

Western Australian Bird Notes

Quarterly Newsletter of the Western Australian
Branch of BirdLife Australia

No. 157 March 2016



NB: The guest speaker at our March meeting will be talking on the Perth and Peel Green Growth Plan. Submissions close on 8 April. See page 33 for details.



Male Mugimaki Flycatcher, Cocos Island. Photo by Bill Moorehead (see report, p27)



White Tern, Cocos Island (see report, p27). Photo by Pam Jones



Common Kingfisher, Cocos Island. Photo by Geof Christie (see report, p27)



(above left) Australian Bustard, (above centre) Straw-necked Ibis and (above right) Bar-tailed Godwit, Eyre. Photos by Alan Pilkington (see report, p50)



White-necked Heron, Lake Kogolup. Photo by John McMullan



Australasian Grebe, Lake Claremont. Photo by David Free (see report, p46)



Laughing Dove, Waterford. Photo by John McMullan

Front cover: Mt Gardner, south coast, December 2015 (see report, page 4). Photo by Sarah Comer

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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

The Editors request contributors to note:

- WABN publishes material of interest to the WA Branch;
- contributions should be written or typed with double spacing—a copy on disk or emailed would assist, especially if in MSWord as a document without styles; do not embed pictures or graphics in MS Word;
- contributions to be sent direct to the Editors, either at the office or by email:

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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- WABN is not peer reviewed

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June 2016 issue: 1 May
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December 2016 issue: 1 November
March 2017 issue: 1 February

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 2016

Results of the annual elections on 22 February 2016

Chair: Dr Michael Bamford

Vice Chair: vacant

Secretary: Dr Kathryn Napier

Treasurer: Frank O'Connor

Committee: Mark Henryon, Keith Lightbody, Suzanne Mather, Paul Netscher, Blair Parsons, Jennifer Sumpton and Sandra Wallace (two vacancies).



White-winged Stilt (5 weeks old), Lake Claremont. Photo by David Free (see also pp2,46)

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A CATASTROPHIC START TO THE FIRE SEASON FOR THREATENED BIRDS ON THE SOUTH COAST

In the last few months of 2015, a series of lightning strikes along the south coast started several bushfires that have had significant impact on the habitat of a number of threatened birds across the region, including the Western Ground Parrot, Noisy Scrub-bird, Western Bristlebird, Western Whipbird and Australasian Bittern.

In mid-October lightning strikes started three separate bushfires in Cape Arid National Park. Two of these burnt over 15 000 ha of the Park, and impacted significantly on the known ground parrot habitat, and one of the core areas that the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW) team had been hoping to target to catch birds to supplement

the group of birds at Perth Zoo. Despite this setback the project team, assisted by volunteers, were able to locate enough birds in listening sessions to proceed with the capture work.

The work was slowed by some very strong winds, but despite this, two birds, a young female and a male, were caught in the first few days of the capture work, and Matt Ricci from Perth Zoo was able to oversee the safe transfer of these two birds to their new home. Capture efforts had to be called off when lightning strikes resulted in more ignitions in mid-November. The two fires in Cape Arid NP burnt through over 150 000 ha of the Park and in combination with the October fires resulted in 90% of the known ground parrot habitat being lost. Monitoring equipment was also impacted during the fires, with automated recording units (ARUs) and other equipment lost. Following these fires only two areas where birds were found in November remained unburnt.

Since November the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW) team have retrieved some of the ARUs that were deployed after the October fires and conducted surveys of the two unburnt pockets. ARUs have been redeployed through unburnt habitat surrounding the fires, and these will be collected in March for review. A small number of birds were heard in an unburnt patch between the fires in early February (2016), which is encouraging. (See also the article by Anne Bondin, on page 20 of this issue, for further information and details on future monitoring).

DPaW also conducted an emergency delivery of the feral cat bait *Eradicat*® in December, and the IFRP team have recently trapped around the unburnt pockets of ground parrot habitat. Ten feral cats were removed.

Australasian Bittern habitat was also impacted by fires in the Merivale area, east of Esperance. The Big Boom wetland, which has been one of the hotspots of activity for this species in recent years, and surrounding wetlands were burnt during the November fires. Both water and bittern monitoring equipment in the wetlands was lost in these fires, and the extent of the impact on bittern habitat is still unknown. Work by DPaW's Alan Clark in

January found signs of bittern activity in Big Boom, and ARUs have been redeployed to monitor this site.

Further west, the November fires had a major impact on the habitat of Noisy Scrub-birds, Western Bristlebirds and Western Whipbirds on Mt Gardner, in Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve. The Mt Gardner headland, where scrub-birds were rediscovered in 1961, was struck by lightning in the storm system that ran though Cape Arid a few days



Mt Gardner, south coast, December 2015. Photo by Sarah Comer

later. Despite a significant effort over several days, the Mt Gardner fire burnt through most of the long unburnt vegetation on the hill with over 90% of the habitat for scrub-birds, bristlebirds and whipbirds lost. Fortunately, there are good numbers of scrub-birds in the Manypeaks area and on Bald Island as a result of the translocation program begun in the 1980s. However, the Mt Gardner population is believed to have held the greatest genetic variation, as it was the place where the species was rediscovered in 1961, but the impact of this fire on the genetic health of the scrub-bird population is unknown.

Significant thought has already gone into plans and actions for the recovery of these birds, as well as for other affected species, such as Gilbert's Potoroo and several plant species. As mentioned above, predator control and population monitoring of threatened species is already under way at both Cape Arid and Two Peoples Bay. (See also the note by Anne Bondin about ground parrot surveys in this issue of WABN.) This work will

A catastrophic start to the fire season for threatened birds on the south coast, ctd

continue through the year, at a level determined by available resources. The optimum time to survey scrub-birds, bristlebirds and whipbirds is in winter-spring, so we are hoping to carry out more intensive surveys for them at that time, so that we can best plan for future recovery actions.

The extent of habitat loss for the Western Ground Parrot is potentially catastrophic — we are just hoping that we don't have more fires in Cape Arid this summer, or even in the next year or two because, if we do, Western Ground Parrots may be forced into a very tight population bottleneck. Because of this dire situation, in late March, the DPaW, in conjunction with the South Coast Threatened Birds Recovery Team, and with support from the Friends of the Western Ground Parrot and BirdLife Australia, will coordinate a workshop of experts from a range of conservation disciplines to develop recommendations for emergency actions to ensure a safer future for the Western Ground Parrot.

Whatever we decide though, there are likely to be ongoing challenges. The fire at Mt Gardner was the largest in that area for many decades, perhaps for centuries. It follows decades of declining rainfall, and the driest Albany winter since records began in 1877 — only 244 mm of rainfall fell in June, July and August 2015, compared with the long-term average of 402 mm for these months. As a result, this fire burnt gullies that normally would be too damp to burn. As this drying trend continues, fire risk, and probably fire intensity and frequency, will increase and we will need to be increasingly vigilant and better informed in relation to fire management. We will also need to continue to improve our ability to control introduced predators, to give our threatened birds the best chance of recolonising after such severe fire events. Addressing these challenges will require coordinated and collaborative efforts between government and non-government organisations and individuals — it is only through such collaborations that enough resources and skills will be brought to bear on the challenges that confront these birds.

Sarah Comer and Allan Burbidge

BirdLife WA is supporting this proposed workshop with a donation of \$5000. BWA is in the unusual position of having been approached by the Department of Parks and Wildlife Senior Zoologist, Manda Page, and the Senior Research Officer responsible for DPaW's Western Ground Parrot programme, Allan Burbidge, to assist in supporting a crisis workshop that will determine the fate of the species. This could be seen as an honour, a sign of the respect with which we are held, and is precisely why we have to be careful with our money; so we can provide assistance when it is most needed.

Donations and bequests 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 for this purpose.

Donations will then be held in an 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. The details of this will be decided by the Executive Committee, guided by the finance policy of the branch.

Bequests can also be made specifically for the branch with the same process.

**Mike Bamford
Chair**

THE PASSING OF MARGERY CLEGG

17 April 1922 – 14 January 2016

Margery used to walk around Blue Gum Lake every morning before work and noticed there was more than one kind of duck! She became a member of the RAOU in 1983 and became friends with another member, Norma Duff, who lived nearby and they regularly went birdwatching together.

Margery made a significant contribution to birdwatching in Western Australia over a period of about 30 years. She quietly worked behind the scenes, typing the Excursions Committee notes for many years and until very recently, remained our final editor for the excursions entry into *WA Bird Notes*. She developed an archive of all excursions and campouts since 1982, a valuable resource for those who followed. She was an office volunteer for 20 years.

Margery's memory of events and knowledge of bird calls was legendary and the 'go to' person on an excursion or campout when a mystery call was heard. She was always very approachable and many people within BirdLife WA, myself included, owe much of their knowledge and enthusiasm to Margery's influence.

Travelling widely within Australia to bird watch with Bryan Barrett or her family, Margery and her campervan was well known to the birding community. It was on a campout to Cheynes Beach in 2010 that she saw the Noisy Scrub-bird, her 600th bird and only three years ago her 601st bird, a Painted Snipe at North Lake, and all this without visiting the outlying islands of Australia. She was a regular visitor to Alfred Cove and recently went there birdwatching.

Margery was a lifelong yoga regular and loved going to the beach and these activities kept her fit for most of her life. She was 93 years old when she passed away and is remembered with great fondness by those who had the privilege of going birding with her.

Sue Abbotts

What does one say about Margery Clegg? Well the first thing was that she had a fantastic memory and attention to detail, particularly with technical skills, be it mobile phones or computers, etc, which left many far younger astounded including me. She remained an avid birdwatcher until her early 90s. Her daughters Jenny (Pura) and Sue are both keen birdwatchers and so too is Sue's son who helped me while I was guiding at Werribee Sewerage works in Victoria many years ago, so the love of birds runs in the family.

When I took Margery to Africa, I was amazed how much knowledge she retained and would delight telling me her highlights at the end of each day, such was her joy and energy with every brand new day.

I would see her regularly on her way down to South Beach, Fremantle for her swim with the family or play with her great grandchildren, which she did well into her early nineties.

Over the years she did so much as a volunteer for BirdLife Australia. She will be missed by her daughters and son. As Pura said to me, "There's going to be a huge gap in our lives".

We all will miss you Margery.

Simon Nevill



Australian Pratincole,
Nambeelup Settling
Ponds (see report,
p48). Photo by Alan
Watson

Quality of digital photographs

IMPORTANT —PLEASE READ!

When submitting photos for use in WABN, please send a high quality image, eg, 300 dpi, **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.



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Australia Day Honours: Brice Wells, OAM

Congratulations to Brice Wells on his recent award. The citation is:

Mr Neville Brice WELLS, Berkshire Road, Forrestfield WA 6058. For service to conservation and the environment, particularly ornithology.

Service includes:

Community Liaison Officer, BirdLife Western Australia, since 2001 and Founding Chair, Community Education Committee, since 2002 and Chair, Excursion Committee, 2003-2004. Member, BirdLife Australia, since 1981, involved in the establishment of Broome Bird Observatory. Northern Territory Vetting Officer, Atlas of Australian Birds, 1997-2000. Minister, a range of congregations, Churches of Christ in Western Australia, 1960s-1980s. Awards and recognition include: Recipient, Volunteer of the Year Award, BirdLife Western Australia, 2006. Recipient, Distinguished Service Award, BirdLife Australia, 2015.

This seems so little and so short considering how many things that Brice has been involved in over an extended period of time.

I first met Brice and his wife Gail at Broome Bird Observatory in July 1990. Their enthusiasm was infectious and my decision to be a birder was locked in, especially for shorebirds. Brice volunteers for everything (maybe too much sometimes!!). He has been the driving force behind the Community Education Committee that he formed for BirdLife Western Australia, and now with Rod Smith they make an extraordinary effort. If that wasn't enough for the award, then his community service in many others areas would also be deserving. He likes to say that he could talk about birds under water with a mouth full of marbles. I think that even then you would still be fascinated.

Frank O'Connor



Among the 2016 Australia Day awards is one granted to one of BirdLife Australia's notable local members, Brice Wells. He received the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM), in the General Division.

A keen birder since his childhood days, Brice has taken every opportunity to pursue his passion, especially when it involved the promotion of those interests to the general public. It was no surprise, then, that he and Gail took on the task of working as wardens at Eyre Bird Observatory. Through much of its life the observatory has been a struggle to maintain, let alone become the attractive venue for those with environmental interests, that it is today. However, the attraction for Brice and Gail was the struggle; the rewards were chiefly the achievements that they could create at this important outpost.

More than a year at Eyre was encouragement enough to set them off in 1988 to create Broome Bird Observatory. Not a job for the faint-hearted. Three years of back-breaking work and negotiating skill eventually established another important observatory, this time in a world-renowned migratory bird habitat.

Brice and Gail lived on in northern Australian locations, Brice taking on roles in a range of bird-related studies, contributing to Bird Atlas surveys and leading bird tours and walks.

On their return to Perth there was no rest. Brice became a member of (now BirdLife WA's) executive committee and established and chaired its Community Education Committee. That involved, and still does, spreading the word to the public through displays, slide shows and school visits.

Brice asserts that he intends to slow down. As a close associate and friend, I don't see much evidence of that yet. With his tactful team spirit and clear sense of purpose he'll keep going while there's an ounce of energy.

Congratulations, Brice. Your OAM is well-deserved.

Rod Smith

Letters to the Editors

Dear Editors

Appreciation

I would like to thank all who helped me after I broke my left ankle on the excursion to Wellard on Saturday, 23 January. Charles Merriam (leader), Clive Nealon and another man carried me to a shaded area, where three nurses attended to me while waiting for the ambulance to arrive. I was impressed with the efficiency, calmness and good humour shown by all. My mishap demonstrated that the registration system in place for excursions is robust and functions exactly as it should.

Ian Abbott

Dear Editors

Birds flying into glass

Libby McGill (Letters 156:9) comments on birds flying into glass doors. During daylight this happens because the inside of a house is darker than the outside and the open area through which a bird is flying is reflected in the glass. So the bird thinks it has a clear flyway in front of it until it hits the glass.

I have also noticed that when Laughing Doves crash into glass doors or windows a residue of powder down is usually left on the glass.

Robert Stranger

Letters to the Editors, ctd

Dear Editors

Photography of nesting birds

I am writing to highlight an issue that is of great concern to me — the photography of nesting birds. I am a member of the BirdLife Australia Photography committee and we are in the process of updating our policy on the non-publication of nesting bird images. It should be available on our website shortly for those interested, but in the meantime I would like to highlight the main concerns.

