filled by the previous day's rain.

It looked around cautiously before wading in to the nearest pool until its breast feathers were getting wet. At this point it took another look around, fluffed its feathers up and proceeded to bathe. After a few minutes, it moved across to another pool and repeated its actions. This occurred a couple more times before it looked around once more and flew off across the slope, soon to be lost from view.

As I stood up to resume my walk to the top of the hill, I noticed a fairly large rock pool some thirty metres below me. Perhaps that is what the falcon was hoping to use as a bath when it was circling me.

Peter Sandilands

'QUIET' GALAHS

In late autumn, on a day that was overcast with very strong west south-west winds, I had time for some birding around Westonia. Many farmers had cleared their paddocks ready for crop or pasture and dust whipped up by the wind was a constant problem. The occasional cold, fast moving shower of rain didn't help observations either.

The smaller bird species were difficult to find and even the ones that appear on virtually every bird list in the area such as Crested Pigeon, Galah, Australian Ringneck, Willie Wagtail, Magpie-lark and Australian Raven seemed to have taken cover. The Galah was the hardest to find of that group and by late afternoon I still had not seen one. On my way out of town I passed the oval and there, on the grass, was probably every one from the surrounding area. The photograph shows many of the large gathering. I estimated there were about 300 Galahs, but the most interesting aspect was that they were feeding in almost total silence. Having watched large flocks of Galahs and corellas feeding, both as single species flocks and together, there is usually some squabbling and general noise but not in this flock. Even when one bird accidentally bumped into another there was a quiet, almost apologetic squawk. I was not able to get close enough to see what they were feeding on.

Peter Sandilands



Galah flock, Westonia Oval, Westonia. Photo by Peter Sandilands

RED-TAILED BLACK-COCKATOO IN THE CENTRAL WHEATBELT

In a manner similar to Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo on the Swan Coastal Plain, the inland sub-species of the Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus banksii samueli*) uses roosts, particularly during the autumn/early winter. These flocks may vary in size from ten or 20 birds to much larger congregations numbering in the hundreds where the noise is so great you can hear nothing else. HANZAB notes that the birds are 'usually in pairs, trios of parents and offspring, or small to large flocks. Flocks most often 20-100, but hundreds common and up to 4000 recorded; flocks generally largest in WA or NT', with '100-500 common in the Wheatbelt' (Higgins 1999). One of the best known roosts in the central wheatbelt is at Merredin Peak on the north side of the Merredin townsite. This year, on a sunny but cool evening in late May, I watched the flocks of birds returning after the day's foraging.

From all points of the compass, small dark specks gradually resolved into groups of varying sizes as they approached the roost. Getting closer, groups joined up, some performing aerial manoeuvres as they did so. Even closer, their distinctive calls could be heard. Being such powerful fliers, the first groups soon arrived in the tops of the trees only to rise and wheel around as the next wave came in. The calling of approaching groups evoked a response from those already in the roost and the noise level rose as the numbers increased. There even seemed to be some sort of hierarchical order as birds already settled were challenged and gave way to newcomers. This activity continued for over an hour. Then, as the sun dipped below the horizon, the noise level dropped considerably. A few late comers were the cause of a certain amount of re-settling and then there was just a murmuring with the odd call.

The numbers were greater than I have seen here for some years. On this particular night, I estimated a total in excess of 400 plus a couple of hundred Galahs. As I walked beneath them on my way out to the street, a few that felt they were too close to me flew up higher in the trees with the occasional call. The Western Corellas that were here last year would have flown low over my head and deafened me with their screeching if I walked under their roost. I reached the street and it was fairly peaceful behind me. In the morning, the procedure was reversed and all were gone within an hour of sunrise. However, there was considerably less noise as they headed off to their foraging areas. Such arrival and departure behaviour has been recorded in HANZAB with different sub-species of the Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo on the Cape York Peninsula in Queensland and along the Darling River near Wilcannia in New South Wales. The description is similar to what I observed.

Reference

Higgins, P. J. (Ed.) (1999). 'Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds: Volume 4 - Parrots to Dollarbird'. (Oxford University Press: Melbourne).

Peter Sandilands

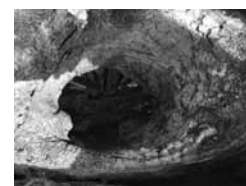
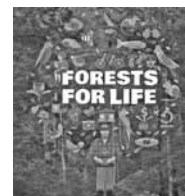
FORESTS FOR LIFE

Passionate, idealistic and 19 years old, I set up my tent near the highway half way between Manjimup and Walpole determined, as one of six young hopefuls, to prevent the logging of a magnificent old-growth Karri forest. Down the road a logging operation was already underway, and walking up to watch the trees fall the first day we were there, a pair of Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos sat close to one another, uncharacteristically low to the ground, calling in a way that I found heart breaking. I stood and watched them wondering if they'd lost a hollow and listened to their deep, tearing, repetitive cries. That moment, with the sound of the birds as a harrowing soundtrack to the shock of seeing such a vast area of ancient forest reduced to mud and twisted stumps, was formative and unforgettable.

We watched a third of the forest we were there to defend fall, but in the end we managed to protect the majority of it, down in the valley, with tree platforms, road-blocks, the activated outrage of flocks of passing tourists and a good number of front page articles.

That was in the days when the argument that conservation was in conflict with jobs and money appeared accurate, at least in the immediate term. It's hard to find somebody who thinks that the wood chipping industry was ever a good idea. Rather than continuing to log selectively, looking for the best timber trees and carefully, skilfully removing them to retain a thriving forest ecosystem, wood chipping saw the massive intensification of logging—clear-felling of forest and burning what remained. Millions and millions of tonnes of trees have been wood-chipped and exported to make paper in a get rich quick scheme for the few that has failed us all. The consequence now, visible only when you take a drive off the highways and wind your way through kilometre after kilometre of juvenile, biologically depleted forests, is profound. It hasn't just robbed the forests, birds and myriad wildlife, but also the current and future generations of timber workers and local communities.

The WA Forest Alliance has been working for the preservation of the south-west native forests since 1990, and the history of advocacy for the forests goes back a lot longer than that. Until very recently though, the arguments have been conservation on one side and jobs and money on the other. Not so anymore. Now, WAFA's new campaign Forests For Life is leading the discussion about revitalising the timber industry, more than doubling employment, dealing with upcoming shortfalls in timber supply, mitigating climate change and salinity, all while protecting the native forests. It is the classic win-



(above) Nesting hollow and (below) Lewin dozer, Lewin Forest. Photos by Jess Beckerling



win plan for the south-west that is attracting enthusiastic and widespread support.

Forests For Life sets out a plan to preserve the south-west forests and support potentially sustainable forest-based enterprises such as tourism and honey production. The fine woodcraft sector would be amply supplied with timber from unavoidable clearing operations but we would no longer see whole tree trunks going directly to woodchip mills, firewood depots and charcoal furnaces—where the majority of the logged Karri, Marri and Jarrah trees currently go. New national park camp and visitor sites would provide for the growing tourism and recreation industries and for research and education. There would be no further loss of scarce nesting hollows to the logging industry, and the Baudin's, Red-tailed and Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos would be given their chance at recovery.

The Forests For Life farm forestry and landcare initiative plans to grow 40 000 hectares of timber trees and carry out priority landcare work on participating farms. It is a plan that is being collaboratively developed and is attracting strong support, including within government. With 90% of the wood from the forests going to woodchips and fuelwood, and The Australia Institute confirming that the native forestry industry is operating at a big financial loss to the State, the time for transition has well and truly come and the Forests For Life plan is ready to lead that transition.

Much has changed in a couple of decades, and much else has stayed the same. Finding nesting hollows pushed up into burn piles is just as heartbreaking as it ever was, even more so now as cockatoo numbers continue falling, but with the transition plan ready to be realised, and support for it widespread, I'm optimistic.

Jess Beckerling

OSCAR AND LUCINDA—A TALE OF TAWNY FROGMOUTHS IN THE ROE 8 SITE

Many BirdLife members will be aware of the former Barnett government's recent attempts to build the Roe 8 highway extension, and the community response that ultimately halted the road. One of the compelling stories of the terrible summer months of 2016-17 as the 'Building Roe 8' conglomerate pressed ahead with bush clearing, is that of Oscar the Tawny Frogmouth.

Oscar's story is situated in a patch of banksia woodland that, prior to Roe 8, was relatively undisturbed and supported a great diversity of flora and fauna. A favourite walking and birdwatching spot, locals could wander along the narrow sandy tracks, spotting orchids, fringe lilies, zamia fruits and banksias. The bush was filled with the songs of a large number of small wrens and honeyeaters, as well as

visiting flocks of Forest Red-tailed and Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos that came to feed on Marri nuts and banksia seed.

A Tawny Frogmouth family was also roosting there. Many locals in the suburb adjacent had been observing these birds for around three years and one local, a wildlife photographer, had been documenting their lives.

In December 2016, a temporary fence went up around this bushland and animal trappers went in to remove quendas and reptiles. The frogmouth family sat on in their tree oblivious to what was coming. Many of us warned the contractors about the presence of the frogmouth family. I made a sign and hung it on fence: 'Tawny Frogmouths Live here – Do Not Disturb'.

In so-called Public Environmental Reviews and Environmental Management Plans for new developments, it is suggested that fauna trapping ameliorates effects of land clearing by moving fauna to alternate sites. However, evidence indicates that survival rates for translocated animals is unsustainably low. Recent studies into this area have evaluated the health status and survival success of natural and translocated wildlife and concluded "*Overall, the results of this study showed that the survival rates of the 67 translocated P. occidentalis were unsustainably low*" (Clarke 2011).

And what about the birds? Many times during the clearing of habitat along Roe 8 I heard contractors and police say, 'they will just fly away', 'they will find somewhere else to live'. But where? Since colonisation in 1829 banksia woodlands have been reduced to one-third of their original extent, and much of what remains is highly degraded (Stevens *et al.* 2016). Perth's banksia woodlands were recently listed by the federal government as a 'Threatened Ecological Community' (TEC). There are simply not many places left for birds to go. It's like suggesting that if the authorities bulldoze my neighbour's house, they can just move in with my family. But there is no more room in my house, not enough resources to support another family.

The Tawny Frogmouth family was now inside the construction site fence. Many of us were filled with anxiety as the Roe 8 conglomerate rushed ahead with their plans. On 12 January 2017, over 1000 people overwhelmed the construction site fence and held up the bulldozer for several hours. Many arrests were made. Later the same day that bulldozer growled to life once more and continued moving west, obliterating everything in its path. A crowd gathered near the frogmouth's tree, shouting and singing and crying. As the 'dozer crashed close to them the frogmouths flew up and away. Those that were watching wept and howled.

The next morning, the frogmouth chick was found dead near the construction site fence. The adults were gone. The following day an adult Tawny Frogmouth was found dead on a nearby road. I approached one of the trappers as he was leaving the site. 'Do you realise that a dead Tawny Frogmouth chick was found yesterday near the fence', I asked. He seemed



Tawny Frogmouths, Coolbellup/Roe 8 area. Photo by Nandi Chinna

surprised, 'What!!!' He was angry and yelled at me that he had a mortgage to pay. He slammed his car door and drove away.

After the banksia woodland had been ripped out of the ground and turned into piles of mulch, and the machines had moved on across Stock Road to begin clearing the next section, residents were left with a wide raw scar, which was noticeably silent. Instead of waking up to the sound of hundreds of small bush birds, magpies, mudlarks and cockatoos, residents awoke to a silent, empty space of sky. The bush and its inhabitants were gone.

Fast-forward to 11 March 2017 and the defeat of the Barnett government. Roe 8 is halted immediately. For many of the campaign supporters and activists this was a terribly bittersweet victory. A forty hectare scar had been cut through some of the most intact banksia woodlands remaining on the Swan Coastal Plain. A great deal of essential habitat had been lost, and Nyoongar sacred sites destroyed. There was elation that Barnett was gone and the road was dead, as well as anger and heartbreak at what we had witnessed, the destruction of our precious bushland.

One day soon after the election I received a phone call from a friend who lives right across the road from the clearing site. She was pretty excited. 'A frogmouth is back! It is by itself'. One frogmouth had returned to the very same tree, just on the edge of the cleared area. It was sitting in the crook of a branch, disguising itself as bark. There were tears of joy as the message went around on Facebook that one of the Tawny Frogmouths was alive and back in its tree. One of the locals named it 'Oscar'.

As multiple meetings were arranged with the new government, the incoming environment minister, the Honourable Stephen Dawson, indicated that he wanted to come down to the site of the Roe 8 clearing. For eight years the Save Beeliar Wetlands Group had been inviting outgoing environment minister Albert Jacob to visit the proposed Roe 8 site to see what was at stake and he never came. Just weeks after the election, 'Oscar' the frogmouth was visited in his dignified position on his tree branch, by the new Western Australian Minister for the Environment.

It is now July and I'm happy to report that on our last visit to the tree, Oscar had found a mate. A smaller frogmouth companion was leaning up and gently grooming it, staring adoringly. We named the smaller frogmouth 'Lucinda'.

We are keeping watch and visiting regularly. We hope that as the scar of Roe 8 is healed and transformed into a community wildlife corridor, more birds will return. As the community replants and repairs their habitats, we hope that we will one day, once again, hear the unique and magical sounds of the myriads of birds in our precious urban bushland.

For more information on the Community Wildlife Corridor visit <http://www.cockburnwild.org>.

Nandi Chinna

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GOING WILD IN WYNDHAM

During my recent northerly winter migration, I dropped into one of my favourite birding haunts, Wyndham. Why Wyndham? Well, firstly it has a great caravan park, secondly there are some great birds in said caravan park; for example, in a five day stay, I saw Gouldian Finches every day, and plenty of other good birds besides. Thirdly, it's only a stone's throw away from Parry Lagoon, a great birding venue in its own right, (okay, a long throw with a very light stone!).

However, while birding near the caravan park I came across some birds I didn't expect—Helmeted Guinea-fowl. There was a group of about a dozen of them including some immature birds. On becoming aware of me they beat a hasty retreat into the surrounding scrub and I saw no more of them that day. Upon making enquiries with the caravan park owner and a few other locals I was told that these birds have been living and breeding in the wild for at least 15 years after a nearby property was vacated.

During the next few days I saw them several times, and like any other wild bird they disappeared if I tried to get too close. These birds venture into the caravan park sometimes, but nobody feeds them or can even get close to them, much like most other birds.

Most field guides describe this species as being resident only at various locations on the Queensland coast but I feel that this should be amended as we have a resident wild population right here in WA, wild in Wyndham.

Peter White



Immature Little Bronze-Cuckoo, Wyndham (see also pp33,53,55,56). Photo by Peter White

OBSERVATIONS OF PREDATION OF AUSTRALIAN SHELDUCK DUCKLINGS BY PELICANS

Extract from *The South Australian Naturalist* **91**(1): 40–41
January–June 2017 40

I had visited Alfred Cove on the Swan River in Perth, Western Australia, a few days in a row in August 2016 to photograph four Ospreys which had taken up residence in the park adjacent to the river. I had noted a number of Pacific Black Ducks (*Anas superciliosa*) with their young in close proximity to the Ospreys who, having a diet consisting mainly of fish, showed no interest in them.

Soon after arriving one morning I noticed a pair of Australian Shelduck (*Tadorna tadornoides*) with two ducklings in close proximity. They were swimming close to the edge of the river in shallow water. What took place over the next few minutes came as a surprise to me. A group of nine Australian Pelicans (*Pelecanus conspicillatus*) flew low along the river and landed within 20 metres of the Australian Shelducks. They settled in a group and did not seem to be heading in any particular direction. One of the pelicans then split from the group and began to swim slowly towards the ducks, between them and the shore. The shelducks swam out into deeper water with the ducklings close by them.

Soon the other pelicans joined in and began to pursue the ducks out into the river. The ducklings, sensing danger, swam at speed in front of the adults (Fig. 1).

At this point three pelicans broke from the group and flew low over the water, landing in front of the ducks to form a 'cut off' of their escape route. By now the adult ducks were attempting to turn back on the pursuing pelicans and the ducklings began diving. Some of the pelicans began to snap at the adults who were trying to protect their young (Fig. 2). The other pelicans then started to dive in an attempt to catch the young ducks (Fig. 3). Over the next ten minutes this action was repeated with pelicans herding the ducks and pursuing the ducklings.



Fig. 1: Initial pursuit. All 4 photo by Danny McCreadie



Fig. 2: Australian Pelicans snap at adult Australian Shelduck.



Fig. 3: Australian Pelicans diving for ducklings.



Fig. 4: The last moments



Fig. 5: Close-up shot of an Australian Pelican about to devour a duckling.

Eventually the ducklings grew tired and were scooped up and eaten by the pelicans (Figs 4 & 5).

Pelicans have been reported eating other birds and even pet dogs in apparently random opportunistic attacks. However, the sustained coordinated attack described above displays a cooperation between individuals of the group not usually seen in such predation.

Danny McCreadie

ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER

In 2013, I heard of two sightings of possible Rufous Bristlebirds near Yallingup. I was sceptical but also interested in these reports as one of my interests is bird vocalisations and since moving to Margaret River in the 1990s I have listened for possible heathland species, including fieldwrens, bristlebirds, scrub-birds and Western Ground Parrots, calling along the coastal strip of the capes. I have investigated WA there have been birds reported way out of their known range, for example the Noisy Scrub-bird has been known to freely relocate to new areas, and a number of re-discoveries of species of birds and other animals previously declared 'extinct'.

My previous experience with heathland species:

a) Formal listening and hearing Western Ground Parrots at Waychinicup (east of Albany) in the 1980s

b) Listening in D'Entrecasteaux National Park when a Western

Ground Parrot was reported by a horse rider in 1991

c) Participating in Noisy Scrub-bird relocation program at Two People's Bay in 1991

d) Living next door to Barren Grounds Bird Observatory in the Southern Highlands of NSW, involved in banding and annual count of Ground Parrots and observing Eastern Bristlebirds on a regular basis

e) Participating in surveys for NSW Land and Environment Court, searching for Ground Parrots and Eastern Bristlebirds near Jervis Bay

- f) Searching for Rufous Bristlebirds at the Coorong
- g) Identifying Rufous Fieldwrens on GWW surveys and other periodic sightings in habitat in WA/SA
- h) Regular visits to Cheyne Beach with visiting birdwatchers to see the three 'specials'
- i) A volunteer with CALM/DEC/DPaW since the early nineties.

In February 2012, when walking in heathland near Augusta, I heard a call I didn't recognise. It had that certain quality of heathland species, but I couldn't confidently identify it. The location was in typical coastal heath sloping down to low cliffs and the ocean.

I spoke to Sarah Comer (Regional Ecologist, South Coast Region, Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA)) about the Yallingup sightings and discovered there had in fact been one possible bristlebird reported. I mentioned the call I had heard near Augusta and Sarah suggested it would be worth following up.

After some liaison with Parks and Wildlife Service, two Audio Recording Units (ARUs) were placed within the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park near Augusta. The course of events was as follows:

18 October 2016 I met with Sarah Comer, Kim Williams, Christine Fleay and Clare Forward (all from DBCA) to place the ARUs in the heath at Augusta. The ARU timers were set for 60 minutes each morning and evening. The ARU battery life lasted until December, then quality of recordings became really bad, then non-existent.

16 February 2017 I met Sarah Comer at Witchcliffe. We collected ARUs from Augusta and returned to the DBCA, Margaret River to set up computers to enable analysis of data. Christine Fleay and Clare Forward were also present.

Over the next three months I spent around 42 hours analysing data from the ARUs (Table 1). Analysing four months of records x 2, meant hours of listening/looking at spectrograms, so days were chosen for analysis when wind interference was relatively low. One of the requirements of acoustic surveys is confidence in the listener's ability to identify the species recorded. At first it was a learning curve identifying some species this way. Recognising bird calls from recordings, especially when the quality isn't 100%, is more difficult than listening and identifying birds calling in the field. Even bird calls have 'jizz'. One noticeable difficulty at first was separating the individual calls of individual species, at all levels and distances. Once I became more proficient at recognising the individual calls (listening) and frequencies of calls (looking) of the more common species, then it became more interesting. I did expect to hear species which weren't positively identified during the acoustic surveys, for example Tawny-crowned and White-cheeked Honeyeaters. On one occasion one recording sounded like a gull calling (that ARU was not too far from the ocean). Naturally there are calls not positively identified for various reasons and this is the most annoying part of the exercise for me, but as this was my first exposure to acoustic surveys, is understandable.

Table 1. Frequency of detection of individual bird species on acoustic recordings made near Augusta.

	No of sessions	
	Site 1	Site 2
Stubble Quail	1	0
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	14	4
Pallid Cuckoo	1	0
Southern Boobook	0	1
Laughing Kookaburra	0	6
'White-tailed Black-Cockatoo'	2	6
Baudin's Black-Cockatoo	0	1
Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo	5	3
Western Rosella	0	1
Australian Ringneck	5	2
Purple-crowned Lorikeet	3	4
Red-winged Fairy-wren	11	5
Splendid Fairy-wren	14	12
Southern Emu-wren	1	3
Brown Honeyeater	3	8
New Holland Honeyeater	19	19
Western Wattlebird	0	3
Red Wattlebird	8	8
Western Gerygone	4	2
White-browed Scrubwren	16	13
Inland Thornbill	7	7
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	2	2
Golden Whistler	16	16
Grey Shrike-thrush	2	4
Grey Currawong	1	3
Australian Magpie	7	5
Grey Fantail	21	19
Australian Raven	1	4
White-breasted Robin	8	17
Red-eared Firetail	1	2
Silveryeye	16	19
Possible Tawny-crowned Honeyeater	1	0
Possible Rufous Whistler	1	0

Table 1 lists birds identified on a total of 21 sessions x 2. A total of 31 species was positively identified, with 26 species at Site 1 (exposed site) and 29 species at Site 2 (sheltered site). The number of sessions each species was identified is shown (this is fairly basic and does not indicate morning or afternoon sessions). Rufous Bristlebirds have so far not been identified from the acoustic surveys.

It has been rewarding working with Clare Forward at DBCA, Margaret River and I thank her for her tolerance, especially of interruptions for her to listen to sections of the recordings and our attempts to match up bird calls from published catalogues of Australian birdsong. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team meeting in Albany in June but Clare was able to make it. Thanks to Sarah Comer, as once again I have learnt a great deal volunteering, and hope to participate in more 'listening'.

Christine Wilder

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www.graemechapman.com.au/resources/bird-calls.php



Australian Hobby, Claremont. Photo by David Free

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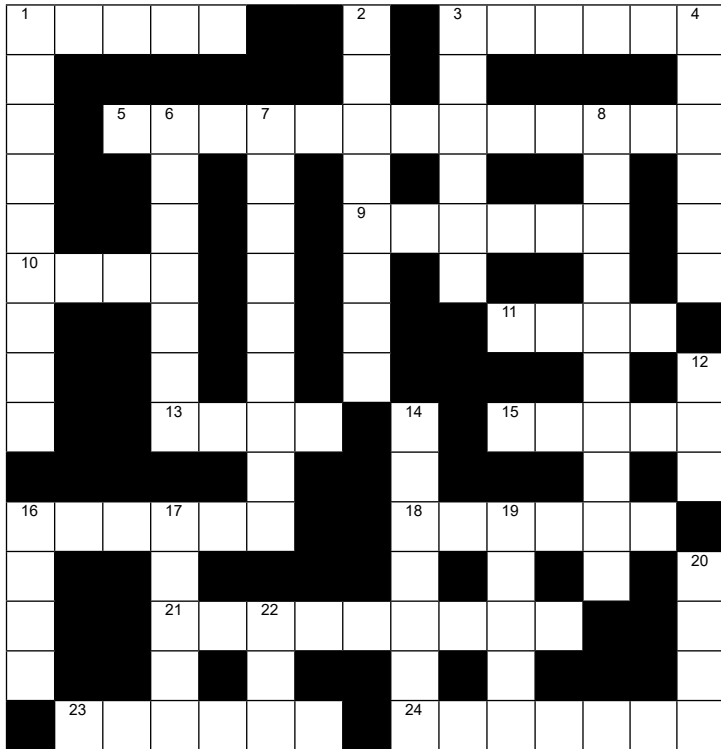
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Crossword No. 32

by Pam Agar

CLUES



See page 53 for Answers



Immature Nankeen Night Heron, Wyndham (see report, p29).
Photo by Peter White

Across

1. Cuckoo chicks do this to remove competition.
3. To turn freely.
5. Not songbirds.
9. May be useful before you buy that new field guide.
10. Shape of two markings on face of Brown Falcon.
11. To utter characteristic notes.
13. Location.
15. Fencing may ... walkers from entering.
16. Northern polar region.
18. If nest materials are few, birds may do this.
21. Possible seabird feeding frenzy at this WA canyon.
23. Negotiating one may save many birds.
24. Not usually suitable foot wear for birders.