Birds are in a daily fight for survival. Any injury or stress-induced illness will almost certainly result in death. Predators are everywhere; breeding is competitive and finding food imperative.

Nesting is the most *critical*, and *stressful* time in a bird's life. Nesting is not just about the bird in question. It is crucial to the survival of the bird species.

Our climate is changing and habitat is being cleared at a relentless rate. In contrast, the number of bird photographers has increased phenomenally. The actions of photographers cannot be viewed in isolation. The more photographers there are, the greater the potential for damage. The effects must be regarded as *cumulative*.

I have no doubt that bird lovers who photograph nests do so with the best intentions. However, sometimes, the effect of disturbing a nest is not immediately obvious. For instance, you might draw attention to beach nesting birds, which are particularly vulnerable as they rely on camouflage as their only protection. The predator will only act after you have left the area. Another example is that you might leave a dead end scent trail that could lead predators, such as cats and foxes, to a nest. Experience in Australia and elsewhere reveals that photographing nesting birds involves three main risks:

1. *Accidental/deliberate damage*

Photographers (and birders) not keeping an appropriate distance from nesting birds. In particular, taking action that:

- ☐ damages or tramples vegetation that exposes nests;
- ☐ startles a bird, which may cause it to accidentally knock eggs from the nest or scare young;
- ☐ incorporates 'gardening' the area around the nest by removing branches or other objects that might block a clear view of the nest, thus increasing the exposure of the nesting birds to the weather and to predation; and/or
- ☐ modifies the nest or its approaches in order to force the bird into a more photogenic position.

2. *Desertion/Stress*

Some bird species are more prone to stress and nest desertion than others. The sensitivity of individual birds within a species may also vary widely. When a bird is exposed to prolonged stress, it is vulnerable to disease. Photographers can cause stress, damage or nest desertion by:

- ☐ lingering too long in a bird's core territory;
- ☐ visiting nests in early mornings, or dusk or during inclement weather when any desertion by a parent might result in the eggs/young becoming cold;
- ☐ using call playback in the vicinity of a nesting bird which causes the bird to leave the nest to respond to the playback; and/or
- ☐ using flash on a nesting bird.

3. *Attracting predators*

Photographers may inadvertently attract predators (such as cats, foxes, raptors, corvids, butcherbirds, magpies, currawongs, etc) in one or more of the following ways:

- ☐ approaching too close to an active nest;
- ☐ showing undue attention to an otherwise well-camouflaged nest (eg birds nesting on the beach or in dense foliage); and/or
- ☐ walking to the nest and back along the same path, leaving a dead-end trail.

Furthermore, in some places in Australia disturbing or interfering with nests is prohibited specifically by legislation.

At BirdLife Photography, we have decided not to allow publication of nesting birds because experience has shown that publishing such images encourages other photographers to take similar photos. We do recognise, however, that nesting bird images may have value for research and conservation purposes and as such we maintain a restricted nesting bird image library that is not for public viewing but may be accessed by request to the Committee.

I encourage WABN to adopt a similar policy.

Georgina Steytler

Carnamah, Inering Hills

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Book review

**KH COATE & LH MERRITT
2015, 'FINCH TRAPPING IN
THE KIMBERLEY: A HISTORY
COMMERCIAL FINCH TRAPPING
IN THE KIMBERLEY DIVISION OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA.' HESPERIAN
PRESS, CARLISLE WA. 390 PP. \$85**

Western Australia has been well-examined in terms of ornithological history, particularly by Wilfred Alexander (discovery of bird species from 1629 to 1840), Hubert Whittell (birds discovered from 1629 to 1921), Clemency Fisher (John Gilbert's visits in 1839-40 & 1842-43), and Ron Johnstone (growth of the bird collection in the Western Australian Museum). This book is an impressive addition to this scholarly tradition.

Land-based exploration of the Kimberley hinterland by Europeans began in 1879 with Alexander Forrest. The Kimberley became famous in 1885 when gold was discovered there. Then pastoralists from eastern Australia settled. The bird fauna became known to Europeans from 1885. By c. 1897 trapping of finches had become an unregulated industry. This was first rectified in 1902.

This book documents in exhaustive detail, the trappers involved, how they operated, assistance provided by Aborigines, how the WA government regulated the industry, questionable practices, the avicultural market which provided the ongoing demand (until 1986), and the retail traders in Perth, eastern Australia, and overseas.

The authors seem to have perused every relevant government file lodged in the State Records Office of Western Australia. Their research is well referenced in 1165 endnotes. Also effectively utilised is the electronic file of newspapers available at the Trove website.

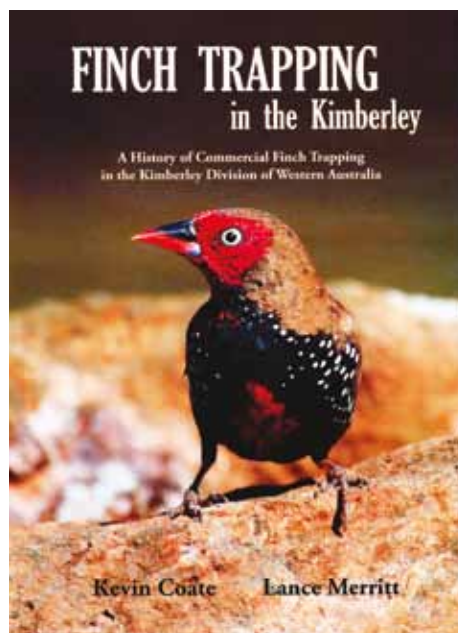
Eighteen finch species occur in northern Australia, 11 of which are present in the Kimberley region. All were subject to trapping, although the most beautifully-coloured species were favoured as these brought the highest financial rewards. The greatest number was trapped in 1958 (c. 39,000). Trapping took place between September and December when fledglings became independent of their parents and diminishing water supplies forced birds to drink at fewer sources, facilitating their capture. Demand for finches was driven by aviculturists.

Despite these grim facts, the impact of trapping was probably limited because access to all waterholes was difficult until motorised transport became established. It was also in the interests of trappers to care properly for the birds they trapped. The creation of the Ord River

Dam in 1972 provided a large permanent water body that made it difficult to trap. Some of the grains grown commercially proved attractive to several finch species.

The WA government did not take on the spot regulation seriously until 1967, when a fauna protection officer was appointed in the Kimberley region. No real effort, however, was ever made to estimate the population sizes of the different species.

WA lagged behind the Northern Territory and Queensland, which prohibited finch trapping in the 1970s, some 15 years before WA did (in 1986). In WA, trapping of the Yellow-rumped Mannikin ceased in 1975, and that of the Gouldian Finch in 1981.



To me, the most outrageous involvement of the WA government was through the Perth Zoo (established in 1898). It sold surplus finches for profit and abused its privileged position as a government institution to circumvent the prohibition of commercial finch exports by the Commonwealth Government in 1911 and for educational or scientific purposes in 1932. It did this by stating that exports were for exchange purposes. This book also brings to attention other dubious practices that today would be considered official corruption, as well as maladministration by incompetent licensing clerks. An early critic of finch trapping was Daisy Bates, who brought attention to the cruelty involved and the large numbers of birds dying en-route to Europe.

However, she also proposed the crackpot idea of releasing Kimberley finches in Kings Park and elsewhere in the south-west!

It was not until the late 1940s and early 1950s that public support for the cessation of finch trapping began to grow. The RSPCA, RAOU (a predecessor to BirdLife), Gould League, and the Western Australian Naturalists Club did their best.

With hindsight, it is clear that the industry should have been put on a better footing, with a more expensive fee required to attain a license, requirements for trappers to list the species and numbers of specimens trapped, a per specimen levy to fund a research program to estimate finch numbers each year, a royalty to be paid on each bird trapped, improved control of exports, limiting the supply of trapped finches so that aviculture became based solely on captive-bred stock, and stronger advocacy by the relevant government departments to the Minister about approving the licensing of trappers. The various departments that administered the regulations generally showed a mere passive interest in the matter, with minimal forward (strategic) thinking. We owe the closure of finch trapping to Minister Barry Hodge, who forced the issue.

Of special interest to me are historical reports of epizootics at 3-4 or 10 yearly intervals, although the

Book review, ctd

possibility of special pleading cannot be discounted (i.e. The birds would have died from disease anyway, so why not let me trap them?).

I have only two criticisms of this excellent book. First, the index is not adequate, and does not attain the usual standard of Hesperian Press. For example, numerous interesting items caught my eye (Princess Parrot, other bird species trapped, animals in Aboriginal diets, Ernestine Hill) but are not indexed. Second, the book

needs a concluding synthesis (?5000 words) that draws together all the threads of detailed information, dates and statistics presented into several coherent themes. The authors should consider doing this and publishing it in a suitable journal (*Western Australian Naturalist* or *Australian Zoologist*).

Ian Abbott

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 number of unusual records were received this quarter, led by the first Australian record of **Temminck's**



Narcissus Flycatcher, Cocos Island (see also pp2,11,27). Photo by Bill Moorehead

Stint found at Lake Eda near Broome in late November 2015, remaining there until Christmas Eve. Also near Broome, the long-staying **Eurasian Curlew** made several appearances on the north shore of Roebuck Bay in late October and early November. In the south, **Oriental (Crested) Honey-Buzzards** reappeared at Lake Joondalup in November, and have remained present into January, with three individuals recorded. Also at Lake Joondalup, an **Intermediate Egret** reported from late December into January is now thought to be an Asian bird of the subspecies *intermedia* based on the extensive dark bill tip, proportionally long neck and short and deep-based bill. This subspecies is split as a separate species by BirdLife International. A breeding plumaged **Little Stint** was also found during a wader count at Morley Beach on Wilson Inlet near Denmark, while at least one **Gallinago** sp. snipe seen at North Lake has been confidently identified as a **Latham's**, which would represent the third record of the species for WA. Returning north, a single **White-throated Needle-tail** seen near Exmouth is one of the few well-documented records of the species in Western Australia in recent years.

An **Australasian Bittern** was photographed at Lake Joondalup — the species has become very rare near Perth in recent decades. Records of both **Common Noddy** and **Sooty Tern** on Penguin Island suggest these species may be continuing to expand their range southwards. **Masked Lapwings** continue to move in the opposite direction around the

coast, with a pair now resident at Yanchep for over a year, following on from their establishment around Esperance with a couple of pairs near Denmark and Albany.

On the external territories, an excellent trip to Ashmore Reef in October produced **Pechora Pipit**, **Middendorff's Grasshopper-Warbler**, and a first record of **Pied Honeyeater** for the reef, while a December visit produced two **Narcissus Flycatchers**. The previously reported **Common Moorhen** and **Common Kingfisher** continued to be reported on Cocos through much of the reporting period, and were joined by a **Chinese Pond Heron**. Late November and December also produced an amazing flurry of vagrant flycatchers, with **Dark-sided**, **Grey-streaked**, **Narcissus**, **Blue-and-White** and **Mugimaki Flycatchers** all recorded! The long-



Masked Lapwing, Yanchep National Park. Photo by Ken Glasson

Observations, ctd

staying **Eurasian Teal** also remained present on Cocos, but is no longer being reported in Observations.

METROPOLITAN (UBD STREET DIRECTORY)

Fork-tailed Swift – 2, 08/01/16, Yanchep National Park (Yanchep) – CN (uncommon migrant to the south-west)

Wedge-tailed Shearwater – 1, 16/11/15, Nairns (Coodanup) – CL (rare inland)

ORIENTAL HONEY-BUZZARD – 1-3 adult males, 15/11/15-01/01/16, Lake Joondalup (Joondalup/Wanneroo/Woodvale) – FO, JH *et al.* (rare vagrant to Australia; subject to BARC acceptance; photographs)

Spotted Harrier – 1, 13/11/15, airfield (Rottnest Island) – DL (rare visitor to Rottnest Island; photographs)

Australasian Bittern – 1, 28/12/15, Lake Joondalup (Wanneroo) – DMc (very rare in the metropolitan area; photographs)

Intermediate Egret – 1, 16/12/15 & 01/01/16, Lake Joondalup South (Woodvale) – MS & WM * 1 probable subspecies *intermedia*, 10/10/16, Lake Joondalup (Wanneroo) – MC & JG (1st record of Asian taxon in Australia; photographs; all records here suspected to involve the same bird)

Hooded Plover – 1 juvenile, 26/10/15, Nairns (Coodanup) – CL * 1, 10/01/16, Two Rocks Beach (Two Rocks) – IP (rare visitor to the metropolitan area)

Masked Lapwing – 2 subspecies *novaehollandiae*, present throughout quarter, Yanchep NP (Yanchep) – CN, KG *et al.* (rare in the Perth area; photographs; see also previous issues of WABN)

Gallinago sp. Snipe – 2, one Latham's and second possible Latham's, 13-17/12/15, North Lake (North Lake) – CL *et al.* (*Gallinago* sp. snipes rare in the south-west, 3rd record of Latham's Snipe in Western Australia, photographs)

Common Noddy – 3, 08/01/16, Penguin Island (Shoalwater) – MB (south of usual range)

Sooty Tern – 1, 23/11/15, Penguin Island (Shoalwater) – MN (south of usual range)

Gull-billed Tern – 2 subspecies *macrotarsa*, 10/10/15, Nairns (Coodanup) – VS (rare visitor to the Perth area; photographs)

Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater – 1, 29/10/15, Paganoni Swamp (Golden Bay) – MN (rare visitor to the Swan Coastal Plain; photographs)

SOUTH WEST (SHARK BAY TO CAPE ARID)

Fork-tailed Swift – 1, 08/01/16, Bluff Knoll, Stirling Range (Gnowangerup) – MN (uncommon migrant to the south-west)

LITTLE STINT – 1 in breeding plumage, 08/01/16, Wilson Inlet (Denmark) – SE (rarely reported migrant; photographs)

Oriental Pratincole – 1, 10-11/12/15, Benger Swamp (Harvey) – RP *et al.* * 1, 18-20/12/15, Nambeelup Settlement Ponds (Murray) – KM *et al.* (rare migrant)

ARID ZONE

Flock Bronzewing – 830, 10/01/2015, Urala Causeway, Ashburton River (Ashburton) – RT & MO (uncommon in the Pilbara)