Down

1. Gradual change of forms of animals.
2. To explain characteristics.
3. In a car, not a good idea, even to save a bird.
4. Smaller of the frigate birds.
6. To many, the nature of report-writing.
7. Deriving nutriment from another species.
8. Small magazine.
12. Skilled depiction of birds.
14. Accounts of activities, sightings.
16. Very enthusiastic.
17. May explain data more simply.
19. To gain by experience.
20. Common companions of a particular egret.
22. A raptor may well do this to a duckling.



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The BWA Executive Committee made the decision to go with the biodegradable plastic wrapper option some years ago when it no longer became feasible for volunteers to place individual copies into envelopes. The next batch of plastic covering received will have the biodegradable logo stamped on the plastic.

BWA Executive Committee

Donations to BirdLife Western Australia

The Western Australian Branch is aiming to be in the financial position to support conservation work through projects, particularly aimed at threatened species. With the decline in government funding, support for this work through donations and bequests is one way this aim can be realised in the future.

Tax deductible donations specifically for BirdLife Western Australia can be made to BirdLife Western Australia through our office at Peregrine House. A tax deductible receipt will be issued.

If the donation is being made as a direct deposit in the BirdLife Western Australia bank account, it is important to signify who it is from and that it is specifically for BirdLife Western Australia. Donations will then be held in a separate account so that they can be accounted for through the national office each year in accordance with the Federal Taxation Department requirements.

Such donations, unless specified by the donor for a particular purpose, will be used to assist in meeting the objectives of the organisation.

If you have decided to make a lasting legacy to BirdLife Australia in your Will, contact Bequests Officer Ralf Sternad on 03 9347 0757 for a confidential discussion on your options, including any specific requests (e.g. support for black cockatoos in WA).

**Mike Bamford
Chair**

Eyre Bird Observatory



Caretakers wanted!

Eyre Bird Observatory is seeking expressions of interest from volunteer couples to caretake the facility in 2018. The tenure would be for a three-month period from February 2018 to the end of April.

The observatory is a not for profit research, education and nature based facility.

Duties include public relations, weather reporting to Bureau of Meteorology, carrying out bird surveys, cooking for overnight guests, cleaning and office duties.

Being bird enthusiasts will be a bonus.

Your accommodation and food is provided free of charge.

Eyre is situated in a wilderness environment in the Nuytsland Nature Reserve on the Great Australian Bight. No camping, dogs or other pets, are permitted.

Contact:

<http://birdlife.org.au/visit-us/observatories/eyre>

New WA members

The following WA people joined BirdLife Australia during the period 1 May to 21 July 2017:

P Allen, K Anderson, J Blundell, K Burgess, M Burnett, W Campbell, J Chamberlain, G Chidlow, J Clarkson, P Curtis, J Cousins, W Dewing, S Egan, B Hill, S Jenkins, C Kerr, M Knappers, C MacLaine, E Newman, J O'Reilly, S Perrie, A Rossen, J Ruhen, M Soemartopo, C Surman, K Takayama, S Tanner, B Triggs, P van de Ven, J Vladich and N Waugh

Country branches

BUNBURY BRANCH

Coo-ee. Our membership grows with new birders joining our flock bringing exceptional expertise and knowledge of local waters, as well as 'newbies' who simply love and are interested in our feathered friends, like-minded company and being outdoors. We work on covering regular sites, and reporting our bird lists to Birddata. Our activity has been stimulated with the curiosity of Leschenault Catchment Council's recently appointed CEO Judy Fisher who is intent in obtaining new information, so we are regularly patrolling Leschenault Estuary's birdlife.

Over July, we reported Siberian migrants on Leschenault Estuary, four Bar-tailed Godwits, including one with one leg, and a lone Black-tailed Godwit. There was also an unseasonal Fairy Tern or two on our waterways.

Our July excursion took us to Stirling Wetland behind Peppermint Beach Village. Eighteen of us braved a blustery, cold morning, recording 26 species including ten Black Swan nests. We watched a Caspian Tern hunting close by, the unusual Glossy Ibis and somewhat out of range, two colourful male Chestnut Teals.

June took us to Leschenault Conservation Reserve, on the west side of our estuary. Our count was 40 species, our "personal best", including five Red-kneed Dotterels. There is a recent and delightful video of Leschenault Conservation Reserve by DBCA:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8C9PM65OmI>.



Bar-tailed Godwits, one is one-legged, Leschenault Estuary. Photo by Chris Tate

We are thrilled the updated official Birding Around Bunbury brochure is about to be installed online. We are seeking funds to have this printed. We have worked on this for several years with BirdLife WA's Pam Agar and team. It will live many years into the future, as the previous brochure was published with Bunbury Naturalists' Olga Green, George and Rita Watkins and Mike Webster in 1997.

In August, it will be six years since our inaugural bird excursion so champagne will flow (or fly?) at our next wander. We have around 70 Bunbury bird lists now, gathered monthly since 2011. These are also sent to local governments, Bunbury Port Authority, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, South West Catchments Council, Leschenault Catchment Council and several other relevant agencies.

We remain vigilant for the unwelcome arrival of Rainbow Lorikeets who have recently colonised the Mandurah foreshore.

If any ornithologists would like to come to Bunbury to give education workshops you shall be warmly welcomed. We would also appreciate experts at our Shorebird 2020 Surveys.

Keep looking to the skies.

Sue Kalab, Convenor, BirdLife Bunbury

CAPE TO CAPE GROUP

Program

Saturday 23 September—Half-day excursion: Yallingup

Meet at 8.45 am on the foreshore opposite the main car park at Yallingup. We shall walk up Valley Road, alongside Yallingup Brook past the grounds of Caves House/Ngilgi Cave on the Wardenup Trail to the lookout and towards the slopes of Mt Duckworth, returning via Yallingup Beach Road (from general store). Bushbirds and seabirds. Bring morning tea in a backpack.

Leader: Christine Wilder – 0427 312 848

Local Annual Events

14 October—Cape to Cape Bird Group – Margaret River Agricultural Show

23-29 October—BirdLife Bird Week/ABB Count

28-29 October—BirdLife Twitchathon

All the excursions are for BirdLife Australia members and the general public. For details of any of the above, please contact Christine Wilder cwilderone@yahoo.com.au or Boyd Wykes majyx@iinet.net.au

Excursion report

East Augusta/Scott River, 20 May

No matter the weather, the leader has to be at the meeting place as arranged, so it was encouraging to meet eight enthusiastic birders for an exploration of East Augusta, as a wild storm was forecast.

Scott River Road was an interesting drive with birds everywhere, especially on the rich dairy farmland opposite the former mine-site—Whistling Kites, a Swamp

Harrier, Australian Shelduck, Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal, Straw-necked and Australian White Ibis, four species of parrot, cuckoo-shrikes and woodswallows on the power-lines and in the swampy grasslands. Four Black Swans, calling as they flew over us, set the trend for the day, and what a great day it turned out to be—calm and sunny.

First up was a 20-minute survey in the Timber Reserve, from the track off Pericles Street. Bushbirds were quiet with a tally of 11 species. David spotted Southern Emu-wrens in the vegetation on the edge of the inlet. A 'scope scan of the inlet meant another 11 species of waterbirds were observed and we watched a pair of Whistling Kite, a White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Musk Duck and Red-winged and Splendid Fairy-wrens at the picnic site and jetties, followed by a short bush walk along the foreshore track amongst the peppermints. Out on the water large numbers of cormorants and pelicans were fishing, with a Caspian Tern caught stealing a fish from a cormorant.

A grassy bank near the Deadwater provided a relaxing place for lunch with Great Egret, White-faced Heron, immature White-bellied Sea-Eagles and Whistling Kites keeping us entertained. Back in the settlement a Scarlet Robin made a brief appearance right next to the sign declaring—“*East Augusta, home of the Western Ringtail Possum*”.

Our last stop was down a sandy track in Scott National Park. We parked and walked to the Scott River with bushbirds remaining fairly quiet.

Throughout the day we saw Grey Butcherbirds in every location (especially on the power-lines) with around 20 in total, Terry saw a Tawny-crowned Honeyeater and a Brown Falcon was perched on a tree on the road verge of Scott River Road as we headed home before the rain set in. The bird tally for the day was a satisfying 55 species.

Christine Wilder

MYALUP GROUP

Excursion reports

Cathedral Drive, Australind, 20 May

Despite dire warnings of storms and tempest our little party of seven bravely gathered under threatening skies at the northern end of Cathedral Drive where we were all given our mission by Alan who regularly covers the ground we were to cover. Contrary to previous experiences we found the area to be very fruitful, observing about ten White-faced Herons, a good number of Nankeen Kestrels as well as the expected Little Pied Cormorants and ibis. In the distance, we could see some dolphins with black cormorants, apparently feeding. We then returned to Cathedral Drive and proceeded slowly south (much to the annoyance of other drivers) and encountered a considerable number of birds. One person was heard to observe that he had never seen so many Elegant Parrots together (we encountered two flocks with a total number of birds numbering about 20). We stopped for the mandatory morning tea break at a car park near the shore about mid-way along the drive where we saw a cormorant tree in the form of a dead tree on the shore with about 30 Little Pied Cormorants and some Australasian Darters distributed over its branches. The cormorants were later replaced by a pair of Whistling Kites, one of which had previously reconnoitred our group. We then proceeded south where we encountered a tree on the side of the road providing a roost for three Ospreys. On reaching the end of Cathedral Drive our group then went along Old Coast Road to the Ecological Display on the water's edge in Australind.

In all we saw 41 species of bird but the surprising result was that we saw many of several species (not including about three flocks of domesticated geese) which does not happen often for our group.

A good day was had by all and thanks go to Alan and Caroline in planning and directing the expedition.

Yarloop and Hoffmans Mill, 17 June

On a grey morning, we set off to the home of Maurice and Sandra Stonehouse who have committed themselves to rescuing injured wildlife. Maurice described to us the beginnings of his activities and how they arrived at the situation they have now. They have managed to recover from the bush fire of last year which devastated the town of Yarloop, but thankfully did not damage their home. However, they did lose the pens in which they were holding animals and birds recovering from injury.

As a result of the generosity of at least one group, they have been able to restore at least some of their pens. However, they still struggle onwards in providing a safe haven for injured animal and birds without much outside support.

We were able to wander the property and interact with the resident Emu which has a definite leaning to the left; a Whistling Kite which they have been unable to release because it has not been able to recover adequately to survive in the wild; a pair of kangaroo 'joeys' which are on their way to recovery; along with some other birds. Maurice has been able to create a small wetland with island refuges and this has resulted in their property becoming attractive to wild birdlife.

The visit proved to be very inspirational for all.

Our convoy then set off for Hoffman's Mill via the eastern boundary of Logue Brook Dam.

Myalup Re-sign, 2 July

This event was very successful with approximately 43 people attending. Errol Harwood welcomed those attending and provided a brief summary of the history of the signage and the 100 Acre Wood. He was followed by David Charles from the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions who is responsible for

visitor services and facilities provided in the national parks in the region, as well as those south and north of the region. At the conclusion, everyone was entertained by a slide show of photos of birds captured by Chris Thorne and other members of the MBO.

Harvey Dam, 15 July

On yet another grey morning we gathered to visit the amphitheatre at the base of the Harvey Dam and then the shore of the dam. The weather was kind when we arrived at the amphitheatre and we dispersed into the gardens to see what birds were around. Judy and Clare found a New Holland Honeyeater pair guarding two chicks just out of the nest (which we did not see).

A small flock of Baudin's Black-Cockatoo was happily feeding near the car park, which enabled Alan to get some great photos.

We then retired to a rotunda for the mandatory morning tea and while there were entertained by the birds including a Grey Butcherbird. Our somewhat shortened bird watch resulted in us jointly seeing 28 different bird species. We concluded with the AGM.

Upcoming events

16 September: Day excursion

For this excursion, it is intended that we will visit a finch breeder in the Ferguson Valley and then the Crooked Brook Reserve. Further information about the excursion will follow at another time closer to the event.

20-23 September: Kukerin

It has been agreed that our 'away' excursion this year be to Kukerin, from which we can investigate the birdlife on Lake Dumbleyung and Lake Grace. It will be held over four days from Wednesday 20 September to Saturday 23 September.

To this point in time eight people have confirmed that they will participating. If you are interested please contact Errol.

Myalup Bird Observer bookmarks

These bookmarks feature the image of a Splendid Fairy-wren which was painted by Margaret Jones a member of the MBO. They are \$2 each and the funds raised are being used to support wildlife rehabilitation in the area. To order please contact Errol Harwood.

Myalup Bird Observers Convenor:
Errol Harwood
Ph. 9720 2963 Mob. 0417 174 147
Email jkbs@iinet.net.au



Pigeon pair: Crested Pigeons, Australind, Myalup. Photo by Caroline Burdett



Birds on the wire: Elegant Parrots, Australind, Myalup. Photo by Alan Burdett



Splendid Fairy-wren, Myalup. Photo by Alan Burdett

WHEATBELT-AVON BRANCH ("WABBA")

Program

9-10 September: Cunderdin Shire

This is an overnight excursion at a 100-acre farming property, with a variety of habitats including pine plantations, banksia woodland, She Oak thickets, Wandoo woodland, and plenty of water. The owner would like a bird survey carried out in the area.

Meet at the Meckering Roadhouse about 12.30 pm on Saturday 9 September. Pack up will be 24 hours later on Sunday 10 September. A night walk will also be included. You will need to be self-sufficient with food and water. Bring along rubber boots, insect repellent, and shovel.

Leader: Phil Lewis

23-24 September: Latham-Perenjori Shire

This weekend we will be supporting the Bio Blitz at Latham, which usually commences about lunch time on the Saturday and finishes 24 hours later on the Sunday. These are well organised events with large numbers of persons attending. This one is being run by the Northern Agricultural Catchments Council (NACC).

Meeting place will be advised later. NACC are doing a web page with all the info when plans are finalised.

Leader: Phil Lewis

25-29 October: Carnarvon

This is a five-day excursion commencing on Wednesday 25 October and finishing on Sunday 29 October. This area is a magical place with lots of different habitats from mangroves, mudflats, beaches and many more. We will visit the lot. We are hopeful that we will obtain the help of the local Carnarvon bird expert, Les George, who has many years of experience in this area.

Provided the weather is going to be kind to us, each day will be action filled, with hopefully some 'lifers' for participants. Some species you might find include Brahminy Kite, White-breasted Whistler, Star Finch, Slender-billed Thornbill, Orange Chat, and not forgetting our overseas friends the waders, who will be back in country by this time.

We will be staying at the Wintersun Caravan Park, situated in 546 Robinson Street, which is the main street driving to the town site. Contact details 9941 8150.

Leader: Max Howard

Please note any person wishing to go on these excursions, are to contact WABBA Deputy Convener Max Howard on the following contact details:

Avon.hill@bigpond.com or 9574 2102



Brown Booby, Lacedpede Is (see also p51). Photo by David Free

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Excursion reports

BANNISTER CREEK, LYNWOOD, 6 MAY

A bright, sunny May morning with a predicted high of 27 degrees greeted 20 BirdLife members and one guest at Bannister Creek, Lynwood. We were informed by walk leader Sue Keogh that this was a new area for BirdLife.

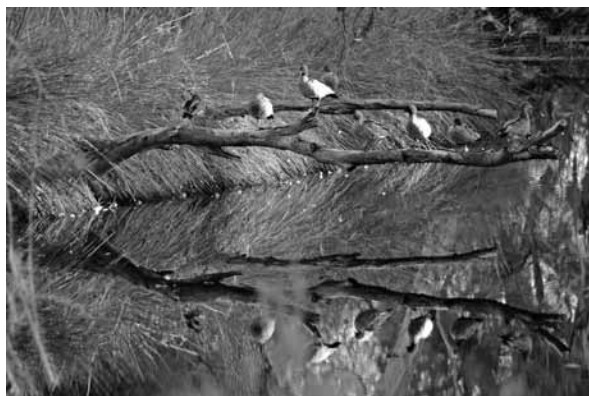
A project for the rehabilitation of the creek had been running for a number of years and had effectively resculptured the creek line. By removing weed, replanting vegetation and aerating the water through a series of small weirs along its length the creek was now home to an increasing number of birds and other wildlife species.

The walk followed the creek line down one side and back up the other. We were accompanied by numbers of Brown Honeyeaters, Silvereyes and Striated Pardalotes with a glimpse of an Australian Hobby. A Red-capped Parrot pair appeared to join our group and posed for the photographers on a dead tree branch. A number of Australian Wood Ducks, Pacific Black Ducks and some Eurasian Coots swam in the pools formed by the new weirs. Australian White Ibis staked in the reed beds along the creek banks. A pair of Inland Thornbill teased the photographers and a number of Yellow-rumped Thornbills were noted feeding on the ground.

As a side issue, we were asked to help with the Rainbow Lorikeet bird count and numbers ranged from 51 to 200+.

Thirty-four bird species were noted during the walk and our thanks go to Sue Keogh for an interesting and tranquil experience in this new area.

Chris Beebe



I attended the walk along Bannister Creek on 6th May, as a guest of Allan Throne, and one of the people on the walk was kind enough to suggest that I should submit this photo for possible inclusion in your newsletter. I must say that this was a judgement made on the basis of the picture shown on the 2.5" camera screen! However, you are most welcome to use the photo if you think it is suitable. I enjoyed the walk very much, and learned quite a bit. As I live in Jaccard Way I am very familiar with that walk along the creek, but knew very little about the various species of birds to be found there. Photo by Peter de Lacey

LAKE MONGER, 18 MAY

Thirteen of us, including an enthusiastic new member, set off on a clockwise walk around the lake.

The lake remains very full so was not suitable habitat for many duck species or Black Swans.

However, Musk and Blue-billed Ducks were thriving in big numbers. The remaining duck species were in low numbers. Some only appeared as we were leaving the venue. The only raptor, Whistling Kite, appeared at this time, too. There was a single Black-fronted Dotterel foraging on the shore. A lone Buff-banded Rail was seen nearby.

We had excellent views of Great Crested and Australasian Grebes and three Hoary-headed

Grebes, which are not common in the metropolitan area at present. Low numbers of Great Egrets, Nankeen Night-Herons, White-faced Herons and Australian White Ibis were recorded.

During our walk, we were aware of the constant overhead flights of Little Black Cormorants and the occasional Great Cormorant to the Swan River and back to Herdsman Lake and Glendalough Open Space, again where there is breeding activity taking place.

We found the Variegated Fairy-wrens with Silvereyes in the eastern conservation area. Some bushbirds were also found there. The corellas were absent during our walk, but the Rainbow Lorikeets did not appear to be disturbed by the activity around the palm trees which were being pruned. There were large numbers of them constantly present during our walk.

Forty-eight species were noted during our walk and as we were packing up after tea and bird count.

Claire Gerrish

YANGEBUP LAKE, 13 MAY

Nineteen members and three visitors visited Yangebup Lake on a cool and very still morning. A total of 62 bird species were seen with the highlights being good views of a Southern Boobook, Western Wattlebird and Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo, and some people saw a Buff-banded Rail. Of interest was a Red-collared Lorikeet which appeared to be in a pair with a Rainbow Lorikeet. The only raptors seen were Whistling Kite and a Brown Goshawk. The lake was very full with virtually no beach showing.

Robyn Pickering

BEENYUP SWAMP, 21 MAY

Thirteen hardy birders fronted for the walk around Beenyup Swamp and the south end of Lake Joondalup. Showers did not dampen their enthusiasm; however, some birds bunkered down to hide from the elements. A total of 41 species was considered a reasonable result given the conditions. Splendid Fairy-wren, Long-billed Corellas and a Swamp Harrier all gave us a good insight to their daily rituals.

Wayne Merritt

LAKE GOOLELAL, KINGSLEY, 27 MAY

Nineteen people enjoyed the excursion to Lake Goollelal, a lovely spot located a few kilometres south of Lake Joondalup within the Yellagonga Regional Park. It was a beautiful, crisp start to the day as we headed in an anti-clockwise direction on this approximately 4.5 km walk around the lake. Flowering red gums, acacias and banksias were abundant. As the morning began to warm up, the birds started to make an appearance. Early in the walk, groups of New Holland, Brown and Singing Honeyeaters darted around catching breakfast on the wing, whilst Australian Magpies warbled away in the tall eucalypts. Yellow-billed Spoonbills, Australian White Ibis and Great Egrets were visible on the far side of the lake. Red-capped Parrots were glimpsed but were soon chased away by territorial Red Wattlebirds.

In total, 47 species were observed on the walk. The main highlights included a family of Australasian Grebes on the lake, a Whistling Kite pair soaring around their old nest site and a cheeky group of Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos.

Carolyn Mynott

NALBARRA CAMPOUT, 3 – 5 JUNE

Thirty-four birders travelled for the campout at Nalbarra Station, located 70 km north of Payne's Find, where we were hosted by John and Karen Wainwright. We were immediately aware of the hundreds of Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos (the *samueli* subspecies of *Calyptorhynchus banksii*) around the station homestead and water points, and that were heard calling constantly.

At the Friday evening get together, Clive produced a program of proposed events over the weekend and a copy of the station bird list, as provided by the owners. The list total was 88. Clive had also produced an innovative list for the number of species guessed at the sign on. This prevented duplication of numbers selected and any subsequent dramas. It was also made known at this time that car-pooling was essential with such a large group in order to give everyone a fighting chance of seeing birds encountered en route.

On Saturday, there was a prompt 0800 start to the first venue which was south of the camp. An area just before the first scheduled stop was 'buzzing' so we had a short walk about to find several key species —Chestnut-rumped Thornbill, Southern Whiteface, Chestnut-breasted Quail-

thrush and Redthroat. These birds were seen again at the next stop, a flat granite outcrop. It was here, too, that we had our first views of Bourke's Parrot.

At the second granite outcrop, which was much larger, not many birds were seen. However, below the rocks were some trees and Spiny-cheeked and White-fronted Honeyeaters were found. As it turned out very few honeyeaters of any species were seen over the weekend.

Morning tea was taken in the shade of trees near a water point. It was a busy area with more Chestnut-rumped



Southern Whiteface, Nalbarra Station (see also pp2,55,56).
Photo by John Baas

Thornbills and Southern Whiteface. We also saw Splendid Fairy-wrens, a few Slaty-backed Thornbills, Red-capped Robins and a Wedge-tailed Eagle. The bushy area adjacent to the water point was very busy with White-browed Treecreepers and Hooded Robins. Several people had new birds to add to their lists, which was exciting, and the photographers were generally happy too.

In the afternoon, we searched some of the sparse eucalypt areas for different species and honeyeaters, but

none were found. Later, we visited another water point where Mulga Parrots were seen. The perils of operating in remote areas was highlighted when an impromptu spotlighting trip by one of the group discovered another camper stranded with battery failure.

On Sunday, we had another early start, with a round trip of some 85 km to negotiate. It was a long day travelling through different habitats in primarily mulga country. There were tall trees with sparse undergrowth, and smaller trees exhibiting bark, ephemeral lake beds, grassy areas with low shrubs, and some rocky ground with granite outcrops.

Wattles had started flowering and they were the only flowers seen in the very dry landscape. More bird activity was noted as the day warmed up. Bourke's and Mulga Parrots proved to be quite common, and Crested Bellbirds, Red-capped Robins, Chestnut-rumped Thornbills, White-browed Treecreepers and Southern Whiteface were seen often.