WHITE-THROATED NEEDLETAIL – 1, 11/01/15, Wapet Creek (Exmouth) – JW (rarely reported in Western Australia)

Baillon's Crane – 1, 07/01/16, Barrow Island (Ashburton) – via WAM (first record for Barrow Island)

Little Ringed Plover – 1-2, 21/12/15-07/01/15, Chinaman Pool (Carnarvon) – LG *et al.* (rare migrant to Western Australia)

KIMBERLEY

Red Goshawk – 1, 06/10/15, Lake Argyle entrance road (Wyndham-East Kimberley) – MN, NB *et al.* (rarely reported in Western Australia)

Semipalmated Plover – 1, present throughout Nov 15 – Jan 16, Broome sewage ponds (Broome) – BBO *et al.* (vagrant to Australia; photographs; records of this individual accepted by BARC)

Little Ringed Plover – 1, 21/10-24/12/15, Lake Eda (Broome) – BBO *et al.* (rare migrant to Western Australia; photographs)

EURASIAN CURLEW – 1, late 10/15-12/11/15, north shore of Roebuck Bay (Broome) – BBO *et al.* (rare vagrant to Western Australia; records of this individual accepted by BARC; see also WABN 155)

TEMMINCK'S STINT – 1, 29/11-24/12/15, Lake Eda (Broome) – CGM *et al.* (1st record for Australia; subject to BARC acceptance; photographs)

Ruff – 1, 30/10/15, Lake Champion (Broome) – BBO (rare migrant to Western Australia; photographs)

ISLAND MONARCH – 1, late 10/15, Browse Island (Wyndham-East Kimberley) – RC *et al.* (vagrant to Western Australia; subject to BARC acceptance)

Arctic Warbler – 1, late 10/15, Browse Island (Wyndham-East Kimberley) – RC *et al.* (rare migrant to Western Australia; subject to BARC acceptance)

Arctic-type Warbler – 2, late 10/15, Browse Island (Wyndham-East Kimberley) – RC *et al.* (not heard to call; all Arctic-types rare migrants to Western Australia)

ASHMORE REEF

ABBOTT'S BOOBY – 1, late 10/15, at sea between Broome & Ashmore Reef – RC *et al.* (rarely reported away from Christmas Island)

Pied Honeyeater – 1, late 10/15, West Island – RC *et al.* (1st

Observations, ctd

record for Ashmore Reef;
photographs)

Arctic-type Warbler – 2, late 10/15, West Island – RC *et al.* (rare migrant to Australian territory, not heard to call)

Middendorff's Grasshopper-Warbler – 2, late 10/15, West Island – RC *et al.* (vagrant to Australian territory, subject to BARC acceptance; photographs)

NARCISSUS FLYCATCHER – 2, early 12/15, West Island – GC & JH (3rd record for Australia; subject to BARC acceptance; photographs)

PECHORA PIPIT – 1, late 10/15, West Island – RC *et al.* (vagrant to Australian territory, subject to BARC acceptance; photographs)

CHRISTMAS ISLAND

VON SCHRENK'S BITTERN – 1, mid 12/15, Christmas Island – RB *et al.* (rare vagrant to Australian territory; subject to BARC acceptance; photographs)

COCOS (KEELING) ISLANDS

COMMON MOORHEN – 1 subspecies *indicus*, throughout Oct-Dec 15, Becek Besar – GC *et al.* (rare vagrant to Australian territory; subject to BARC acceptance; photographs; see also WABN 157)

Chinese Pond Heron – 1, throughout Oct-Dec 15, Airstrip – GC *et al.* (rare visitor to Australian territory; subject to BARC acceptance)

SLATY-BREASTED RAIL – 1, 26/11/15, West Island – via WAM (1st record for Australian territory; subject to BARC acceptance; photographs)

COMMON KINGFISHER – 1, Oct-Dec 15, various locations on West Island (rare vagrant to Australian territory; subject to BARC acceptance; photographs; see also WABN 157)

CROW-BILLED DRONGO – 1, 6-13/12/15, Home Island – GC *et al.* (1st record for Australian territory; subject to BARC acceptance; photographs)

NARCISSUS FLYCATCHER – 1, 28/11/15, Home Island – GC & PJ * 1, 30/11/15, Oceana House – GC & PJ * 1, 07/12/15, Home Island – GC *et al.* (rare vagrant to Australian territory; subject to BARC acceptance; photographs)

BLUE-AND-WHITE FLYCATCHER – 1, 23-25/11/15, Oceana House – GC & PJ (rare vagrant to Australian territory; subject to BARC acceptance)

GREY-STREAKED FLYCATCHER – 1, 24/11/15, near Home Island Jetty (rare vagrant to Australian territory; subject to BARC acceptance; photographs)

DARK-SIDED FLYCATCHER – 1, 13-15/11/15, West Island High School – GC & PJ (rare vagrant to Australian territory; subject to BARC acceptance; photographs)

MUGIMAKI FLYCATCHER – 2, 11/12/15, Trannies Beach – GC & PJ (rare vagrant to Australian territory; subject to BARC acceptance; photographs)

EYEBROWED THRUSH – up to 2, 19-30/12/15, various locations on West Island – GC & PJ (rare vagrant to Australian territory; subject to BARC acceptance; photographs)

Arctic Warbler – 1, 07/12/15, Home Island – GC *et al.* (rare migrant to Australian territory, subject to BARC acceptance)

OBSERVER

BBO = Broome Bird Observatory
CGM = Clare & Grant Morton
CL = Craig Lester
CN = Clive Nealon
DL = David Letham
DMc = Daniel McKeon
FO = Frank O'Connor
GC = Geoffrey Christie
IP = Ian Pibworth
JG = John Graff
JH = John Harris
JW = Jordan Webber
KG = Ken Glasson
KM = Ken Monson
LG = Les George
MB = Mark Binns
MC = Martin Cake
MN = Mark Newman
MO = Margot Oorebeek
MS = Mark Stanley
NB = Nick Brown
PJ = Pam Jones
RB = Richard Baxter
RC = Rohan Clarke
RP = Robyn Pickering
RT = Ray Turnbull
SE = Steve Elson
WAM = WA Museum
WM = Wayne Merritt
VS = Vicki Stokes



Rufous Fieldwren, Nilgen Lookout, Lancelin. Photo by Alan Watson

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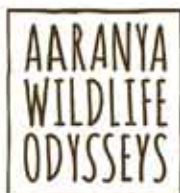
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Lifeline for shorebirds in Cairns

The shorebirds of Cairns have been thrown a lifeline. After advocacy from local environment groups, including BirdLife North Queensland, the Cairns Regional Council recognised the importance of the intertidal mudflats along The Esplanade in Cairns, admitting that its 'sand nourishment exercises' disrupted the ecology of the mudflats, and announcing it will work to sustain this prime habitat.

The Esplanade's status as a shorebird hot-spot had been jeopardised after large quantities of sand were deposited along the foreshore, affecting the shorebird feeding areas.

A vital link in the East Asia–Australasian Flyway, the Esplanade has the only food-rich area of mudflats between Cape York and Townsville, forming an internationally significant site for thousands of migratory shorebirds.

Duck season goes ahead in Victoria

With south-eastern Australia in drought, ducks have flocked to Victoria's rapidly drying wetlands because there's nowhere else for them to go, but they'll find little refuge with the 2016 duck-shooting season given the go-ahead.

BirdLife Australia has urged the Victorian Government to cancel this year's duck-shooting season.

One of the Government's criteria for closing wetlands to shooting is to provide refuge for waterbirds during drought — the 2007 and 2008 duck-shooting seasons were cancelled on environmental grounds, and the conditions in Victoria's wetlands are worse now than they were back then.

Surveys have indicated that waterbird abundance is the second lowest on record and breeding is at a record low.

Critically Endangered parrots eaten by rats

With just a few dozen birds left in the wild, the Orange-bellied Parrot needs all the help it can get. Over the past few years, that help has been in the form of a captive-breeding program to increase the population and release birds back into the wild. Over 200 birds are held in captivity.

However, the program was dealt a blow when rats infiltrated an enclosure at Taroona in Tasmania and killed 14 of the Critically Endangered birds. Security at the facility has since been "significantly enhanced".

BirdLife Tasmania has called for transparency of the species' management, and BirdLife Australia's CEO, Paul Sullivan, said the incident shows that wild populations shouldn't be allowed to decline to the point where they rely on captive-breeding programs to ensure their survival.

Looking for RTBC nests

Because the Endangered Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos of south-western Victoria and south-eastern South Australia are secretive when breeding, the Recovery Team has asked the community to help locate new nest sites, offering incentive payments of up to \$500 to landholders and members of the public for information.

The incentive scheme, generously funded by the Nature Foundation of South Australia, has been running since 2011 and has seen 14 new nests located.

Knowing the location of nests enables us to protect nest trees from nest-raiding predators such as Brushtail Possums, and also helps us to identify nesting hotspots, which assists us to better target habitat restoration works.

WANTED

BACK ISSUES OF WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BIRD NOTES

I'm trying to complete my collection of past issues of WABN.

My collection is missing the following issues:

Numbers 1-18, 20, 22, 25, 37,
41-44, 53-55, 86, 94, 101-115, 119,
122-127.

Should you have any of these issues, have no further use for them, and would like to dispose of them, please contact me on 9381 9841 or

iabbott@westnet.com.au

CHAIR'S REPORT

An annual report can be considered to serve two purposes: report on what we have done and discuss where we are going. The former is fairly easy and satisfying to do. The latter is more challenging as it touches upon that vexatious question of the purpose of BirdLife Australia in general; and getting agreement on the purpose of BA is probably harder than getting a group of shorebird specialists to agree on the identity of a distant and poorly seen wader. But without wishing to cause offence to said specialists, getting at least some sort of agreement on the purpose of BA is probably more important.

What have we done?

In the language of annual reports of businesses around the world (and BA is a business whether we like to consider it to be or not), 2015 was a solid year for performance and growth within BirdLife WA. I have on my desk the annual reports from our office manager Annette Park, from the Excursions Committee, the Sales Committee, the Community Education Committee and the Bird Guides working group. I've also seen recent minutes from meetings of the Research Committee and the Great Western Woodland Committee. The CEC visited 33 schools and engaged over a thousand students and parents, we had 83 excursions and campouts, and there was one new and five revised bird guides. Sales of cards were down but the Sales Committee is looking at ways of turning that around.

A common theme to the reports is the enthusiasm of the committee members, but also concern at the inevitability of growing older (with the apparent exception of one member of the CEC) and the scarcity of new members.

Excursions, Sales and Community Education are core activities driven by volunteers, but we also have several projects, some with paid staff massively assisted by volunteers, and others run entirely by volunteers. The Great Cocky Count was conducted successfully once again, with results indicating a continuing decline in numbers of Carnaby's in the Perth region. Project officer Matt Byrne saw the 2015 GCC almost to completion then moved on to another job, with Tegan Douglas and Robyn Pickering picking up the reins. The continuing decline in numbers is a massive cause for concern and while some members have queried the usefulness of monitoring the decline of a species, it is only through having such data that pressure can be brought to bear on government to do something about it. We need data to effect change.

Some other notable events:

- The Great Western Woodland Project came to an end and a new beginning in 2015, with the completion of the intense and funded phase but a transition to ongoing surveys run largely by our irrepressible volunteers.
- The Cockies in Crisis Project began, focussing on the two forest species, and Tegan Douglas was appointed as project officer. She has settled in quickly, made

herself useful in helping out with Carnaby's as well, not to mention assisting with our FaceBook presence.

- Helen Bryant was appointed as Program Manager but in reality her position is much more than that. She is helping Sue Mather with grant applications, coordinating our responses to some major conservation issues and providing much-needed support for the Executive Committee.
- Despite its importance, the Great Cocky Count failed to achieve expected funding but then received emergency support from the Department of Parks and Wildlife. With the next count scheduled for April 2016, Adam Peck has been appointed as the new project officer and is rapidly finding his feet.
- Recognition of Brice Wells in the Australia Day honours for his contribution to conservation. While well-deserved as a personal honour, this is a great reflection on BirdLife as well.

The question of conservation advocacy has occupied some of our time on the Executive Committee, with the WA Group being the only regional group of BirdLife that does not have a devoted conservation committee. Despite this, we have attempted to reply to all issues brought to our attention. The most demanding and arguably most important of these have been ongoing issues with clearing and Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo (including Roe 8), proposed new Biodiversity Conservation Legislation to be introduced into WA parliament, the dilemma facing the Western Ground Parrot, and the Perth Peel Strategic Development Plan. This plan is an attempt to manage Perth's growth without compromising conservation values, and has been subtitled the "Green Growth Plan", which has immediately made some of us nervous.

Where are we going?

This is an important question to ask on a regular basis. An organisation such as BirdLife is never static in its outlook and activities, but recent years have been times of change. It was not that long ago that I had a conversation with a member who was complaining about the presence of non-members on a half day excursion. The member held the opinion that being able to attend excursions was one of the rights of membership, a right he had bought by paying his membership fee. I upset that member then, and may still upset some members now, by saying that an excursion without non-members is a lost opportunity. Of course there are excursions where numbers have to be limited to members, but excursions are also an opportunity to get other people interested in and concerned about birds. More broadly, are we members for what we can get from BirdLife, or for what we can give to BirdLife?

In a similar vein, I was told very firmly some years ago that the public did not expect to be involved in projects, but expected projects to be carried out by scientists and associated people (members again?) on their behalf. While this may be true in some cases (shorebird counts,

BirdLife WA reports, ctd

CHAIR'S REPORT, CTD

Atlas surveys), and while some members of the public may indeed feel this way, this got me to thinking about the over-arching objectives of BirdLife and how we expect to achieve them. According to a strategy document I just glanced at, BA has a vision of "a bright future for Australian birds ... to be achieved by informing and leading action to ensure birds and their habitat flourish... and we have goals of...improving conservation outcomes, promoting the appreciation and understanding of birds and building one strong organisation". Later in the same document, it is clear that increasing society's awareness of BirdLife, having more members and having very many more supporters (not members but people who support our cause by giving money) underpin our vision. So what does this mean and if this is really what we want, how do we get there? We certainly don't get there by excluding non-members from all excursions and projects. In fact, if we want to raise society's awareness of BirdLife, promote "appreciation and understanding of birds" and massively grow our member and supporter base, then we need the opposite approach.