After lunch, we headed off towards Darn Rock, a few kilometres away. Bourke's Parrots were seen often and there was a brief stop for two Crimson Chats seen only by a couple of people.

We then completed the Granite Loop and headed back to the camping area stopping briefly for birds along the way. Varied Sittellas were seen by a few people. We arrived back at camp as darkness was falling and, at the end of a long day, we were very grateful to the Wainwrights who provided a sausage sizzle for all of us.

Next morning many of us set off to a watering point on the way to Great Northern Highway. We waited patiently

and watched as five parrot species used the water trough. Later we walked through the bush surrounding the windmill and saw the usual small birds and had good views of Crested Bellbirds. The final bird call was held back at the camp and the total count was 57 species, meaning that the prize bottle of wine was won by John Delaporte. It was a low total but the quality of the birds and the views we had had were adequate compensation. We had also managed to add 13 species to the list that we received from the station owners, bringing the station total to 101.

The most notable sighting of the afternoon was just the top of the head of an Australian Owlet-nightjar roosting in a circular fence pole. The Western Bowerbird was also seen briefly after a long and patient wait although the unattended bower had been seen by most people.

Claire Gerrish

HARRISDALE, JANDAKOT REGIONAL PARK, 4 JUNE

Twenty-eight participants enjoyed this jewel of banksia woodland within the surrounding new suburbs. Thirty-four species were sighted with the keen photographers in the group capturing some great pictures of some of the species. Without recent rains, the wetlands lacked water but the open area with green grass still provided us with great views of Splendid Fairy-wren, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Silvereye and Elegant Parrot. Western Wattlebird and New Holland Honeyeater dominated the woodlands. Both Red-tailed and Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos plus a Yellow-billed Spoonbill flew over. However, no raptors appeared. Thanks to our leader, Debbie Walker, for her knowledge of the birds and the plants of Harrisdale. The area is certainly worth a visit.

Lorraine Chyne

YANCHEP NATIONAL PARK, 10 JUNE

A group of 12 people joined me for the morning's walk on a cool but bright morning. The first part of the walk entailed walking the track that surrounds Lake McNess and while we were on the east side of the lake we saw most of the regular waterbirds although the number of ducks was down on previous visits. We saw only Black Swans, Pacific Black Ducks, Grey Teal and Australian Wood Ducks. Other waterbirds seen included Yellow-billed Spoonbills, Great Egrets, Black-winged Stilts and a single White-faced Heron.

The Masked Lapwings, now apparently resident, were seen on the lawns in front of the cafe and further along a Buff-banded Rail was seen well out in the open, away from the thick vegetation they usually retreat to. The usual array of small birds was also in evidence with

Willie Wagtails, Grey Fantails, Yellow-rumped Thornbills and Splendid Fairy-wrens all providing us with good and extended views.

As we progressed around the lake we saw a Wedge-tailed Eagle soaring above the water—a first for me at Yanchep—and in the more vegetated areas a Spotless Crake was heard and Fan-tailed Cuckoos were heard and then well seen.

Later, a majority of the group drove across the park and walked around Boomerang Gorge. Fortunately, the walk there itself was interesting but we only added one bird, a Rufous Whistler, to a list that totalled 41 birds for the morning.

Clive Nealon

FLYNN ROAD, 17 JUNE

Twenty-two members and visitors met at Flynn Road, close to The Lakes roadhouse on 17 June. We were joined by some new members, so we were a large group.

The early winter has been very dry and the weather on the day was clear and sunny. This area consists of open, mainly Wandoo, woodland.

We moved on to a parking spot about 6 km from the meeting place. Dry conditions made the start of the walk quiet, but we soon found a range of bushbirds including Elegant Parrots. We walked onwards to a rocky outcrop where we stopped for a tea break; near the outcrop one member sighted Painted Button-quail. From here Charles lead us to search for the Crested Shrike-tit, but we were unable to find it on this occasion. Some members stayed behind to photograph the birds in this area. On the way back some of the group spotted a Western Yellow Robin.

We moved on to another area of woodland which has more scrubby vegetation and a dry stream. White-naped Honeyeaters were seen while we ate our lunch. The new members were delighted to see Scarlet and Western Yellow Robins, Fan-tailed Cuckoo and Western Rosella on the walk.

The total count for the day was 37 birds, lower than before but dry conditions made it quieter than usual.

Sandra West

THE SPECTACLES, 19 JUNE

Ten birdwatchers, including one on her first BWA excursion, gathered at The Spectacles. We followed a clockwise circular route, taking some 3½ hours to return to our starting point at the car park. The lake water was murky with an oily sheen and produced not one waterbird.

We regularly heard Fan-tailed Cuckoo and most participants also had a good view of one close to the track. Some managed to spot a Brown Goshawk and an

Australian Hobby. Elegant and Red-capped Parrots were seen, as well as Australian Ringnecks (and the ubiquitous Rainbow Lorikeet).

Honeyeaters were well represented by Singing, Brown and New Holland Honeyeaters and by Red and Western Wattlebirds. Smaller bushbirds included Weebill, Western Gerygone, both Striated and Spotted Pardalotes and Yellow-rumped, Inland and Western Thornbills.

The species total was 35.

Many thanks to Maris for leading the walk.

Charles Merriam

TOM BATEMAN RESERVE, THORNIE, 25 JUNE

A perfect sunny though chilly winter morning created great conditions for the 20 people, including a visitor from Japan, who attended this excursion. Because this is a permanent water source we might have expected more duck species but Australasian Darter and Great Cormorant were a pleasant surprise, neither being seen regularly at this site.

Splendid Fairy-wren, also not often seen, was present at the southern end and most people had good views of a male Red-capped Parrot and White-browed Scrubwren, another uncommon sighting.

A flock of Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos treated us with flashing red tail panels as they landed, then rose again. Little Grassbird and Rufous Whistler were also picked up by some. A Little Eagle soaring overhead during the bird call brought the final number to 45, capping off a very pleasant morning.

Pam and George Agar

PIESSE BROOK RESERVE, KALAMUNDA, 1 JULY

The rainfall we experienced that morning made up for shortfalls in June.

Seven optimistic/hardy souls joined me on this very chilly morning. The birds were understandably hidden and it was hard work finding any. The most obliging were the Galahs. Although the stream had a little water, ducks were not seen or heard. Cold and sopping after three hours, bird call was quickly discussed and any tea or coffee was consumed in the warmth of our own cars.

18 species were seen.

Stella Stewart-Wynne

VICTORIA DAM, 8 JULY

Twenty-one members and four visitors had an enjoyable walk in the marvellous winter sunshine at Victoria Dam. It was very cool to start off with and the birds were not easy to see. Several parrot species and New Holland Honeyeaters were in the car park at the beginning of the walk and Striated Pardalotes were heard too. As we commenced walking a pair of Western White-naped Honeyeaters and a Scarlet Robin showed themselves to everyone.

Some of the grevilleas were flowering alongside the path, but we did not see New Holland Honeyeaters and Western Spinebills until our return trip. Only Australian Shelducks were seen on the dam. Two unidentified birds were seen from the dam wall, a raptor and a cormorant. The reliable Splendid Fairy-wrens were seen at the bottom of the steps. An obliging Spotted Pardalote foraged in a small tree on the edge of the roadway and continued feeding until all the birders and photographers had seen it.

Not a lot was happening in front of the pavilion so we continued round to the old dam wall. A White-browed Scrubwren stayed until it had been seen by everyone and at the same time a Grey Shrike-thrush was heard nearby. We birdwatched through the bushy area to the top of the Bickley Brook pathway, but it was mainly more New Holland Honeyeaters and Weebills. Some of us were fortunate to see Red-eared Firetails briefly on our way back to the pavilion. The White-breasted Robin and some more Splendid Fairy-wrens were seen after we had waited patiently for some time.

There was not a lot to see on the way back to the car park for morning tea, except for the Western Spinebills. Tea was welcome after the hike back and bird call only delivered 36 species.

Claire Gerrish

LIGHTNING SWAMP, 15 JULY

Threatening weather did not deter 22 people from joining the walk around Lightning Swamp. The leader provided a quite downbeat description of the area, having conducted a disappointing 'recce' earlier in the week but fortunately the birds came out this day and so the low expectations were generally exceeded.

The main swamp area, near the entrance gate, had a broad expanse of shallow water but was almost completely devoid of birds—thank goodness for Pacific Black Ducks.

As we started off on the path through the reserve there was an almost constant background of Striated Pardalote and Brown Honeyeater calls. The most visible birds, however, were White-cheeked Honeyeaters and they provided everyone with excellent, exposed views.

A number of people had a brief view of a Brown Goshawk making a determined dash after prey, and Splendid Fairy-wrens provided some entertainment along the bank of the drain running through the reserve.

Parrots were prominent with excellent opportunities to see Red-capped Parrots and Australian Ringnecks, and at the western end of the reserve a flock of Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos were feeding in a Marri overhanging the path and ignored the group of people lined up to watch them.

The call of coffee or tea proved strong enough for half of the group to walk a little more quickly back to the cars but the dawdlers were rewarded with views of a soaring Little Eagle as the final, and thirty-third, bird of the morning.

Clive Nealon

ST RONAN'S NATURE RESERVE, 29 JULY

Eighteen people recorded 34 species at St Ronan's Nature Reserve on a cold, overcast day with some light rain and moderate winds. Highlights were Red-capped Robin, Scarlet Robin, Western Yellow Robin and Brown-headed Honeyeater. The only raptor seen was a Nankeen Kestrel.

Most of the group went to Mokine Nature Reserve after lunch. Nearly all of us added Purple-crowned Lorikeet, Yellow-plumed Honeyeater and Golden Whistler to our list. One lucky person also saw a Painted Button-quail! The total number of species recorded on the day was 38. A highlight after lunch was good views of Brown-headed Honeyeater at a stop between St Ronan's and Mokine Nature Reserve.

Robyn Pickering

Observatory reports

BROOME BIRD OBSERVATORY

The busy season (for guests!) descended on the observatory in a big way this year, with our tours fully booked for most of July and plenty of campers in the campground. BBO staff also ran a short course on raptor, tern and shorebird identification with raptor expert Dr Stephen Debus. The raptors put on a good show, with 16 species recorded during the course field trips including an Australian Hobby catching a Red-kneed Dotterel in front of us at Kidney Bean Claypan.



The floodwaters on Roebuck Plains have gradually dried over the past few months, though there is still plenty of water in the lakes and claypans. Most importantly for the comfort of staff and guests, this meant we were finally freed from the mosquito plague in early June!! An added benefit was the concentrations of waterbirds that gathered around the remaining areas of water, leading to some exceptional counts. These included 25 000 Plumed Whistling-Ducks at the sewage ponds in town, over 50 000 Grey Teal at Duck Lake and Kidney Bean, 1500 Red-kneed Dotterels at Kidney Bean, 1000 Magpie Geese on a dam on Roebuck Plains and 400 Purple Swampheas at Lake Eda. These numbers have now dispersed, but there is still an excellent variety of waterbirds at our wetlands, and this should improve further as the freshwater shorebirds return through August and September. The Yellow Chats at Kidney Bean have also been enjoying the good conditions, with some continuing to breed throughout the Dry season so far—a bonus for our tour guests as this has meant many of the chats have retained their stunning breeding plumage throughout this period!

The drying plains also saw shorebird numbers increase again on the high tide roosts near the BBO, including a handful of Asian Dowitchers. A lone immature Common Redshank has also remained in the bay for the Dry, but has been studiously ignoring the roost sites near BBO so has only been seen when feeding along Crab Creek. The annual Dry season MYSMA shorebird count in Roebuck Bay in early July resulted in a count of little over 22 000 migratory shorebirds still in the bay. This was a significant increase on last year that is likely attributable to a good breeding season last year meaning more young birds overwintering. The first returning adult shorebirds were noted in mid-July (Common and Wood Sandpipers), with the first juveniles expected in early August, so this number is steadily growing towards the average 130 000 or so present during the Wet season.

The most unusual sighting for the period was a small swiftlet that flew over a group of our short-course participants while we were viewing shorebirds in the bay. It was seen again briefly passing near the observatory shortly afterwards, but views in both instances were quite brief. Several subtle characteristics, including a relatively obvious pale rump, shallow tail fork, and small size are consistent with Edible-nest Swiftlet, which is also the most likely of the candidates in terms of range and time of year. The influx of waterbirds to the region included several rare species for the region, such as Freckled Duck at Lake Eda in May, Australasian Shoveler at Lake Eda in May and June, and at Kidney Bean Claypan and Duck Lake in early July, Chestnut Teal at Kidney Bean in early July, and Broome's first confirmed records of

Dusky Moorhen at Lake Eda in May. Also of note have been several Oriental Pratincoles out on Roebuck Plains amongst the numerous Australian Pratincoles—very unusual for the Dry season. Around the observatory itself since late May, two Leaden Flycatchers were present, including an adult male; this species is a scarcity in the Broome area.

In other observatory news, we're in the process of gaining approvals for our new office and interpretive centre, which we hope to have up and running sometime later this year. In town, the Water Corporation has completed a new viewing platform at the Broome South Wastewater Treatment Plant on Clementson Street (see also full article below). The ponds are a well-known birding site and the new platform means visitors have an excellent view across the site, without needing to climb onto car roofs! All that's left to do is wait and see whether Sammy the Semipalmated Plover returns to the ponds for another year!

BBO Staff

NEW VIEWING PLATFORM AT BROOME TREATMENT PLANT

The Broome South Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) (its official name) has had many local names over the years, not all of them repeatable here! It is a true birding hot spot, even in Broome which boasts the world-renowned shorebird site of Roebuck Bay (the amazing terns hardly ever get a mention), beautiful mangrove forests full of birds, wetlands that will blow your bird-nerd mind (after a big wet season), grasslands, saltmarsh and the local Pindan *Acacia* woodland which, while it may not win many prizes for 'the world's most spectacular forest ecosystem', is still packed with birds.

So how does a 13 ha completely artificial habitat get top billing?

Permanent water, food, roosting areas and now a birdwatching platform (The Barndarlmarra Hut) smack bang in amongst the birds.

Who can remember the last time a big organisation got the thumbs up from the birdwatching community? No, me neither. But look no further than the Broome Wastewater Treatment Plant to see what can be done with some good planning and community-minded management. Paul Beard, the Water Corporation's West Kimberley Operations Manager, knew that the Broome plant was popular with birders having seen many of us standing on the roof of our cars peering longingly over the fence in to

the ponds. So when some major works were scheduled for the plant he decided to put in a birdwatching hide, yep just like that. You never knew government entities could do such a thing, did you? After consultation with the Broome Bird Observatory staff and Committee, the plan came to fruition. The years of saying to the Water Corporation representatives that 'the only people who like treatment plants as much as they do are birders', finally paid off. So now local and visiting birders have a large, shaded, raised bird hide situated right where all the best birds are, INSIDE the main boundary of the treatment plant. To have a hide INSIDE a wastewater treatment plant in this day and age is brilliant. It is safely fenced off from the ponds themselves but affords brilliant views of the site and the birds. It is open access to the public all day every day. There are also some information boards about both the birds and wastewater. So there you go, win-wins don't come much better than that.

Over the years almost 200 species have been recorded at the Broome South WWTP. During 2016, 110 species were recorded within the boundary or flying over the 13 ha—not bad.

As the ponds are so close to Roebuck Bay, many shorebirds use them to roost in during the high tide period. Others use them for foraging at any time, often in conjunction with the adjacent bay. Grey-tailed Tattlers, Pacific Golden Plovers, Common and Wood Sandpipers are some of the most commonly seen, but any and all of the local shorebirds can show up, with Long-toed Stint and both Swinhoe's and Pin-tailed Snipe recorded

regularly (we won't go in to the ID debate here). At least three species of resident (non-migrant) shorebirds breed on the banks of the ponds: Black-winged Stilt, Masked Lapwing and Black-fronted Dotterel. Last but not least, of course, the famous Semipalmated Plover has returned to the ponds every year since its first stay from October 2010. It could be asked how we know it is the same bird. Well, we don't but on the balance of probabilities it is more likely to be the same individual than seven different ones!

Waterfowl species show a great diversity and sometimes great abundance. There were 25 000 (give or take) Plumed Whistling-Duck on the pond walls and roads in June 2017. It is an evocative sight to see them flying over the Broome town site in the evening as they head off to graze on the grass of Roebuck Plains, whistling gently as they go. Other regulars include Grey Teal, Hardhead and Pink-eared Duck, and there is always the chance of something rarer like a Magpie Goose or Radjah Shelduck.

Many waders (not shorebirds!) also use the ponds, including various herons, egrets, spoonbills and ibis. Birds of prey soar above, rarely attacking the birds but always on the lookout for any that are in less than prime



The Barndarlmarra Hut. Photo by John Graff



Plumed Whistling-Duck. Photo by R Else

condition that might make an easy target. In next-to-no-time at the Broome ponds Osprey, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Brahminy Kite, Black Kite and Whistling Kite should be seen. Brown Goshawk, Australian Hobby and Peregrine Falcon might also make an appearance. In

the Wet season, there is also a good chance for northern Australian specials like Barn Swallow and Eastern Yellow Wagtail.

The ponds also have a reputation for producing rarities, ranging from local scarcities like Freckled Duck to



Semipalmated Plover. Photo by Rohan Clarke

national rarities like White Wagtail. Aside from the famous Semipalmated Plover and aforementioned wagtail, the ponds have also played host to other rarities like Franklin's Gull, House Swift, and Red-throated Pipit.

The wet season is usually the best time for these rarities, but it's

unusual if there isn't something of interest at any time of year.

Broome Bird Observatory

EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY

We have been here for almost three months, and have had many guests staying with us, and many day visitors as well. To get to the bird observatory, they need to drive through a considerable amount of country that was burnt out during the December fires, so it's no wonder that most people ask "how has the fire affected the bird numbers here, and in the Nuytsland Nature Reserve that surrounds us?"



There is no doubt that bird numbers are down, and in particular there is a decline in birds dependant on nectar and insects. There has definitely been a marked drop in honeyeaters in the past few months. In comparing the number of birds and bird species that we recorded during May, June and July of this year, with the numbers during the same time in 2015 (Table 1), we find that we were down 11 species in May 2017, compared with May 2015, but we were down only two species compared with May 2016.

Despite all that, however, there are still many New Holland Honeyeaters here, and they dominate the numbers, but there is also a reasonable variety of other species. We have four bird baths at the observatory, and as well as New Holland Honeyeaters, the Major Mitchell's come in most days, up to 46 at one time. They are the photographer's delight! Their beautiful crests and pink underwings are amazing.

There are two nesting boxes that were made specifically for the Major Mitchell's, but whilst there are green leaves in one, the other has not been used, despite the work that went into 'making them feel at home'! Despite the large numbers we sometimes see here, their population

has certainly diminished. In January 2015, there were 2131 Major Mitchell's recorded, 808 in 2016, and 178 in January 2017.

Some of the other birds that come in to drink include the Singing Honeyeater, Golden Whistler, Silvereye, Brush Bronzewing, Welcome Swallow, Australian Raven, Grey Currawong, Red Wattlebird, White-eared, Brown and Brown-headed Honeyeaters, Grey Shrike-thrush and Grey Fantail.

Although they haven't called in for a drink, we have seen Wedge-tailed Eagles in the vicinity of the observatory, and that pleases us as there are relatively few birds in the burnt-out area immediately to the north of us. It's also somewhat surprising to see them down here, as there is plenty of road-kill up on Eyre Highway. They may be trying to vary their diet! Some of the unexpected visitors that have called in here include a Grey Teal, Black-tailed Native-hen and Cattle Egrets.

Kanidal Beach has few surprises, but Nine-Mile and Twilight Cove usually have more interesting species. There are always Australian Pied Oystercatcher, Red-capped Plover, Pacific Gull, Silver Gull and Caspian Tern and often the Grey Teal to be found at Kanidal Beach. We recently saw 19 Banded Stilts on Kanidal Beach (two of them appeared to have only one leg, but seem to balance OK nonetheless) and another ten at Nine-Mile. In addition, we often see Sooty Oystercatcher, White-faced Heron and Eastern Reef Egret.

At Twilight Cove, we often see the White-bellied Sea Eagle hovering above the Australian Pelican, Sanderling and Curlew Sandpiper, not often seen near Eyre (one

Table 1. Entries from Eyre's daily bird log for May, June and July of 2015, 2016 and 2017. Entries represent the totals of the numbers of birds seen each day in each month. Note that a total of 30 Emus in a month could mean one Emu every day of the month, or 30 birds on one day. Similarly, a total of 30 for one species might mean something quite different from a total of 30 for another species.

	2015			Total	2016			Total	2017			Total
	May	Jun	Jul		May	Jun	Jul		May	Jun	Jul	
Emu	32	13	23	68	1	9	10	20	6	1	0	7
Australian Pied Oystercatcher	30	149	69	248	72	56	63	191	36	45	24	105
Red-capped Plover	157	271	170	598	24	168	125	317	118	100	131	349
Silver Gull	131	680	413	1224	309	208	66	583	38	133	58	229
Caspian Tern	0	9	2	11	3	0	4	7	19	17	37	73
Brush Bronzewing	474	533	473	1480	292	75	65	432	44	32	14	90
Major Mitchell's Cockatoo	603	1031	340	1974	731	564	1089	2384	892	648	863	2403
Spotted Pardalote	384	117	102	603	67	24	125	216	40	30	36	106
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	359	355	244	1561	251	353	353	957	1	25	0	26
Yellow-throated Miner	231	468	365	1064	333	280	361	974	261	212	186	659
Singing Honeyeater	995	749	555	2299	922	713	639	2274	454	306	318	1078
White-eared Honeyeater	156	120	109	385	43	41	94	178	22	76	14	112
Purple-gaped Honeyeater	8	37	6	51	3	6	7	16	0	0	0	0
Yellow-plumed Honeyeater	8	32	31	71	12	2	4	18	0	10	0	10
Brown-headed Honeyeater	125	54	32	211	17	17	39	73	20	46	7	73
Brown Honeyeater	391	462	441	1294	385	300	319	1004	88	71	56	215
White-fronted Honeyeater	402	91	50	543	0	0	0	0	17	6	0	23
New Holland Honeyeater	3014	2802	2272	8088	3709	2023	2258	7990	2180	2800	1787	6767
Jacky Winter	9	5	4	18	0	2	7	9	0	0	0	0
White-browed Babbler	93	174	114	381	75	49	129	253	121	61	7	189
Golden Whistler	4	7	3	14	0	0	2	2	1	7	4	12
Grey Shrike-thrush	29	87	82	198	53	38	134	225	19	30	16	65
Willie Wagtail	86	114	74	274	105	89	107	301	128	114	35	277
Dusky Woodswallow	175	145	140	460	125	41	335	501	220	271	45	536
Grey Butcherbird	53	47	48	148	53	27	81	161	31	31	25	87
Australian Magpie	25	21	23	69	41	13	35	79	25	42	22	89
Grey Currawong	88	46	100	234	306	295	356	957	281	145	126	552
Australian Raven	319	348	290	957	483	249	365	1097	321	395	223	939
Welcome Swallow	1389	1272	593	3254	813	347	482	1642	803	395	303	1501
Tree Martin	26	4	3	33	2	2	4	8	25	16	14	51
Silvereye	1222	1015	711	2948	974	526	451	1951	232	274	168	674

was in breeding plumage). There was one seen there in 2015, and ten in August/ September/October 2016 and six this period.

Crystal Pond, adjacent to the Cocklebiddy Road-House, is usually an interesting site for us to visit. For some time, a lone Hoary-headed Grebe lived there but has now gone. For two weeks in a row there was a Pink-eared Duck with some Grey Teal. In the vicinity, we have seen a White-necked Heron, a Straw-necked Ibis, Australasian Pipit, Welcome Swallows and a Mistletoebird.



Nankeen Kestrel, Eyre (see also p55).
Photo by Bill Dolence

toss-up between the Yellow-throated Miners and Western Grey Kangaroos. We saw over 300 kangaroos on one of our surveys. Of course, being close to Eyre Highway, there are still many Wedge-tailed Eagles and Australian Ravens, but also, not in large numbers, Nankeen Kestrels, Grey Butcherbirds, the Pallid Cuckoo, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Australian Magpie, Magpie-lark and the Australian Bustard.