There is an old saying in education that goes something like this (there are several versions):

Tell me and I will forget.
Show me and I might remember.
Involve me and I will learn.

To have any true hope of "A bright future for Australian birds", we need massive changes in the attitude of our society not just to the environment, but to clearing,

urban development, farm management, timber, mining and energy industries, and so on. We need Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo to be valued by society and accepted as much a part of Perth as the Swan River and Fremantle Doctor. If we want to change attitudes towards the environment that ultimately supports birds and gives them a bright future, then we need to be looking at all the ways in which we can engage the public; and that is where birds come into their own.

None of the above excludes 'traditional' activities like excursions, meetings and projects, but it does mean that not far below our consciousness we should be looking for opportunities in our activities to engage with people who can't tell a Magpie from a Magpie-lark. And what we want them to do is not necessarily learn the difference, but to learn to value and therefore care.

...and finally

I'd like to acknowledge all the members who have helped make BirdLife WA function so effectively over the last year. Sue Mather deserves special mention as it sometimes seemed that she never went home! If it seems that the word volunteer has appeared many times in this report...it can never appear often enough.

Nic Dunlop and Graham Wooller have stepped down and the Executive Committee thanks them both on behalf of the WA members for all their hard work for BirdLife WA.

Mike Bamford

BWA PROJECTS

BirdLife Western Australia 2015 end of year project summary

This is a summary of the BirdLife Western Australia (BWA) projects as at 31 December 2015, and the plan for 2016. This is required as part of the end of year audit process.

2015 was an extraordinary year for projects undertaken by BWA, thanks to the fundraising and program management efforts of Sue Mather and National Office (NO). With the employment of Helen Bryant (WA Program Manager), fundraising and program management will be even stronger in 2016.

The PRNRM funding for the Great Cocky Count, the Great Western Woodlands project (funded by Nature Conservancy through NO), the Starlings project (funded by the South Coast NRM through NO) and the Bitterns project (funded by the South Coast NRM through NO) were completed. Funding continued for PHCC Rivers 2 Ramsar, Perth Banksia Woodlands and Taronga Carnaby's

Black-Cockatoo projects. Major new funding was received from LotteryWest for Cockies in Crisis, WWF for work on black-cockatoos and LotteryWest for a fundraising campaign in WA. Funding was also obtained from the Swan River Trust for work on shorebirds, and BirdLife Australia's Australian Bird Environment Fund (ABEF) for remote surveys in the Great Western Woodlands.

Perth NRM

2015 was the third year that the PNRM has funded the Great Cocky Count. There are also many roosts counted in the greater south-west region.

This is the only project that monitors the population trend for these threatened species. For the fifth year in a row, it continues to show an alarming decline in the population of Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos in the Perth region. Forest Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos have only been counted for the past two years and so there are insufficient data at this stage to define any trend. There are very few counts in areas with Baudin's Black-Cockatoos and so no trend can be determined for this species.

BirdLife WA reports: Projects, ctd

New 2016 — Great Cocky Count

Applications for ongoing funding from Perth NRM were unsuccessful because Federal Government funding guidelines have changed. BWA has obtained \$30 000 from the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW), and along with donations received in 2015 (see CBC Recovery), and BA's National Fundraising Appeal BWA will conduct another GCC in 2016. Additional donations have recently been secured from the City of Armadale and the City of Perth to support the GCC.

This is one of several projects that will fund the new Carnaby's Project Coordinator. Adam Peck began this role at the start of February.

This project will again involve the participation of more than 700 volunteers.

Peel Harvey Catchment Council Rivers 2 Ramsar

2015 was the third year that the PHCC has funded BirdLife Western Australia to conduct black-cockatoo workshops in their catchment along with some work on shorebirds. This work is done by the Carnaby's Project Coordinator and is one of five projects that enables BWA to employ the CPC for the full year.

The PHCC has again promised to continue this funding for 2016 with \$20 000. The funds cover salary, travel, printing and equipment and it includes \$2000 for Project Management.

Perth Banksia Woodlands

2015 was the second of three years for this project. The project is funding the revegetation of areas of Bold Park with local plant species including species suitable for Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos. The funds cover the on ground works and some project management costs for BWA. There is no salary component. The on ground works are being undertaken by the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority (BGPA) and the Friends of Bold Park. As part of the project, BWA is conducting bird surveys in these areas. Maris Lauva has volunteered to do these surveys.

Taronga Carnaby's Cockatoo

The official title for this project is Breeding Habitat for Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos. 2015 was the second of three years' funding from the Taronga Conservation Society Australia for this project which is following up on the Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo breeding range surveys conducted in 2013. The remaining work will be conducted in the last quarter of 2016 by the Carnaby's Project Coordinator and the remaining funds (including the third instalment of \$10 000) will be fully expended by the end of 2016.

Volunteers will be needed for this work, and their travel expenses will be covered.

LotteryWest Cockies in Crisis

This is the largest project for BWA. Funding commenced in January 2015 with Tegan Douglas being employed in June. The current project will continue to June 2017, although it is expected that ongoing work will be identified in the final project report, and that future

funding will be sought to progress this. The project aims to assist the forest black-cockatoos, so potentially all three species, but most of the work will be aimed at threats to Baudin's Black-Cockatoo and the Forest Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo.

The initial instalment was \$50 000. Future instalments will be in arrears, when BWA will submit periodic invoices to cover the expenditure, with six monthly project reports. The total funds for the project are \$255 448.

Volunteers will be needed later in this project.

WWF Cockatoos

This funding of \$40 000 was obtained through National Office. The aim of the project is to establish voluntary management agreements (VMAs) to protect and develop significant areas for Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos. The initial funding of \$18 000 was paid to NO to cover salaries. The second instalment of \$18 000 was paid to BWA. There is a final instalment of \$4000 due with the submission of the final project report which is due in the middle of June 2016. This work was planned to be completed by the Carnaby's Project Coordinator, but Robyn Pickering was employed for the final quarter of 2015 after Matt Byrne left.

LotteryWest Fundraising Campaign

This funding of \$20 000 was obtained through National Office, plus BWA agreed to provide an extra \$5000. The project aims to identify major donors in Western Australia that can support the projects in WA such as black-cockatoos, IBAs, shorebirds, GWW, bitterns, Ongoing Atlas, Birds in Backyards, etc.

The funds are held by BWA because it is a LotteryWest grant, but the work is being organised by Andy Scobie in NO and mostly being done by Donorcentricity. The remaining funds are expected to have been spent by the end of June.

The success of this project would significantly change BWA and the way we are structured. This will need to be very carefully managed.

CBC Recovery

These are funds left over from the early cockatoo projects (where there was not the requirement to fully expend them), plus donations that have been made to BWA to support the cockatoos.

BWA received three major donations in 2015. \$1000 from the Calingiri & New Norcia LCD, \$7125 from BA's national fundraising campaign and \$1928 from fundraising by the Antz Inya Pantz Café. These donations will be spent in 2016 as part of the funding for the black-cockatoo projects.

These funds have been kept to provide interim funding between projects. They have been allocated for spending on a number of occasions, but either new funding has been obtained, or the project officer has left and there has been no one to complete the work. The Holmes A'Court funds would be spent first, except for specific donations such as those detailed above.

BirdLife WA reports: Projects, ctd

Holmes A'Court

These funds were donated to Birds Australia Western Australia Inc. (as we were then) to support Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos. They were raised through an art exhibition organised by Janet Holmes A'Court. The original donation was \$44 672.72 and this was matched by the Macquarie Bank giving a total of \$89 345.44. These funds have been used for a number of purposes, and much of it has been to fund the period between different grants.

Once the 2016 budget has been completed, and the funding for the WA Program Manager and the new black-cockatoo project officer have been determined, the WA Program Manager will put forward plans to spend any unallocated funds. This proposal is expected to be in April or May. This will also include the CBC Recovery funds.

Shorebirds 2020

These funds are to support shorebirds in Western Australia and are managed by the volunteer Shorebirds 2020 Coordinator in Western Australia. Kim Onton retired from this position in 2015, and Bruce Greatwich has taken over this role. The main activity is to organise the annual shorebird count in early February which is conducted by many volunteers. In 2014, it funded workshops and counts in Exmouth and the Exmouth gulf region.

There are plans in 2016 to hold workshops in Albany and Port Hedland, with talks happening about other locations. The remaining funds will sustain this work on an ongoing basis.

In 2015 the Swan River Trust (SRT) donated \$7500 to fund workshops and shorebird events in the Perth metropolitan region and also the south-west. These funds are to be spent by June 2018, and planning has commenced for these activities.

Hooded Plovers

There is a Hooded Plover Committee in Western Australia chaired by Marcus Singor. These funds were initially provided by the Waterways Commission to support Hooded Plovers in Western Australia. The funds have been topped up by some donations and BWA support over the years, with remaining funds mostly used towards the annual Hooded Plover count in February each year, conducted by volunteers from Esperance to Perth. This costs between \$150 and \$300 a year. The funds will continue to be used on an ongoing basis. When these funds have been fully expended, BWA will consider making a provision to continue this work.

Bitterns

There was a Bitterns project in the south-west funded by LotteryWest with Robyn Pickering as the project officer. These funds were fully expended, but Robyn has continued to organise fundraising events to support this work. This fundraising has included the WA Calendar (three years now), the WA Twitchathon and the WA Photo Twitch.

There are no specific plans at this stage to spend these funds. Some funds were used in 2014 to purchase automatic recording units (ARUs) that can be placed at

wetlands to record the calls over an extended period, and thereby to monitor for the calls of bitterns. The ARUs continue to be deployed, but this is done on a volunteer basis. The volunteers can claim for expenses, but often they don't.

The WA Program Manager will consult with Robyn Pickering for worthwhile uses for these funds.

Great Western Woodlands

The major project for the Great Western Woodlands was completed in May 2015. Liz Fox and Shapelle McNee were the project officers. A GWW Committee was established to continue the surveys in autumn and spring on a volunteer basis, and to promote the conservation of the woodlands. BWA made a provision of \$7500 in 2014 to support this ongoing work. This was estimated to cover five volunteer surveys from spring 2015.

The GWW Committee received a \$6730 grant from BirdLife Australia's ABEF to fund some remote area surveys to establish data for areas that are difficult to access. The first part of this was done in 2015, and the remaining funds will be spent in April / May 2016 during a second set of surveys.

New 2016 — State NRM Cockatubes

This new grant of \$40 000 through the State NRM will fund the installation of Cockatubes in the south-west. Cockatubes are artificial nest hollows that have been shown to work successfully for black-cockatoos. In particular, this will increase the breeding capacity for the endangered Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo. This work will be done in conjunction with Rick Dawson of DPaW.

The original funding request was for \$51 750 to fund the installation of 100 Cockatubes. The lower amount granted could mean that this number may be reduced. One possible use of unallocated funds from the CBC Recovery and Holmes A'Court funds is to support and possibly extend this exciting project.

These funds are expected to be received in April with the main work being completed by June. Monitoring and reporting work after that will be completed by the end of the year. This project will be managed by employing Deb Sullivan in consultation with Adam Peck and overseen by Helen Bryant.

New 2016 — State NRM Starlings

This new grant of \$19 000 through the State NRM will fund the installation of 40 more lure cages to trap starlings in the wider Esperance area. This work will be done in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture & Food Western Australia (DAFWA).

These funds are expected to be received in April with the main work being completed by June. This project will be managed by Deb Sullivan in Esperance.

New 2016 — State NRM Lorikeets

This new grant of \$21 000 through the State NRM will fund the development by Glenn Ehmke (NO) of an app as part of the BirdLife Australia Conservation Portal for people to report the sightings of five introduced species (Rainbow Lorikeet, Eastern Long-billed Corella, Little or Short-billed Corella, Starling, Sparrow, Indian Ringneck

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Parrot, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo and Feral Pigeon), with Rainbow Lorikeets the major target. This will be done in conjunction with the Rainbow Lorikeet Steering Committee which comprises members from DAFWA, DPaW, WA Museum, Perth NRM and BWA.

These funds are expected to be received in April with the main work being completed by September. Robyn Pickering will be contracted for this project, managed by Helen Bryant.

Frank O'Connor

2015 Twitchathon results

We had a great Twitchathon competition in 2015 with four armchair teams, five 12-hour teams and eight 24-hour teams taking part on the weekend. Two teams also entered the EcoTwitch competition earlier in the year. It was particularly pleasing to see so many families getting a team together. The "e-galaks" team (the Edelburg family), whose team captain, Torsten, was eight and a half years old at the time of the Twitchathon and his twin brother, Aengus, was also part of their crew. There was a lot of action on twitter with several teams posting live updates and general banter, adding to the atmosphere of the competition. As expected, the ensuing Twitchathon trip reports were excellent reading, brilliantly capturing the many highs of the best birds and the occasional lows of the worst dips.

Here are the results:

24-hour competition

- 1: Ruffled Up** 180 Nigel Jackett and Stewart Ford
- 2: West Coast Babblers** 162 Steve Burns, Ian and Louis Purdy and Rowan Dubouley
- 3: Rainbow Avocets** 122 Robyn and Morgan Pickering

12-hour competition

- 1: Twice Bittern** 139 Frank O'Connor, Wayne Merritt and Mark Henryon
- 2: SWAT-less** 136 David and Mary Secomb and Rose Ferrell
- 3: Splendid Hens** 111 Sue Abbotts, Athena Georgiou, Kerry Cowie and Xenia Dennett

Armchair competition

- 1: Team Newman** 67 Mark, Lauren and Lochlan Newman
- 2=: Mork & Mindy** 48 Mike and Mindy Bamford
- 2=: The O.B.E. Team** 48 Clive and Wendy Napier, Valerie and Connor Hemsley

EcoTwitch competition

- 1: Pindan Pedallers** 100 Nigel Jackett, Jaime Jackett, Jane Taylor
- 2: FGA Trudgers** 73 Christine Fleay, Kerry Fleay, Kerry Smith, Michelle Whitford

The winner of the Best Bird was Twice Bittern with the Oriental Honey Buzzard at Lake Joondalup reappearing for the Twitchathon in a case of spectacularly good timing! Worst dip was very much at the other end of the scale — New Holland Honeyeater for the Splendid Hens.



White-faced Heron and Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Dalyellup (see report, p28). Photo by Mavis Norgard

Thank you also to the teams that didn't make the top three in their events, perhaps we'll see you on the podium in 2016? We are looking forward now to planning this year's Twitchathon. Stay tuned for updates in the next few months.