Bill and Jude Dolence

For numbers on our Cocklebiddy and Blue Bush Plain surveys, it's often a

Coming events



BirdLife Western Australia Code-of-conduct for campouts

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

1. Please notify the BWA office if you plan to attend a campout, leaving name, address, phone number and an emergency contact.
2. Family pets should not be taken on campouts.
3. Each person should carry the 'Lost Procedure' card. A compass or GPS is useful. Carry a whistle, CB radio and matches/lighter which can be invaluable if you are lost, or to raise an alarm.
4. Fill in the Attendance Record and the Medical Disclosure form if required.
5. Participants wishing to leave any activities early should ensure the leader is advised.
6. Campfires can only be used if permitted at the time and must be fully extinguished prior to leaving the camp area.
7. Members should ensure that their vehicle is in roadworthy condition and they have

adequate food, water and fuel, and suitable clothing including footwear. Daily checks can be undertaken using the 'POWER' check guide, ie, P = petrol/diesel fuel, O = oil, W = water, E = electrical/battery, R = rubber/tyre pressures.

8. When travelling in convoy having your vehicle lights turned on and always keeping the vehicle behind you in sight, especially at turns, is good practice. If they stop, check if help is required and advise the Leader.
9. The environment should be left in pristine condition, and care should be taken not to disturb the wildlife or stock animals. Always leave gates as you have found them, ie, if they are open then leave them open, if closed then close them.

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

Revised July 2012

Important note re campouts

Members anticipating attending campouts must notify the BirdLife WA Office (9383 7749) of the number in their party and when they will arrive.

If you are unsure, put your name down as you can always cancel.

An emergency contact number should also be provided in case of accident.

New members

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

Sunday 3 September: Paruna Sanctuary Full-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park at the end of Avon Road. Travelling on the Toodyay Road, turn north into O'Brien Road, which becomes Clenton Road after 15.3 km, and after a further 2 km turn north onto Avon Road. This road is gravelled but quite suitable for any vehicle, and less than 1 km in length. Allow 20 minutes from the Toodyay/O'Brien Roads turnoff.

Paruna Sanctuary is owned by the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) and we will be carrying out surveys of three sites.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Sue Abbotts

Saturday 9 September: Lake Leschenaultia, Chidlow Half-day excursion

Meet at 9:00 am at the hotel in Chidlow. Travel 10.5 km past

Mundaring on Great Eastern Highway and turn left into Old Northam Road and it is 2 km into Chidlow. It is now free to enter the park.

A 6 km walk on an excellent track takes us through Jarrah, Marri and Wandoo woodland where 77 species have been recorded.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Charles Merriam

9-10 September: Cunderdin Shire

See Wheatbelt-Avon report, p39, for details.

Thursday 14 September: Star Swamp, North Beach, Stirling Half-day excursion

Meet at 7:30 am in the car park at the end of Mary Street, Waterman. To get there, turn off West Coast Highway at Mary Street, and drive to the car park. Alternatively, from Marmion Avenue,

turn left into Beach Road, left into Ethel Street, and then left into Mary Street,.

Species that may be found here include Variegated Fairy-wren, Southern Boobook and Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo. Star Swamp is part of the Northern Swan Coastal Plain IBA for Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo and has Tuart and Banksia woodland and heath. A variety of raptors and bushbirds can be seen. Over 82 species of birds have been recorded here.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Michael Hancock

Saturday 16 September: John Forrest National Park, Mundaring Half-day excursion

We will meet at 8:15 am near the information board within the paid section of the park. John Forrest National Park, is located approximately 28 km east of Perth via Great Eastern Highway. Turn off Great Eastern Highway at the Number 2 entrance

and follow Park Road to the facilities area. Entry is \$12 per vehicle or \$6 per vehicle for seniors. Proceed through the entrance gate and park opposite the information board adjacent to the toilet block.

We will follow walk and fire trails over undulating terrain and can expect to see a mix of the birds of the Jarrah forest and the drier Wandoo woodland areas, as both vegetation communities are represented in the park. Over 100 species have been recorded including nine honeyeaters, ten parrots and cockatoos and eight raptors. Bring morning tea to have while the bird list is compiled.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Peter Sandilands

16 September: Ferguson Valley

See Myalup report, p37, for details.

Sunday 17 September: Dryandra, Cuballing Shire Photogroup activity

Meet at 8:30 am in the Congelin campsite (not Congelin Dam) off the York-Williams Rd in Lol Gray State Forest, Dryandra. Look for the BirdLife sign.

Option to camp at Congelin campsite run by Department of Parks and Wildlife on Saturday night at a cost of \$10 per adult per night and \$6.60 concession.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Keith Wilcox

Monday 18 September: Bold Park Eco Centre, Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat Monthly meeting, 7:30 pm

Deborah Slater-Lee from the State NRM will give a talk on Government Grant funding.

20-23 September: Kukerin

See Myalup report, p37, for details.

Saturday 23 September—Half-day excursion: Yallingup

See Cape to Cape report, p36, for details.

23-24 September: Latham-Perenjori Shire

See Wheatbelt-Avon report, p39, for details.

Sunday 1 October: Lake Joondalup, Joondalup Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am at Neil Hawkins Park, in the car park at the end of Boas Avenue. Joondalup Lake has recorded the highest number of species for any BirdLife WA half-day excursion with 75 species of birds seen in one morning excursion. There are always lots of waterbirds and bushbirds to be seen around this large lake, and there could be waders as well. Lake Joondalup is within the Northern Swan Coastal Plain Important Bird Area for Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo.

Bring your telescope if you have one.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Susan Abbotts

Monday 2 October to Saturday 7 October: Mount Gibson Wildlife Sanctuary survey

A maximum of 12 volunteers are sought to undertake four days of important bird surveys at Mt Gibson Wildlife Sanctuary. The sanctuary is managed by the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) and the birdwatching is good for dry-land species such as Major Mitchell's Cockatoo, Southern Scrub-robin, Chestnut and Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush, Mulga and Burke's Parrots, honeyeaters, Malleefowl and Redthroat.

The survey has now been running for four years and focuses on determining the differences in avifauna inside and outside a 43 km predator-proof fence. There is no requirement for volunteers to have extensive experience in birding; rather, more experienced birders will be able to provide assistance to newer surveyors. There is also no requirement for birders to have access to, nor experience in, using a GPS as AWC staff navigate birding teams into sites. Individuals do need to be able to walk up to 1 km through (sometimes thick) vegetation. About four surveys of 20 min each are conducted every morning and afternoon by each team.

AWC will provide facilities (water, power) and some inside accommodation will be available. There will also be a welcome BBQ on Monday 2 October, as well as a farewell BBQ on Friday 6 October. Birders will also be able to visit other good birdwatching locations on-sanctuary, plus to search for (and hopefully see!) endangered Greater Stick-nest Rats, which are kept in a feral-proof enclosure on-sanctuary.

The turnoff to Mt Gibson Wildlife Sanctuary is 74 km north-east of Wubin along Great Northern Highway, heading for Payne's Find. The homestead is 27 km along Mt Gibson Road. Detailed directions will be sent to participants. Two-wheel drive vehicles are able to get into the sanctuary. There should not be a requirement to use volunteers' vehicles for the surveys.

Please register at the BirdLife WA office on 9383 7749.

For members only.

Leader: Peter White

Friday 6 October to Sunday 8 October: Augusta campout

It has been a number of years since a BirdLife WA campout in Augusta and we are extremely lucky to be able to take advantage of a camping area offered in a bushland setting on the Hardy Inlet in school holidays. We shall not be travelling great distances, with excursions all day Saturday 7th and the morning of Sunday 8th. Plan to arrive on Friday afternoon. As well as our usual visit to the lighthouse, waterwheel, Donovan Street bushland, Karri forest, nocturnal walk, we have been invited to visit a large private property with creek, lake, forest and vineyard with nesting waterbirds/bushbirds.

Apart from showers and toilets supplied, you will need to be self-sufficient as there will be no power available. This campout will suit those with tents, camper-trailers and smaller caravans. There is no camp kitchen. Cost per person per night is \$15.

Numbers will be limited to 34 people so please call the BirdLife WA office on 9383 7749 to put your name on the list. All bookings will be handled through Christine Wilder and there may be a wait list. Further details will be available closer to the campout.

For members and guest only.

Leader: Christine Wilder

Saturday 7 October: Bold Park, Floreat Half-day excursion

Meet at 7:30 am at the Camel Lake car park. Bold Park is the largest natural area of Tuart/banksia woodland/kwongan remaining in the western suburbs. The plan is to subdivide into four or five groups (depending on numbers attending) so that the entire park is covered in the one morning.

The southern block lacks formed paths and those who wish to explore it will need long trousers and stout shoes. The north block has few paths but the ground cover is mostly grass. Appropriate dress is recommended. The large central block and the beach block have numerous paths. A map will be distributed to each group so that the extent to be covered is clearly defined. We will meet back at the car park at 10.30 for morning tea and collation of the bird lists.

For members and guests only.

*Leaders: Ian Abbott, Pauline Woolley,
Alan Watson and Nigel Sutherland*

**14 October—Margaret River
Agricultural Show**

See Cape to Cape report, p36 for details.

**Saturday 14 October: John Oldham
Park
Photogroup activity**

Meet at 7:00 am at the John Oldham Park car park, Mounts Bay road, Perth. This is just near the Mount Hospital. Parking is \$4 per hour unless you find somewhere cheaper and walk.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Lesley McCauley

**Sunday 15 October, Bibra Lake,
Cockburn
Half-day excursion**

Meet at 7:30 am in the first car park at the southern end of the lake off Progress Drive. This car park is between Hope Road and Gwilliam Drive. Bibra Lake is a part of the Beeliar Wetlands chain and a large number of bushbirds and waterbirds can be seen here. Over 130 bird species have been recorded in this reserve. Bring water, hats, suitable footwear, etc.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Alan Watson

**Saturday 21 October: Collins Road,
Flint
Half-day excursion**

Meet at 8:00 am on Collins Road. Drive about 1 km from Brookton Highway and park on the left-hand side of Collins Road. The Collins Road turnoff is about 50 km east of the junction of Brookton

Highway and Canning Road, on the right-hand side coming from Perth. We will walk through this area of Wandoo woodland where 61 species have been recorded. This is thought to be the closest breeding site to Perth of Blue-breasted Fairy-Wren. Also, this area has an abundance of Rufous Treecreepers and frequently seen birds include Crested Shrike-tit, Restless Flycatcher and Western Yellow Robin.

As there will be birds breeding here, members are asked to follow BirdLife guidelines regarding nesting birds.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Clive Nealon

**Monday 23 October: Bold Park Eco
Centre, Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat
Monthly meeting, 7:30 pm**

Neil Hamilton from the Dept of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA, formerly DPaW) will give a talk on the Night Parrot.

**23-29 October—BirdLife Bird
Week/ABB Count**

See Cape to Cape report, p36, for details.

25-29 October: Carnarvon

See Wheatbelt-Avon report, p39, for details.

**Thursday 26 October: Herdsman
Lake, Stirling
Half-day excursion**

Meet at 7:30 am in the Maurice Hamer car park. Turn off Pearson Street into Falcon Avenue, then right into Lakeside Road. The car park is on the left, opposite Heron Place. This is one of the waterbird refuges which never dries up and 140 species have been recorded here. Bring your telescope if you have one.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Claire Gerrish

**Saturday 28 and Sunday 29
October: Western Australian and
National Twitchathon**

Get your twitch on! Teams race to see who can find the most species of birds in 24 hours, 12 hours and birdathon events. Funds raised support BirdLife Western Australia conservation projects.

For more information and to register contact Stewart Ford (stewartford@hotmail.com).



Peregrine Falcon, Claremont. Photo by David Free



Juvenile Brown Booby, Lacapède Island (see also p39). Photo by David Free

Sunday 29 October: Forrestdale Lake
Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am at Moore Street car park. From Perth, drive down Kwinana Freeway, turning left into Armadale Road. Continue on across Nicholson Road, then just over 1 km along turn right into Weld Street, then second left into Loftus Street, and then right into Moore Street.

There should be plenty of waterbirds, bushbirds and possibly some raptors. Over 110 bird species have been recorded here. The wildflowers should be good too.

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

For members and guests only.

Leader: David James

Saturday 4 November: Ellis Brook, Gosnells
Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am at the corner of Gosnells Road and Bygum Lane, Martin. We will walk up the steep path to the top of the falls which provides great views of the Swan Coastal Plain. It is a popular area where a variety of bushbirds can be seen, some of them not often seen near Perth, such as Red-eared Firetail, Red-winged Fairy-Wren, and Red-capped and Scarlet Robins.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Steve Burns

Sunday 5 November: Woodman Point, Cockburn
Photogroup activity

Meet at 7:30 am in the car park at Woodman Point on Jervoise Bay. Turn right off Cockburn Road, into O'Kane Court, then left into Jervoise Bay Cove, and almost immediately right into Woodman Point Road. Drive to the end of the road and take the last left to the car park.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Gary Meredith

Monday 6 November to Friday 10 November: Bremer Bay campout
Mid-week campout

The campout will be based at the Bremer Bay Beaches Resort and Tourist Park, Wellstead Road, Bremer Bay which has accommodation facilities ranging from camping and caravan sites to luxury self-contained villas. Fuel is available in the town and at Boxwood Hill.

A number of locations will be visited during the campout including Beaufort Inlet, Fitzgerald River National Park and Wellstead Estuary. Hooded Plover and Rock Parrot have been recorded at the latter. Some local farmers have kindly allowed the group access to wetland and bush areas on their land, an opportunity that is not normally available to us. We may need to negotiate thick scrub and muddy edges in some places so bring footwear and clothing that can handle the conditions. Insect repellent should also be carried. Depending upon the weather conditions, most places we plan to visit are accessible by conventional vehicles on graded gravel and/or sand tracks. Previous campouts have recorded a high number of species.

There will be a limit of 25 people, so please telephone the office on 9383 7749 to put your name on the list. When booking your accommodation at the Tourist Park (telephone 08 9837 4290) let them know you are with BirdLife Western Australia. If we get the numbers, the operators of the Tourist Park will apply a discount when you pay the remainder of your fee upon arrival. You can also contact the caravan park by e-mail on frontoffice@bremerbaybeaches.com.au.

A briefing will be held in the outdoor area of the café (subject to availability) at 5:00 pm on the Sunday evening. Bring your "best" hat for the Melbourne Cup Day lunch.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Peter Sandilands

Sunday 12 November: Ashfield Flats, Bassendean
Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am at the car park at the southern end of West Road, Bassendean. From Guildford Road turn into Colstoun Road, turn left into Haig St and right into Fisher Street. Follow Fisher Street into Reid Street and then turn right into West Road. Follow West Road to the end car park at Sandy Beach Reserve. There should be a variety of waterbirds and bushbirds.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Peter White

Saturday 18 November: Albany pelagic

Meet at Emu Point Boat Harbour, Albany, at 6:30 am for a 6:45 am departure. We will travel offshore to the edge of the continental shelf looking for a variety of albatrosses, petrels, shearwaters and other seabirds, returning to port at around 4:00 pm.

There is a limit of 18 people on the boat, and if we get enough people we will run trips on both days. The trips are run on a cost-share basis, so the cost is dependent on the number of participants—it is expected to be \$160 per person with a full boat of 18 people, increasing if the boat is not filled (e.g. estimated cost with 15 people is \$180 per person). These costs are for a single trip.

Book a place by contacting John Graff either by e-mail at jgraff2@hotmail.com (preferred) or by phone on 0424 008 179. You are welcome to book for one day only or both days.

Leaders: Dan Mantle and Plaxy Barrett

Sunday 19 November: Albany Pelagic

Details as per Albany pelagic Saturday 18 November.

**Sunday 19 November: Thomson's Lake, Cockburn
Half-day excursion**

Meet at 7:30 am in the car park on Russell Road. From Kwinana Freeway turn west into Russell Road, continue approximately 3 km to the car park on the right. If you reach Pearse Road you have gone too far. There is a good variety of bushbirds, waterbirds and perhaps a few waders. Over 120 bird species have been recorded here. Bring your telescope (if you have one) and rubber boots or old sneakers as it will be muddy.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Robyn Pickering

**Sunday 26 November: Lake McLarty, Murray
Full-day excursion**

Meet at 7:30 am at the gate into Lake McLarty Reserve. Travel on the Perth-Bunbury Highway past Pinjarra Road, turning right into Mills Road and continue for approximately 3.7 km until you see the reserve entrance gate on the right. Take your lunch, sun hat, insect repellent, water and telescopes. Wear rubber boots or old shoes as it will be muddy.

Lake McLarty is an IBA site for migratory waders so there should be a variety of waders at the lake, as well as many waterbirds and bushbirds. Note: this excursion may be moved to an alternative venue if water levels are unsuitable.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Susan Abbotts

**Monday 27 November: Bold Park Eco Centre, Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat
Monthly meeting, 7:30 pm**

Stephen Ferguson from Curtin University will give a talk on 'Fightin' females: vocal aggression in the Florida scrub-jay'.

**Thursday 30 November: Pelican Point, Crawley
Half-day excursion**

Meet at 8:00 am at the gazebo at the entrance to the reserve. This

is to the south of the Mount's Bay Sailing Club, at the end of Australia II Drive, off Hackett Drive, Crawley. Over 130 species have been recorded here. Water levels in the lagoon have increased in recent years, and there has been some revegetation work in the reserve. We will walk through the reserve, along the river and through adjacent bushland. We will look for waterbirds and bushbirds.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Charles Merriam

**Saturday 2 December: Penguin Island, Shoalwater
Photogroup activity**

Meet at the ferry terminal car park at 8:30 am to catch the 9:00 am ferry. The car park is near the corner of Arcadia Drive and Penguin Road in Shoalwater. We will photograph the Australian Pelican rookeries, Bridled Terns, Crested and Caspian Terns with young and also Pied Cormorants, which have a regular flight path conveniently close to the pier.

Members and guests only.

Leader: Richard Mazanec

**Sunday 3 December: Alfred Cove, Melville
Half-day excursion**

Meet at 7:30 am in the car park in Troy Park next to the Oval, off Burke Drive, Attadale. There should be migratory waders and waterbirds around the river, and there are always bushbirds in the park. Over 130 bird species have been recorded here. Bring your telescope if you have one.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Toni Webster

**Saturday 9 December: Lake Claremont, Swanbourne
Two-hour excursion**

Meet at 7:30 am at the Lake Claremont Golf Club car park off Davies Road, Claremont. We will look for waterbirds and bushbirds around this pleasant suburban lake.

For members and the general public.

Leader: David Free

**Sunday 10 December: Variety Pavilion, Saw Avenue, Kings Park
BirdLife WA barbecue lunch**

The end of year barbecue lunch for all members this year is at Kings Park from 12:00 to 2:00 pm at the Variety Pavilion on Saw Avenue (see p14 for map of area). Parking is available adjacent to the pavilion. Barbecues are available.

Just BYO everything and let's get together and have a great time. You could even fit in a bird walk before joining us for lunch!

All members, family and friends welcome.

**Thursday 14 December: Clarkson Reserve, Maylands
Half-day excursion**

Meet at 7:30 am in the car park on the east side of the tennis courts off Clarkson Road. Travelling away from the city on Guildford Road, turn right into Peninsula Road and follow this until you reach a T-junction with Clarkson Road. Turn left at the T-junction and travel about 200 m along Clarkson Road towards the tennis courts, and turn right to reach the parking area. Buff-banded Rail has been seen here and it should be quite a pleasant walk along the river.

For members and the general public.

Leaders: Jennifer Sumpton and Lynley Davey

**Saturday 16 December: Wearne Road, North Bannister
Full-day excursion**

Meet at 8:00 am on the corner of Wearne Road and Albany Highway. Wearne Road is on the left about 37 km south of the corner of Jarrahdale Road and Albany Highway and immediately before the sign "North Bannister 2 km". We will meet up here and then travel approximately 10 km down Wearne Road to the excursion location.

We will explore the Wandoo woodlands looking for robins, babblers and other bushbirds. After morning tea we will look at another area nearby.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Clive Nealon

Sunday 31 December: Canning River Regional Park, Wilson Half-day excursion

Meet at 7:30 am at the Kent Street Weir car park. The walk follows a 5 km circuit along the Canning River, viewing a large selection of bush and waterbirds, hopefully with sightings of the elusive Spotless Crake. Over 110 species have been recorded in this area.

For members and guests only.

Leaders: George and Pam Agar



(above left) Little Egret fishing for breakfast and (right) Australasian Grebe, *Dalrymple*. Photos by Mavis Norgard

It has been very cold down here lately, so there has not been much activity at my birdbaths, but I had one new bird there just before the end of the warm weather, an Inland Thornbill. I had been hearing a different sounding bird for several days, but I could not get a clear look at it. From its size I thought thornbill, but it wasn't making its usual sound. Eventually I caught it for a moment having a drink and I did get a photograph, good enough for identification, but not publication. I was hoping for another chance but, alas, that was its last visit.

Not much action around the lakes just yet, but come spring that area becomes a hive of activity for a variety of birds, some seasonal visitors, but many breeding.



Eastern Reef Egret, Montgomery Reef. Photo by David Free



Forest Kingfisher, Wyndham (see report, p29). Photo by Peter White

Crossword No. 32, answers

ACROSS

evict, 3 swivel, 5 non-passerines, 9 review, 10 tear, 11 call, 13 site, 15 deter, 16 Arctic, 18 pilfer, 21 Bremer Bay, 23 treaty, 24 sandals.

DOWN

1 evolution, 2 describe, 3 swerve, 4 lesser, 6 onerous, 7 parasitic, 8 newsletter, 12 art, 14 reports, 16 avid, 17 table, 19 learn, 20 cows, 22 eat.

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Calendar of events

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7/2017

- Sun 3 Sep:** Paruna Sanctuary, Full-day excursion
Sat 9 Sep: Lake Leschenaultia, Chidlow, Half-day excursion
9-10 Sep: Cunderdin Shire
Tue 12 Sep: Albany Branch excursion
Thu 14 Sep: Star Swamp, North Beach, Stirling, Half-day excursion
Sat 16 Sep: John Forrest National Park, Mundaring, Half-day excursion
16 Sep: Ferguson Valley
Sun 17 Sep: Dryandra, Cuballing Shire, Photogroup activity
Mon 18 Sep: Bold Park Eco Centre, Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat, Monthly meeting
20-23 Sep: Kukerin
Sat 23 Sep: Yallingup, Half-day excursion
23-24 Sep: Latham-Perenjori Shire
Sun 1 Oct: Lake Joondalup, Joondalup, Half-day excursion
Mon 2 Oct to Sat 7 Oct: Mount Gibson Wildlife Sanctuary survey
Fri 6 Oct to Sun 8 Oct: Augusta campout
Sat 7 Oct: Bold Park, Floreat, Half-day excursion
14 Oct: Margaret River Agricultural Show
Sat 14 Oct: John Oldham Park, Photogroup activity
Sun 15 Oct: Bibra Lake, Cockburn, Half-day excursion
Sat 21 Oct: Collins Road, Flint, Half-day excursion
Mon 23 Oct: Bold Park Eco Centre, Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat, Monthly meeting
23-29 Oct: BirdLife Bird Week/ABB Count
25-29 Oct: Carnarvon
Thu 26 Oct: Herdsman Lake, Stirling, Half-day excursion
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Members in the field



Nalbarra campout (see report, p41). Photos by John McMullan



Eyre Bird Observatory (see report, p46): (above) Pink-eared Duck. Photo by Bill Dolence

(below) Pacific Gull. Photo by Tanya Dolence



(right) CDR Course participants with leader, Tegan Douglas at far left, Charles Darwin Reserve, White Wells Station (see report, p13). Photo by Sally Read



Silver-backed Butcherbird, Wyndham (see report, p29). Photo by Peter White



Nalbarra campout: (above) Mulga Parrots by John Baas and (right) female Bourke's Parrot by Alan Watson (see report, p41).



Whistling Kite, Lake Goolelal (see report, p41). Photo by Carolyn Mynott



Crimson Finch, Wyndham (see report, p29). Photo by Peter White

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