Happy birding!

Stewart Ford and Wes Bancroft

Western Ground Parrot – another victim of the Esperance fires

In November 2015, lightning storms started a number of catastrophic bushfires in the Esperance area, resulting in the deaths of four people and the devastation of large areas of crops and bushland. In Cape Arid National Park areas known to contain Western Ground Parrots were burnt.

At the time when the November fires started, a team from the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW) together with a number of volunteers were in the park, attempting to capture a small number of birds to boost the captive population at Perth Zoo. Before they were forced to evacuate the area, the team succeeded in capturing two young birds which were transferred to Perth Zoo. Sadly, the two birds which initially had adapted very well to captivity, fell ill in December and have since died from respiratory illness while still in quarantine. The remaining five birds at Perth Zoo are well and hopefully will breed this year.



Western Ground Parrot. Photo: Perth Zoo

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After assessing the impact of both the October 2015 fires and the catastrophic November blaze, the recovery team estimated that 90% of the known occupied Western Ground Parrot habitat was destroyed.

Two small pockets of habitat that remained unburnt have since been baited and trapped for feral cats. At the time of writing, a team is in the field undertaking further predator controls as well as redeploying autonomous recording units, and conducting some listening sessions to determine where additional parrots may have survived the fires.

This autumn, the Department of Parks and Wildlife will need volunteers to help with monitoring surveys in Cape Arid and Fitzgerald River National Parks. Please contact the Friends of the Western Ground Parrot (e-mail: wgparrot@gmail.com) to find out if volunteers are still required as these surveys tend to fill up fast.

Survey dates are as follows:

Cape Arid National Park 13-19 March

Cape Arid National Park 3-9 April

Fitzgerald River National Park 18-22 April

Previous surveying experience is welcome, but not essential as volunteers will be trained to identify the Western Ground Parrot calls. Please remember that good hearing is required to be able to identify the calls in the field. Participants also need to be prepared for off-track walking and remote bush camping with very limited facilities. Food will be provided and camping gear can be made available on request.

BirdLife Australia has generously made available a grant from the Australian Bird Environment Foundation, allowing the Friends of the Western Ground Parrot to subsidise the travel costs of volunteers.

The Western Ground Parrot, which in July 2015 was listed by the Federal Government as one of 20 birds marked for emergency intervention, may now well be Australia's rarest bird. To put it bluntly, the parrot is staring extinction in the face. It will take an all-out effort by government agencies, conservation organisations such as the Friends of the Western Ground Parrot and BirdLife, but also private individuals and companies to ensure that we do not lose this species.

In spite of all the bad news, it is probably worth remembering that the Noisy Scrub-bird has made a comeback from equally low numbers with only one population surviving in the Two Peoples Bay area in the early 1960s. Apart from Two Peoples Bay, Noisy Scrub-birds are now found in the Mt Manypeaks area, Waychinicup National Park and Bald Island. They are no longer listed as critically endangered, although a bushfire destroyed much of their habitat at Two Peoples Bay last November.

Anne Bondin

[Editors' note: see also article by Sarah Comer and Allan Burbidge in this issue]

Hooded Plover highlights: bumper breeding season for Cape to Cape Region

Over the summer months volunteers have been busy checking out the beaches between Cape Naturaliste and Cape Leeuwin. In the process many active nest sites were discovered and these were reported to the Department of Parks and Wildlife who fenced the sites and installed signage. These measures helped safe-guard the nesting sites, although predation and disturbance after fledging is still a major problem.

A total of 12 different breeding sites was located. Many of the nests were found in their traditional locations, confirming strong site fidelity. There were a number of second breeding attempts often made in close vicinity of the first breeding attempt.

The 2015 breeding results are shown in Table 1 (see next page). The February 2016 survey will show how many juveniles made it through to adulthood.

Busselton Hooded Plover project

The City of Busselton is running a Hooded Plover monitoring project at beaches within its jurisdiction (from Eagle Bay to Wilyabrup). Volunteers monitor their beach once a fortnight from September to April. The aim is to identify which beaches within the boundaries of the City of Busselton are still being used by Hooded Plovers and on what beaches they still breed. Jackie Nichol is the Senior Sustainability and Environment Officer from the City of Busselton and oversees the project. She works in partnership with the Department of Parks and Wildlife and Birdlife Australia. We are half way through the project and the interim results are shown in Table 2 (see p22).

Hooded Plover 'super clutch'

Natalie Bell made an exceptional discovery on 20 December 2015 when she was visiting South Point near Gracetown.

A Hooded Plover 'super clutch' of five eggs was found (see photo). There was nothing unusual about the nest location. It was a relatively quiet area, but on a big swell there can be people on the point watching surfers at the South Point break. People do walk their dogs along here and loop back to Gracetown via the Cape to Cape track up on top of the dune.



Super clutch of Hooded Plover eggs. Photo by Natalie Bell

Editors' note: Normally, WABN will not publish photographs of active nests (see policy, *WABN* 151:40). In this case, the photograph of a very unusual clutch size was taken during a standard survey, by an observer aware of the need to minimise disturbance. This species is highly susceptible to predators when nesting, and we discourage the routine approach to nests for that reason.

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Table 1. Breeding of Hooded Plovers in the Cape to Cape Region, 2015-16.

Date	Site	Breeding status	Fenced	Breeding attempt	Observer	Comments
12-07-15	Boranup	2 adults, nest 2 eggs	Yes	First-unsuccessful	Suzanne Trigwell	600 m south of north point; nest on top of small dune with low vegetation around
12-08-15	Boranup	2 adults				No sign of nest
03-02-16	Boranup	2 runners		Second	Ian Rooke	1 adult present
19-09-15	Grunters	3 eggs	Yes	First-unsuccessful	Natalie Bell	Nest high up near the dune, elevated spot with green vegetation around it
14-10-15	Grunters	3 chicks				
06-11-15	Grunters		Yes	Second	Natalie Bell	Nest reported in similar location as last time
21-12-15	Grunters	2 adults, 1 chick				On 30 December 2015 chick with broken wing
08-09-15	Skippy Rocks	1 adult, 2 chicks		First	Leigh Carroll	Two separate groups of walkers mentioned seeing Hooded Plover plus 2 chicks, bird like on the sign
29-12-15	Skippy Rocks	2 adults, 1 chick		Second-unsuccessful	Jenny Kikeros	Two extra signs installed by DPaw
04-09-15	Boodjidup	2 eggs			Gene Hardy	No adults sighted; nest on beach toward Redgate from the Boodjidup outfall
22-09-15	Redgate	Nest - 2 eggs	Yes	First-unsuccessful	Peter Simmonds	Base of fore dunes on southern side of creek
18-12-15	Redgate	1 chick		Second	Douglas Coughran	Southern Redgate Beach
10-10-15	Gallows	2 eggs	Yes		Wally Smith	Nest close to public walk way
29-10-15	Gallows	2 adults, 1 chick				Adults with chick seen north of Gallows towards Willyabrup - assumed to be the same family
17-12-15	Gallows	adults and Juvenile				Successful outcome - one chick fledged
21-01-16	Gallows	Nest with 3 eggs		Second	Ernie Haggett	
11-10-15	Ellensbrook	1 adult and 1 chick			John McKinney	Sighted south of Ellenbrook lookout
06-11-15	Margaret River	2 adults, 2 eggs	Yes	First-unsuccessful	Natalie Bell	Reported north of river mouth on sandy spit
05-12-15	Margaret River Rivermouth	2 chicks				
01-01-16	Margaret River Rivermouth	Nest with 2 eggs		Second	Natalie Bell	On the sand spit again, not too far from the last nest site
30-10-15	Hillview - Augusta	4 adults and 3 juveniles			Wally Smith	One juvenile younger and not yet flying
05-11-15	Hamelin Bay	2 adults, 1 egg			DPaw	Nest on Hamelin Bay headland, bird sighted from boardwalk
20-12-15	Cowaramup	1 adult, 5 eggs			Natalie Bell	Bob Hagan, Ben Tannock, Wayne Elliot
05-01-16	Cowaramup	Nest with 4 eggs			Ernie Haggett	Nest at South Point, double clutch
16-01-16	Cowaramup, South Point			First-unsuccessful	Natalie Bell	Nest predated by fox
28-12-15	Bobs Hollow	2 adults, 2 runners			Mrs Simmonds	

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We contacted the BirdLife beach nesting birds project manager, Grainne Maguire for further information about the super clutch. Advice received was that it was likely a trio of two females and one male. The male mates with both and the females lay 2-3 eggs in the clutch. There have been two instances of this on the Mornington Peninsula, Victoria over the last few years — consistently 4-6 egg nests. Grainne banded some birds on one of the nests so we know they stayed together as a trio for several years and all three adults raise the chicks as well.

Christine Fleay checked the South Point nest on the 27 December 2015 from 10 -11 am. She located the nest (still with 5 eggs) and three adults — one on the nest (bird 1), one nearby preening (bird 2) on the edge of the sand/rocks and one on the rocks near the ocean about 40 m from the nest (bird 3). When Christine was in line with the nest, bird 1 left the nest and paired up with bird 2. Bird 3 then also appeared near the base of the rocks and walked away. It moved cautiously towards the nest until it was about 15 m from nest. The pair then went into territorial mode and made 'grunting sounds' and chased off bird 3 in flight.

Observations made by Ernie Haggett on 5 January 2016 revealed that the clutch had reduced to four eggs.

Jenny Kikeros and Jane Scott checked the nest on 8 January 2016 and observed two adult birds feeding about 20 m west of the nest. They were between the nest and the rocks that lead to the ocean. One bird was sitting on the nest. Three adults were present. On 16 January

2016 the nest was gone. Natalie Bell mentioned there was evidence of tracks and a scat at the nest location which were identified as belonging to a fox that possibly predated the nest.

Breeding success

Ross Jones reported seeing 121 Hooded Plovers at Lake Warden on 13 December 2015. He estimated that around 60 to 70% were juveniles. This would indicate that part of the Hooded Plover population had a very good breeding season. The number of juveniles translates to a high number of successful breeding pairs. Hooded Plovers may stay with their parents for a short time after they reach flying age, but more often they leave their natal territory quickly. They are often observed in flocks with other non-breeding birds (Ehmke and McGuire 2012).

Acknowledgements

Our volunteers are making an enormous contribution to Hooded Plover research in the Cape to Cape region: Natalie Bell, Christine Fleay, Jenny Kikeros and Christine Wilder are to be commended for their outstanding work.

Reference

Ehmke, G. and Maguire, G. (2012). MyHoodie. A guide to the amazing breeding lives of Hooded Plovers. Field companion to the website www.myhoodie.com.au. (BirdLife Australia: Melbourne.) (Available from <http://mybeachbird.com.au/>).

Marcus Singor

Table 2. Fortnightly records of the presence of Hooded Plovers on beaches in the City of Busselton.

	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2015	2016	2016	2016	2016	2016
	Sep	Sep	Oct	Oct	Nov	Nov	Dec	Dec	Dec	Jan	Jan	Feb	Feb	Mar
Siesta Beach			A											
Dunsborough, Elmore	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A			
Eagle Bay, Point Picquet			A	A										
Eagle Bay, Community Hall	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A			
Eagle Bay, Rocky Point	A	A	A	A	A		A	A		A				
Castle rock	A	A												
Meelup		A	A	A										
Bunkers Bay	A	A		A	A		A					A		
Gull Rock			P		P		P	P						
Cape Naturaliste		A	P	A										
Kabbijgup Beach														
Yallingup Beach			A	A	A	A	A			A	A			
Smiths Beach, North		P	A	A	A		P			A		A		
Smiths Beach, South														
Wyadup		A	A	A			A			A				
Injidup north		A	A	P	P	A		A		A				
Cape Clairault				P	P		P							
Quinninup														
Moses Rock, South			A	A	A	A		A			A			
Moses Rock, North						A								
Willyabrup														
Gallows			P	P	P	P	P	P		P	P			
P=Present on beach														
A=Absent from beach														
Blank means not surveyed														

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Operation Rainbow Roost: identifying Rainbow Lorikeet roosts in Perth

BirdLife WA, in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture and Food, are commencing a new project assessing Rainbow Lorikeet numbers and distribution in south-west WA. This project is being funded through the State NRM Community Grants. An estimated 40 000+ Rainbow Lorikeets pose a major risk to WA community values. The project aims to provide a reporting tool for the community that is easy to use so that pest birds can be reported quickly and easily and locations of key roosting sites identified.

A phone app to allow easy reporting of Rainbow Lorikeet sightings is being developed. However, until the app is developed, please report sightings of Rainbow Lorikeets

from the outskirts of the Perth Metropolitan area and particularly any known roost sites. You can report these to Robyn Pickering by email robyn.pickering@birdlife.org.au or by phoning the office on 9383 7749.

This project is Stage 1 of a series of Projects designed to manage the Rainbow Lorikeet issue.

- Stage 1: Working with Community and BirdLife WA to report Roosting Sites utilising 'Birdata' phone app.
- Stage 2: Prove the concept of Rainbow Lorikeet sterilisation with input from universities and stakeholders.
- Stage 3: Field trials and evaluation of sterilisation with stakeholder support (WALGA, etc.) based on the Stage 1 and 2.

Robyn Pickering



Great Crested Grebe, Kanidal Beach, Eyre (see report, p50). Photo by Alan Pilkington

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Naming of birds

MEROPIDAE — BEE-EATERS

The bee-eaters are a large family occurring throughout Europe, Asia and Africa. The bee-eater was known to the Romans who named the bird *apiastra*, and the Greeks, who called it *merops* — both names meaning 'eater of bees'. Bees, however, only form a small part of their diet, which consists of various medium to large flying insects.

Rainbow Bee-eater — *Merops ornatus*. This bird was described in 1790 by J White who called it the Mountain Bee-eater, having recorded it in the Blue Mountains. In later years it was variously called the Variegated or Australian Bee-eater and also the Rainbow Bird. The name Rainbow Bee-eater was finally settled on in about 1969. The Greek name *merops* means eater of bees, while the specific name *ornatus* comes from the Latin meaning richly adorned — certainly a very apt name for this beautiful bird.

CORACIIDAE – ROLLERS

Only one member of the roller family occurs in Australia.

Dollarbird — *Eurystomus orientalis*. The genus name comes from the Greek *eurystomos* which means wide-mouthed, totally appropriate for this bird! The specific name *orientalis* refers to the east — the type locality being the East Indies or Java as it is now known.

PITTIDAE – PITTAS

The name Pitta comes from a south-eastern Indian dialect and refers to any small bird, not specifically to pittas as we know them.

Blue-winged Pitta — *Pitta moluccensis*. The specific name refers to the type locality where the bird was found — the Moluccan Pitta from the Moluccan Islands which are part of Indonesia. This name was in fact an error in translation — the origin was actually Malacca which is in Malaysia. This pitta occurs throughout Indonesia and south-east Asia and is a rare vagrant or occasional visitor to the North West coastal area of WA.

Rainbow Pitta — *Pitta iris*. In Greek mythology, Iris (the rainbow) was the attendant of Hera who was the Queen of Heaven and the goddess of the atmosphere! The meaning of the word '*iris*' is the same whether in Greek or Latin, namely 'rainbow'. The Rainbow Pitta is a pretty colourful bird in spite of its black face, neck and underparts.

ATRICHORNITHIDAE – SCRUB-BIRDS

Noisy Scrub-bird — *Atrichornis clamosus*. The genus name separates this family from another closely allied group — the Bristlebirds. The bristles referred to are found around the base of the bill, but these are lacking in the Scrub-birds. The Greek derivation of the name is *a-*, without, *trikhos*, hair, and *ornis*, a bird. Which does not mean a completely hairless (or featherless) bird! The

last name accurately describes the surprisingly loud call of the Noisy Scrub-bird — *clamosus* (Latin) meaning very noisy or shouting. Thus we have the Noisy Bristleless bird.

CLIMACTERIDAE — TREECREEPERS

Three species of treecreeper occur in Western Australia. Their genus name comes from the Greek *klimakter* which means ladder rung. This refers to their habit of climbing up tree trunks while searching for insects under the tree bark.

White-browed Treecreeper — *Climacteris affinis*.

The specific Latin name *affinis* means related to. Presumably related to other treecreepers.

Black-tailed Treecreeper — *Climacteris melanura*.

The Latin name of the Black-tailed Treecreeper translates directly to the English name. *Melanos* is Greek for black, while *urus* is Greek for tail. Giving us Black-tailed ladder-rung climber.

Rufous Treecreeper — *Climacteris rufa*. Another easy derivation, as *rufus* (Latin) means reddish or red, so we have the Red ladder-rung climber.

PTILONORHYNCHIDAE — BOWERBIRDS

Western Bowerbird — *Ptilonorhynchus guttatus*.

The name comes from the Greek *ptilon*, feather, and *rhunkos*, bill. The Western Bowerbird has small feathers on the forehead, which extend slightly over the bill — hence feather-bill. The specific name originates from Latin *gutta*, meaning a droplet, or spot giving the bird the name 'spotted feather-bill'.

Great Bowerbird — *Ptilonorhynchus nuchalis*.

Nuchalis comes from New Latin *nucha* meaning the back of the neck or nape. This refers to the pink/lilac nape crest which is displayed when the bird turns its head down and sideways. The name means 'naped feather-bill', though the Western Bowerbird has a similarly coloured nape crest.

Monticola



Rufous Treecreeper. Photo by Andrew Hobbs

Members' contributions

YELLOW-RUMPED THORNBILL RAISING SHINING BRONZE- CUCKOO(S)

During the BirdLife Western Australia excursion to Lake Gwelup in January a young Shining Bronze-Cuckoo was seen being fed by a Yellow-rumped Thornbill. The Yellow-rumped Thornbill is a known host of the Shining Bronze-Cuckoo (Serventy and Whittell 1976, Brooker and Brooker 1989, Johnstone and Storr 2004). It is also a co-operative breeder although there can be exceptions to this. 'In pairs, both parents feed and attend nestlings and fledglings. In co-operative groups, all members of the group feed nestlings and fledglings' (Higgins and Peter 2002, p.512). In this instance, there were other Yellow-rumped Thornbills in close proximity to the observers but none attempted to feed the young cuckoo as it persistently followed the one thornbill that was foraging among the branches of some small eucalypts. It is possible that a pair was raising the cuckoo but no changeover of the provisioning bird was observed. The fledgling's plumage was indicative of a young bird with a brown smudgy area under the chin but only a faint beginning of barring on the body below the folded wing edge. Its chest and breast were white while the back appeared to be a duller green than an adult. No rufous was noticed in the wings or tail that might have led us to think that this was a Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo. Having noted this, the birding group moved on.



Shining Bronze-Cuckoo.
Photo by John McMullan

After the excursion had ended a small group returned to the lake to look for some species they had missed earlier. While trying to find a juvenile Fan-tailed Cuckoo — seemingly independent of its own host — the young Shining Bronze-Cuckoo was seen again, still persistently following the one Yellow-rumped Thornbill. As we were watching this it became apparent that there were actually two young Shining Bronze-Cuckoos, their plumage indicating that they were of the same or similar age, following the one thornbill. There is no mention of a host raising two young in Higgins (1999). However, Serventy and Whittell (1976) note that they had found two eggs of this species of bronze-cuckoo in a Yellow-rumped Thornbill's nest and on rare occasions eggs of the two bronze-cuckoos are found in the one nest. Brooker and Brooker (1989) record one instance where a nest contained a Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo egg which was apparently removed when a Shining Bronze-Cuckoo laid in the same nest. In a second instance, a Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo laid in a nest that had already been parasitised by a Shining Bronze-Cuckoo. The Shining Bronze-Cuckoo nestling ejected the remaining thornbill

egg as well as the egg of the Horsfield's. On no occasion during their four year study did they find more than one egg of the same cuckoo species in the same nest. They did record that 'R. Payne found a nest of a Western Thornbill at Gooseberry Hill which contained two Shining Bronze-Cuckoo eggs'.

Having located the juvenile Fan-tailed Cuckoo, the group returned through the area where we had been watching the Shining Bronze-Cuckoos and again we noted the two young cuckoos persistently following the one Yellow-rumped Thornbill. The constant buzzing call of the young cuckoos seemed to spur the host ever onwards. Higgins (1999, pp.735-737) records that Shining Bronze-Cuckoo fledglings beg vigorously and will follow host parents and may utter a single-note begging call all day at a rate of 160 notes/min. Each time the bird we were observing found a morsel one of the cuckoos was alongside to take it, overlapping each other in their eagerness to get the food. Still, none of the other thornbills that were nearby attempted to feed them.

These observations and notes leave us with a number of things to ponder:

1. The current accepted knowledge is that a cuckoo will lay one egg in the host's nest and remove one of the host's eggs. If the parasite's egg is accepted and hatches after incubation, the cuckoo will remove all the remaining eggs or fledglings from the hosts nest within the first few days of its life. Did two cuckoos lay their egg in the same nest on the same day? Given that occurred and they hatched at around the same time, why wasn't there a battle to eject the other so that they, and they alone, were the sole beneficiaries of the food supply? This is rather unlikely so what else could have occurred?
2. The hosts are put under more pressure than with their own young trying to supply food to a cuckoo. Having fledged, the young cuckoo follows its host parents as described in the article above. One day, another young cuckoo of similar age (possibly hosted by another pair of thornbills in the same clan) decides its relative is getting more food than it is and joins the procession behind the hosts of the first cuckoo. We noticed the overlapping behaviour of the two young cuckoos, virtually taking turns to relieve the thornbill of any food it gathered. Is this more likely than the previous scenario? I could find no reference to anything like this in HANZAB.
3. The almost continuous buzzing call of the young cuckoo often attracts other members of a co-operative group such as thornbills, to assist in the feeding. Even completely different species, attracted by the begging call, will offer food. With such a heavy responsibility, why was no assistance being offered to the one thornbill the two young cuckoos were following? Observations on both occasions that we were aware of the two young were of 5-8 minutes duration. It would be interesting to know if that Yellow-rumped Thornbill will survive the trauma of trying to raise not one, but two cuckoos.

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Members' contributions, ctd

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Peter Sandilands

HISTORICAL NOTE ON THE NOISY SCRUB-BIRD

On a recent birding trip down south, we visited the Waroona Dam, or Drakes Brook Weir as it is also called. There, in the picnic area we found two bronze plaques.

One commemorates the passage on November 3, 1842, of John Gould and James Drummond who were on their way to Augusta from Perth. Near this spot they discovered the first known specimen of the Noisy Scrub-bird. The plaque was dedicated by the RAOU and the WA Historical Society on September 12, 1948.

Next to this plaque is another which commemorates the release, on 12 June 1997, of six Noisy Scrub-birds into a tributary of Samson Brook some 10 km from Waroona Dam, as a tribute to John Gould's discovery. The plaque is dated January 2001 and erected with the assistance of the Department of Conservation and Land Management, Alcoa Australia, Birds Australia and the Shire of Waroona.

Sadly, these six birds did not seem to be able to establish themselves successfully. It is unknown how long they survived.

Libby McGill

COCOS (KEELING) ISLANDS (CKI)

Cocos (Keeling) Islands (CKI) is a remote Australian Territory in the middle of the Indian Ocean 2768 km north-west of Perth and 3685 km due west of Darwin. Our nearest neighbour is Christmas Island, about 1000 km to the east-north-east. We are 900 km south-south-west of Sumatra and approximately 1100 km north-east-south-west of Java. We are still part of Western Australia and a passport is not needed to visit from the mainland, although the plane does leave from the international airport.

The atoll is situated on the south-western extremity of the East Asian-Australian flyway that extends from the Arctic Circle through South-east Asia to Australia and New Zealand. Small numbers of birds travelling on this flyway land on the atoll twice a year where they feed and replenish their fat reserves on their way to and from their breeding grounds in the north. Our regular visitors in this category include Common Redshank, Common Greenshank, Oriental Pratincole, Saunders's Terns and Barn Swallows.

Some birds, particularly the immature ones, get lost as they travel from one area to another. They may be blown off course in bad weather conditions or their navigation skills may be poor. Others may be searching for new feeding grounds as their traditional feeding areas are destroyed by industrial developments such as those currently taking place in the Yellow Sea. Of these vagrants (many from South-east Asia and northern Australia) some are fortunate enough to find their way to CKI.

These vagrant birds arrive on the atoll in small numbers year round, but particularly between October and April and it is this group that attract twitchers and birding groups to the islands.

We lived in this tropical paradise, oblivious to presence of these exciting birds for a number of years before, in 2011, finally working out why these enthusiastic visiting birders took the trouble to fly here from as far away as Queensland, NSW and Victoria.

Having cottoned on to the fun of searching for a 'needle in a haystack' we armed ourselves with cameras and field guides and set off around the atoll in search of the hidden treasure! We now spend many enjoyable hours a week photographing and observing the resident population such as Green Jungle Fowl, White-breasted Waterhens and White Terns, as well as searching for migrant and vagrant birds passing through the atoll.



Above: Noisy Scrub-bird plaque, Waroona Dam.

Below: Plaque, Drakes Brook Dam, Waroona. Photos by Libby McGill



Members' contributions, ctd

Looking for birds on CKI has given us both a new lease of life. We had no idea how many different birds there were to be found here and have now seen 110 species. Visiting bird enthusiasts are kind enough to share their knowledge and experience with us and we enjoy the friendship and camaraderie that their visits bring.

Birds seen in the last three months (October - December '15) include Common Moorhen, Common Kingfisher, Narcissus (see photos, pp2,11), Dark-sided, Mugimaki, Grey-streaked and Blue and White Flycatchers, Grey Wagtail, a Crow-billed Drongo, Eyebrowed Thrush and Watercock.

Pam Jones and Geof Christie
Cocos (Keeling) Islands
www.cocosbirds.com
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WILLIE WAGTAIL NEST DESTROYED

In October 2015, a pair of Willie Wagtail again nested under the patio roof of one of our residences in Minilya Street, Innaloo. One juvenile fledged from the nest and when the nest was examined two mummified young were in it. One was quite young and the other a bit older.

Presumably, the same pair of birds nested again under the same roof in November but this nest was under the outer edge of the roof near the edge of the gutter where it could be seen from the backyard. The nest was similar to the one described by Stranger and Lynch (*WABN* 156:21) but contained broader strands of grass, thicker strands of wool, thin nylon fibre and what appears to be spider web completely around the outside. However, the nest was partly demolished and two dead nestlings were on the ground underneath, perhaps having fallen out or having been pulled out.

The reconstructed nest is 7 cm in diameter and its walls 6 mm thick. The inside floor is 4.5 cm deep, the hole in the demolished part of the nest is 5 cm in width and extends from 1 cm below the rim to the bottom, part of which is also torn away.

We suspect that the Singing Honeyeater was the cause of the damage because it is very aggressive towards small birds, terrorises native finches in cages and aviaries and plunders the nest of finches in both urban and rural areas (Serventy and Whittell 1976). It is also possible that if the Argentine Ant eradication campaign in the 1950s was responsible for the subsequent decline of the Willie Wagtail in Perth, its slow recovery may have been due to the depredations of the Singing Honeyeater.

Reference

Serventy, D.L. and Whittell, H.M (1976). 'Birds of Western Australia'. (University of W.A. Press: Nedlands, W.A.)

Robert Stranger and Kevin Lynch

REGENT PARROTS AT DALYELLUP

Once again, big numbers of Regent Parrots have brought their fledglings to the coast here at Dalyellup, feeding on the acacia plants that have produced a bumper crop of seeds this year. They arrive around late November, just as the seed ripens, and stay as long as it lasts. Usually the number of birds starts to dwindle in January and not many are seen for the rest of the year.

At present, I often see 50 or so birds feeding in the one small area. (see photos, pp20,60)

Although they may not all be visible at the one time, when they get the signal to move on, the whole flock is airborne within seconds. The flocks seem to consist of mostly females and youngsters. The males have seldom come within range of my camera, so I could not do better than the attached photo which may not be good enough to print, but the one of the female you may consider as up to standard.

Common Bronzewing (often seen in my backyard), also benefit from the parrots' harvesting. When they open the seed pods, some of the seeds fall to the ground and become an easy source of food for the ground feeding birds. The one photographed had been feeding, but posed nicely for me before taking off.

The White-faced Heron and Yellow-billed Spoonbill were photographed at one of the two small lakes near my place. This lake has an area of paperbarks, fringed with tall old Tuart trees in which the spoonbills like to nest every year.

Mavis Norgard

MORE PROBLEMS FOR BIRDERS

A while ago I wrote of the importance of birders *à la mode*. At that time I recommended sensible birders disengage from the fray until the then troubling problems were resolved; meanwhile clutching an adequate supply of good port.

Much has since occurred. Port remains necessary. The fashion arbiters Christidis and Boles have been 'retired'; their role now fulfilled by a faceless committee. This may be to prevent actual or verbal assault, for the faceless have assembled the "BirdLife Australia Working List of Australian Birds" (hereinafter BAWLAB). This document reveals 1950 taxa, more than doubling the number of birds the birder needs identify, not to mention a further 45 supplementary species. Fortunately however, it is possible to reduce mental effort by passing over the extinct species that are included in the total.

Birders will be pleased to note the recent changes are in accord with previous official manifestations of the surreal and obscurities remain an integral part of the lexicon. For example: an endemic bird is defined as "an endemic (Australian) bird that naturally occurs on the Australian continent or territorial islands and nowhere else in the world" — tautology at its finest. The obscurity of the

Members' contributions, ctd

definition is enhanced by the additional statement that: "A bird does not need to be endemic to be Australian" (both from BAWLAB 'What is an endemic bird'). Elsewhere the endemic definition differs, being "taxa that occur only in Australia" (BAWLAB *Field definitions and conventions*). Neither BirdLife Australia nor Charles Darwin University have grasped that there is a real difference between 'in' and 'on'.

A further example of the latest convoluted words is: "The concept of ultrataxa...refers to a monotypic species (a species with a sub-species) or a sub-species." (BAWLAB 'What is an ultrataxon'). A concept that means two different things is definitely worthy of careful consideration over several glasses of port.

Fortunately for the harassed birder hastily catching up on the new 1995 taxa (less the extinct) the following clarification will come as a relief: "...you don't need to worry about ultrataxa when you record bird data, the definition is important. As the terminal diagnosable taxonomic units of avian diversity, ultrataxa are effectively the base unit of avian biodiversity...". So that's all right. To reverse the well-known aphorism: "Ornithology is as useful to birds as the philosophy of science is to scientists" (from Feynman, R.P.).

The new Working List includes any bird that has been "...reliably recorded in Australia (even if it was 300 years ago)..." (note 'in') (BAWLAB 'What birds are included'). It might have been expected that the sighting date/s for vagrant species would be given in BAWLAB, especially with a 300 year time frame, to prevent the hapless birder honing skills to recognise the vagrant Siberian Peregrine Falcon, only to find it may only have been observed once, many years ago. Meanwhile, over the port, birders can speculate that the falcon may have been a ship's mascot escaped from a warship when the Russian fleet passed through the Straits of Malacca in 1905 (an event ultimately to have adverse consequences for Australia — worth considering over a glass of port, or two).

The new taxa and their cohorts are, in a fine and bold surge of progress, to be reviewed (ie, altered) annually. Whereas it was a nuisance to have to alter bird lists and purchase new field guides every five years or so, the change to annual variations can only gladden the hearts of those few pre-occupied with minutiae.

Earlier I recommended that sound birders learn a range of esoterica to drop into conversation at appropriate moments. This is now needed more than ever, as it is clear that grappling with the taxa and ultrataxa of the last 300 years (reviewed annually), is more than any reasonable birder should undertake. Consequently, a number of birders have requested me to provide them with some conversation pieces and I believe memorisation of these profundities will be enhanced by initially providing them in question and answer form.

There are 25 questions. The answer may be one or more of the potential answers shown. Any birder who can answer all the questions correctly is probably best avoided; about 50-60% will suffice to see a birder through most difficult conversational situations.

Bruce Buchanan

Questions

1. Which of the following breed co-operatively?
Striated Pardalote, Singing Honeyeater, Dusky Woodswallow, Grey Butcherbird.
2. Which of the following are known to adopt orphan birds?
Splendid Fairy-wren, White-browed Babbler, Australian Magpie, Laughing Kookaburra.
3. Which bird is known to encourage flight by wing flapping and food presentation?
Brown Goshawk, Crested Tern, Laughing Kookaburra, Brown Falcon.
4. Which parent birds are known to tutor their offspring to sing or sound in a special way?
Australian Magpie, Zebra Finch, Galah, Rufous Whistler.
5. Which WA land bird is known to catch fish?
Apostlebird, Pied Butcherbird, Australian Raven, Red Goshawk.
6. Which WA raptor has been seen to use bait to catch fish?
Little Eagle, Black-breasted Buzzard, Black Kite, Pacific Baza.
7. Which of the following use tools?
Grey Shrike-thrush, Eastern Osprey, Tawny Frogmouth, Australian Raven.
8. Which species has to carry a stick to a roost to be allowed to enter?
Grey-crowned Babbler, Red-capped Parrot, Galah, Black-faced Woodswallow.
9. Which species is known to fly backward into the wind?
Brown Honeyeater, Little Corella, Willie Wagtail, Sacred Kingfisher.
10. Which of the following can hang upside down?
Mulga Parrot, White-eared Honeyeater, Varied Sittella, Grey Currawong.
11. Which of the following can mimic?
Brown Thornbill, Regent Parrot, Baudin's Black-Cockatoo, Rainbow Bee-eater.
12. Most birds can move their eyes independently, with some exceptions. Which are the exceptions in the following?
Little Eagle, Pheasant Coucal, Southern Boobook, Australian Pipit.
13. Which of the following species 'duet'?
Magpie-lark, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Tawny Frogmouth, Southern Boobook.
14. Most species pitch warnings about aerial predators about 7kHz. This is to?
Warn as many species as possible, make the sound carry further, make the position of the caller difficult to locate.
15. Do birds have a sense of time?
Yes/No/Possibly.
16. Which WA bird can learn the 3rd, 4th and 5th music intervals, memorise a tune and transpose

Members' contributions, ctd

- it to another key?
None, Australian Magpie, Gilbert's Whistler, Budgerigar.
17. Which species is known to play hide and seek?
Grey-crowned Babbler, Australian Magpie, Varied Sittella, Banded Lapwing.
 18. What appears to be the main reason birds play?
For brain development, stress reduction, group bonding, pair bonding.
 19. When feeding on a road can birds adjust their take-off time according to the speed of the oncoming vehicle? No, unknown, yes.
 20. What seems to be the most usual form of bird play? Young with young, solitary play with objects, adults with young.
 21. Does the theory that brain size is directly related to intelligence hold in respect of birds?
Unknown, yes, no.
 22. 'Carolling' is a well-known feature of Australian Magpie song. Is it
To declare territorial boundaries, advertise for a mate, celebrate seeing off 'aggressors', summon the group.
 23. Male Golden Whistlers show dominance with?
Loudness of call, thickness of the black breast band, size of the white throat patch, 'brilliance' of their gold coloration.
 24. Birds resident in cities are subject to much urban noise. As a result they use which counter-measure/s?
Sing faster, sing at a higher frequency, change the time of singing, shorten their song.
 25. Male birds are adversely affected by having an older brother. Why?
Younger birds are smaller, less colourful, sing a less complex song, has less testosterone.

Answers

- (1) all of them.
- (2) Laughing Kookaburra.
- (3) Laughing Kookaburra.
- (4) Zebra Finch and Galah.
- (5) Australian Raven.
- (6) Black Kite.
- (7) all of them.
- (8) Black-faced Woodswallow.
- (9) Willie Wagtail.
- (10) all of them.
- (11) the first three.
- (12) Little Eagle, Southern Boobook.
- (13) all of them.
- (14) make location difficult.
- (15) yes.

- (16) Budgerigar.
- (17) Australian Magpie.
- (18) stress reduction mainly, cognitive development partly.
- (19) yes.
- (20) solitary.
- (21) no, budgerigars are among the most intelligent and have 'small' brains.
- (22) celebrate seeing off of aggressors.
- (23) size of the throat white patch.
- (24) all of these.
- (25) song less complex because lower testosterone.

The answers to questions 1-22 derive from Kaplan, G (2015) *Bird Minds*, CSIRO, questions 23-25 from Stutchbury, B (2010) *The Private lives of Birds*, Walker Publishing.

Both books are worth reading and/or purchase.

EXTENDED REPORT ON KINGS PARK EXCURSION, 17 OCTOBER 2015

The BirdLife WA database contains the result of 22 surveys conducted in Kings Park from 1989 to 2011. It is not known how spatially extensive these were but it is likely that all examined only a small part of the park. Last year's excursion took a more strategic approach: Kings Park was divided into four more or less equal sectors, which were demarcated on maps kindly provided by Steve Easton, Biodiversity Conservation Manager in the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority. These maps detailed all the paths in Kings Park and helped excursionists navigate their assigned sector.

The 19 people who attended split into four groups led by Sue Abbotts, Suzanne Mather, Charles Merriam and Clive Nealon. The intention of traversing all of Kings Park simultaneously was achieved and resulted in a benchmark of 35 landbird and seven waterbird species recorded during the morning.

List of species recorded

Landbirds (indigenous to the park)

Brown Goshawk (recorded in 2 sectors), Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo (2), Sacred Kingfisher (1), Rainbow Bee-eater (4), Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo (2), Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo (1), Australian Ringneck (4), Variegated Fairy-wren (2), Brown Honeyeater (4), New Holland Honeyeater (2), White-cheeked Honeyeater, Spotted Pardalote (1), Striated Pardalote (4), Weebill (3), Western Gerygone (4), Grey Butcherbird (1), Australian Magpie (4), Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike (3), Rufous Whistler (4), Willie Wagtail (2), Grey Fantail (4), Magpie-lark (1), Australian Raven (4), Tree Martin (3) and Silvereye (3)

Members' contributions, ctd

Landbirds (not indigenous to the park)

Australian White Ibis (3), Straw-necked Ibis (1), Spotted Dove (1), Laughing Kookaburra (4), Galah (4), Little Corella (4) and Rainbow Lorikeet (3)

Waterbirds

Australian Wood Duck (1), Grey Teal (1), Pacific Black Duck (1), Great Cormorant (1), Little Black Cormorant (1), Australian Pelican (1) and Great Egret (1)

Species not recorded during the excursion

Several bird species have been recorded by me in 2015, during at least one of my eight visits:

Shining Bronze-Cuckoo (also recorded in 1989 according to the BirdLife WA database)

Common Bronzewing (2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009)

Western Spinebill (1989, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2007)

White-browed Scrubwren

Welcome Swallow (1989, 1993, 2001, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011)

Australian Shelduck (2001, 2006, 2009, 2010).

Ryan Glowacki, BGPA Bushland Manager, has also reported three other species in 2015:

Yellow-rumped Thornbill (also recorded in 1989, 2001, 2004, 2006 according to the BirdLife WA database)

Varied Sittella (2002, 2007)

Mistletoebird (2002, 2009).

The status of these nine additional species is not clear. However, the bronzewing, spinebill, scrubwren, thornbill and sittella are probably rare residents. Also noteworthy is that no Laughing Doves were recorded during the excursion (or during my visits in 2015).

The situation in Kings Park appears a little more hopeful than I described in the penultimate paragraph of my article published in *WABN* 149:26-27. However, I had a disappointing response to my request in that article for historical lists of birds recorded in the park. In addition, despite searching carefully the written archives of BirdLife WA, I found no Kings Park bird lists before 1996. Does anyone know what happened to the lists assembled for the book *Birdwatching Perth and Environs* (1995)?

Abundance of species during the excursion

Two of the groups kept records of the numbers of birds seen or heard. Species with > 10 records are listed below.

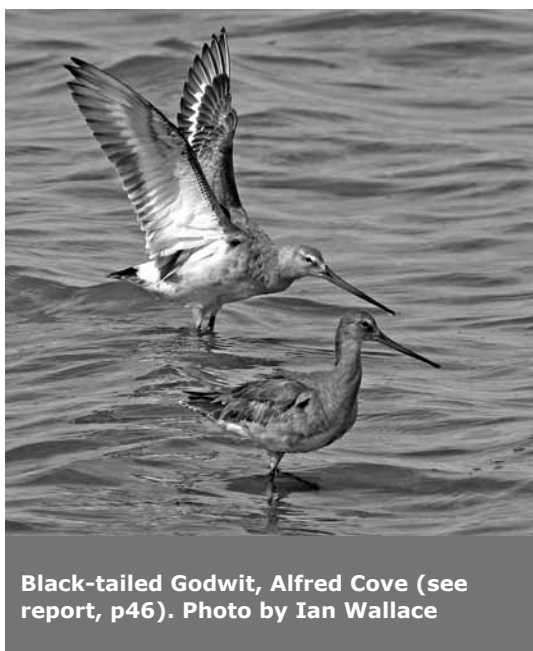
Sector 1 (north-west portion of Kings Park): Brown Honeyeater (33), Rainbow Lorikeet (26), Australian Raven (25), Weebill (23), Red Wattlebird (21), Rainbow Bee-eater (15).

Sector 3 (south-west portion of Kings Park): Rainbow Lorikeet (52), Australian Raven (27), Australian Magpie (23), Striated Pardalote (18), Red Wattlebird (16), Rufous Whistler (12), Galah (12).

Acknowledgements

Thanks to all who participated in the excursion, Annette Park for providing me with extracts from the BirdLife database, Sue Mather for allowing access to the BirdLife WA archive, and Steve Easton and Ryan Glowicki for their interest and assistance.

Ian Abbott



Black-tailed Godwit, Alfred Cove (see report, p46). Photo by Ian Wallace

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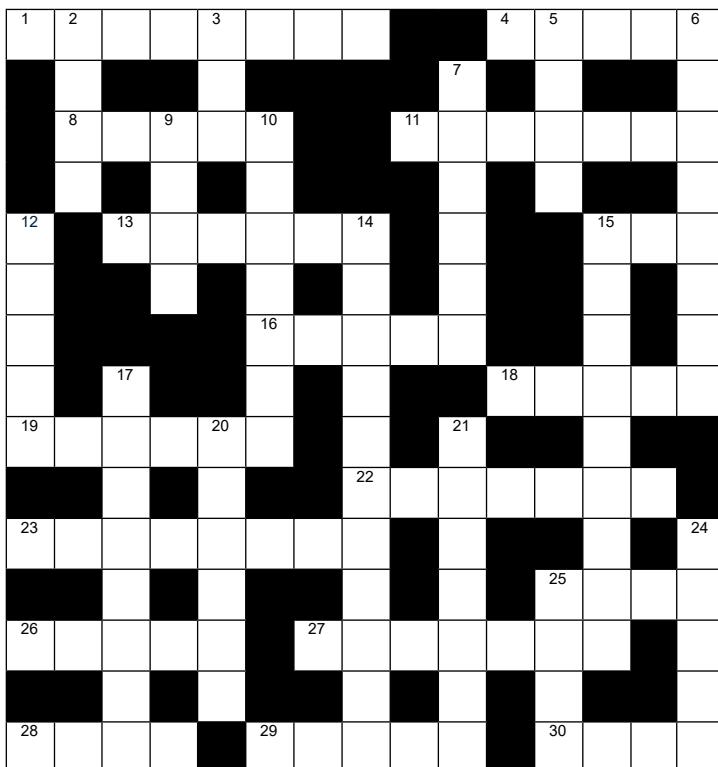
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Crossword No. 26

by Pam Agar

CLUES



ACROSS

1. Speckled.
4. Pale violet.
8. Garden trees sometimes used for nesting by Rainbow Lorikeets.
11. Rarely seen duck.
13. Wader with up-turned bill.
15. Noise in a breeding colony.
16. In official records, one could be critical.
18. Ideal conditions for birding.
19. Smallest of the ibis found in WA.
22. May be a Malleefowl's initial step in mound-building.
23. These parents are more likely to be successful.
25. Construction material for a grebe's nest.
26. To clean and straighten feathers.
27. Marking on wing.
28. Dark facial area.
29. Expandable pouch of pelican's bill.
30. Lake home of a subspecies of Western Corella.

DOWN

2. To call shrilly.
3. Tree species favoured by Weebill.
5. Nesting pardalote may seem to disappear ... a bank.
6. Records from this period provide comparisons.
7. Lamellae on a duck's bill enable it to do this.
9. Opposite to dead.
10. Body of people with similar interests.
12. Bee-eaters leave this part of their meal.
14. Ground-dwelling.
15. Occasional visitor from Asia.
17. Formal meeting to share ideas.
20. It may help to be this when watching birds.
21. To cause a response.
24. Smell, often unpleasant.
25. Failure to keep eggs spells disaster.

See page 57 for Answers




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BirdLife WA and The Perth and Peel Green Growth Plan for 3.5 million

Our state government has released its draft plan for how the greater metropolitan area will look as our population approaches 3.5 million people, which it's projected to reach by 2050. This plan covers urban and industrial development, infrastructure, resources and conservation. While this plan does make some concessions for our native birds, we feel they could do more.

BirdLife Western Australia is compiling a comprehensive response to this proposal to ensure that our native birdlife is protected and provided for into the future. As we develop our submission we will be asking our members for support over the coming weeks.

We hope you can help out.

Perth and Peel Green Growth Plan for 3.5 million

To hear more about this, come along to our monthly meeting on 21 March, when Simon Taylor from the Department of Premier and Cabinet will speak on the draft documents of the Strategic Assessment of the Perth Peel Regions.

This document is now open for comment (closing 8 April). BWA will be compiling informed, effective submissions.

The Strategic Assessment addresses the environmental impacts of future development of the Perth and Peel regions required to support a population of 3.5M; this is a once in a generation proposal for the Region's future urban and rural-residential development, and associated environmental impacts.

As you are likely aware, 4 of the 5 development actions or 'classes of action' that are being assessed in order secure EPBC Act approval and streamlined approvals under the Western Australian Environmental Protection Act 1986, are likely to have direct impacts on the ecological character of the Perth/Peel region. Assessing the impact of these Classes of Action and the proposed avoidance, mitigation and rehabilitation requirements is key to submissions.

Black-Cockatoo ID brochure

BirdLife's new Southwest Black-Cockatoo ID brochures have arrived!

These handy guides provide tips on distinguishing between our three southwest black-cocky species using distribution, appearance, and calls, as well as the feeding residue they leave behind. A pdf version is on the BirdLife website (<http://www.birdlife.org.au/projects/southwest-black-cockatoo-recovery/publications-and-forms>), and hardcopies can be picked up from the BirdLife WA office in Perth.

If you are a member of, or work for, a community or other group and would like a number of brochures to make available to others, please email swblackcockatoos@birdlife.org.au to arrange for some to be sent out. Happy cockatoo watching!

Rangeland surveys of July 2016

For a number of years, BirdLife Western Australia (BWA) has organised Rangeland Surveys in association with the Western Australia Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW). Pastoral leases are occasionally relinquished to the Government and biological surveys are undertaken to establish conservation management plans. BWA is involved with surveys of the birdlife. The 2016 surveys are tentatively scheduled for Dalgety Downs Station and Yaringa Station of the western Gascoyne Region.

The field surveys undertaken in the BWA Rangeland Surveys are scheduled for the last two weeks in July each year. Two areas are surveyed, each with five days of fieldwork, usually covering five survey plots per day in each location. After 25 survey plots, we reposition to a second conservation reserve or former pastoral lease region. The stations can have a range of facilities from pure bush camping to shearing shed accommodation with electricity, covered meeting rooms, flush toilets and hot showers. However, participants are expected to be completely self-sufficient.

The surveys have more scientific rigour than the shorter weekend BWA campouts as the data acquired provide DPaW with valuable information for conservation management. Scientific manuscripts from previous rangeland surveys can be found in the Amytornis on-line journal of the BWA website. The daily field survey periods require a reasonable level of fitness, but are not too onerous. Non-birding partners are also welcome. It is a very good way to increase your competence in birding and to enjoy camping in station country with a group of like-minded people.

If you would like to be placed on the email list to attend, please contact:

John and Ruth Luyer (john@hibeach.net),
Ed and Alyson Paull (edward.paull@bigpond.com),
Roger and Cheryl McCallum (roger8cheryl6@hotmail.com),
or David and Roma Bell (dtrcbell@iinet.net.au)

and mark your calendar for the last two weeks in July.

2016 GREAT COCKY COUNT

We are excited to announce the seventh annual Great Cocky Count is happening Sunday 3 April 2016!

The Great Cocky Count is an annual citizen science survey that aims to count as many Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos as possible across WA on a single night. Getting involved is easy — as a volunteer you simply go to the roost location we allocate to you and count all the cockatoos flying into their night-time roosting trees. The survey only takes an hour, starting 30 minutes before sunset. This year, the Count will be held at sunset on Sunday 3 April 2016.

Registrations are now open.

To register as a volunteer, go to the Great Cocky Count website and fill in the new online registration form (look for the drop-down menu) or downloadable version. Please be aware registrations close two weeks before the count (Sunday 20th March) so it's best to register as soon as possible!

Community Information Sessions

Each year, BirdLife runs a number of community information sessions in the Perth region and some locations across the south-west. These workshops provide an opportunity to come along and learn about black-cockatoos, their conservation, and see demonstrations on how to identify and count cockatoos in the wild. Once you've registered for the 2016 Great Cocky Count, keep a lookout for a future email notifying of a workshop near you.

More volunteers needed!!

We are always looking for more volunteers so please pass this email on to anyone you think might be interested in participating in the Great Cocky Count.

Do you have a black cockatoo roost site near you?

BirdLife are trying to locate more roost sites across WA, so please contact us at carnabys@birdlife.org.au and let us know if there's a black-cockatoo roost site near you.

Readily accessible areas of the Great Western Woodlands

The Great Western Woodlands (GWW) is the largest remaining intact temperate woodland in the world. Covering 1.6 million hectares, it spans an area 230% the size of Tasmania. The Birdlife GWW project is an ambitious 12 year undertaking to regularly survey specific sites throughout the GWW in order to inform conservation activities to keep the area intact for future generations. We call for volunteers twice each year (spring and autumn) to do these surveys. One exciting thing about the project is that we are working proactively in a healthy ecosystem with strong bird populations, instead of trying to keep critically endangered birds from going over the brink.

If you have ever considered joining these regular BirdLife surveys you would know that many parts of the GWW are quite remote and the surveys require a serious commitment. However, for people just passing through the area there are easier options to see the birds and contribute to the GWW Project.

The well-known Hyden to Norseman road passes just to the south of the Jilbadji nature reserve, in the southern part of the GWW. The road itself passes through the GWW and offers many birding opportunities. Several regular survey sites are located within 20 km of this road heading north up the well

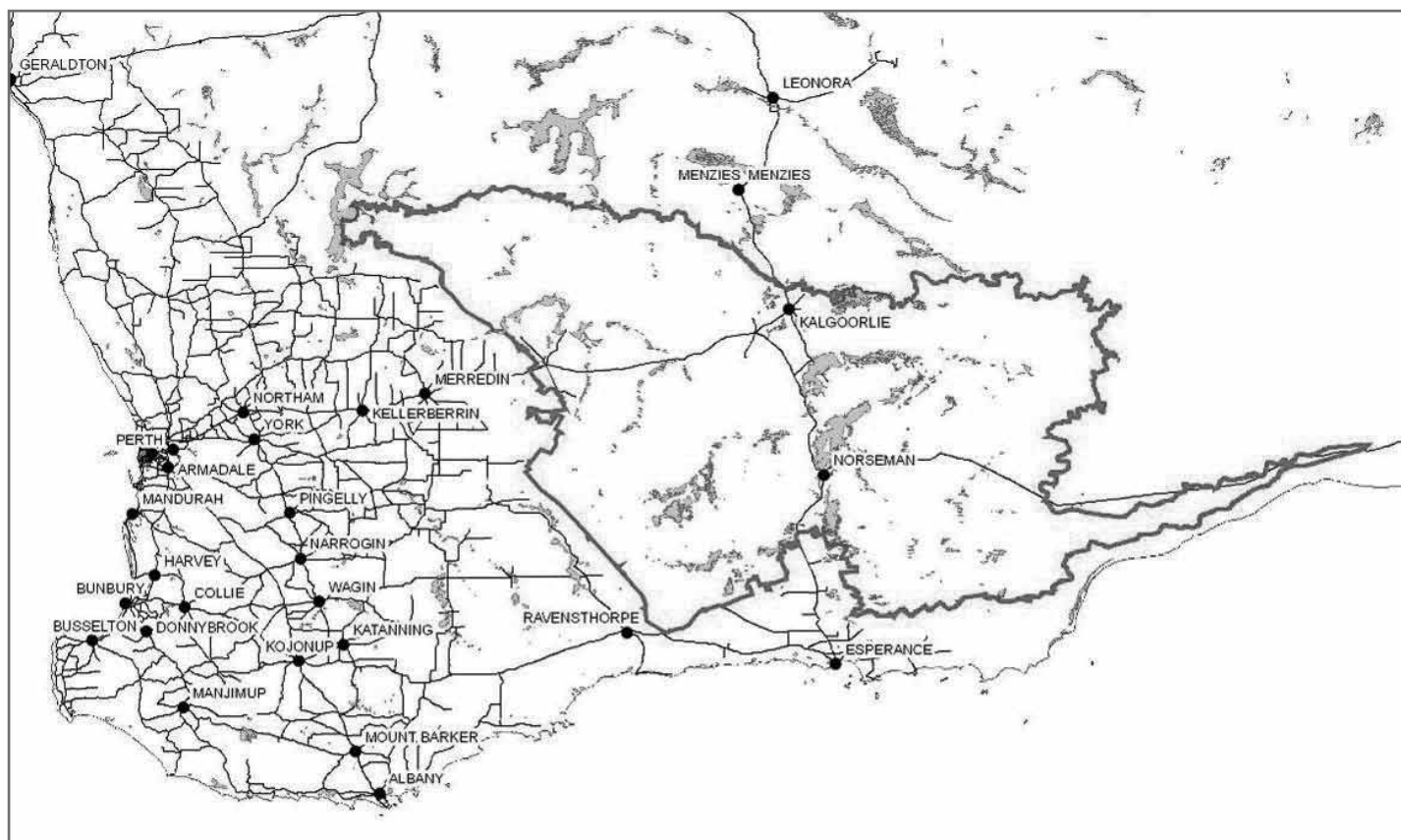
maintained Marvel Loch-Forrestania Rd. People can make a contribution to the project by undertaking 20 minute surveys at these sites without needing to divert too far from their route.

Other sites only a little more difficult to access exist further east. People can also contribute by recording the first 2 hectares and 20 minutes of every birding walk at any spot within the GWW as an Atlas survey.

To the north both Credo and Fraser Range stations have basic facilities for campers. Both are easily accessed and many GWW survey sites can be comfortably reached by day trips.

There are many wonderful birding spots throughout the woodlands. Combining your recreational birding with Atlas surveys is little effort and you will have the satisfaction of knowing you are contributing to the preservation of this ecosystem. If you are contemplating doing something like this, contact the GWW Surveys coordinator Maris Lauva for information about locations and bird lists: gww@birdlife.org.au 0403 029 051

To read about the project see: <http://www.birdlife.org.au/projects/great-western-woodlands>





Malleefowl Report Form

SPECIES NAME: <u>Leipoa ocellata (malleefowl)</u>		NUMBER SEEN: _____	
OBSERVATION DATE: _____		TIME: _____ am/pm	
OBSERVER NAME/S: _____			
Organisation / Company: _____			
Role / Position / Job title: _____			
Address: _____			
EMAIL: _____		PHONE: _____	

OBSERVATION LOCATION: (i.e. property address, distance to nearest intersection, reserve name, locality, nearest town, distance and direction to that place)			

DISTRICT: _____		LGA: _____		Reserve No: _____	
------------------------	--	-------------------	--	--------------------------	--

DATUM:	COORDINATE TYPE:	COORDINATE SOURCE:	ACCURACY OF COORDINATES: (±)
GDA94 / MGD94 <input type="checkbox"/>	Decimal Degrees <input type="checkbox"/>	GPS <input type="checkbox"/>	30m <input type="checkbox"/> 10km <input type="checkbox"/>
AGD84 / AMG84 <input type="checkbox"/>	Degrees Minutes Seconds <input type="checkbox"/>	Differential GPS <input type="checkbox"/>	300m <input type="checkbox"/> 50km <input type="checkbox"/>
WGS84 <input type="checkbox"/>	UTM <input type="checkbox"/>	Map <input type="checkbox"/>	1km <input type="checkbox"/> 100km <input type="checkbox"/>
Unknown <input type="checkbox"/>	(If UTM coords provided, Zone is required)	Google Earth/Maps <input type="checkbox"/>	Specific distance (m): _____
		GIS (i.e. ArcMap) <input type="checkbox"/>	

Latitude/Northing: _____	No. satellites: _____
Longitude/Easting: _____	Map/atlas title: _____
Zone: _____	Map scale: _____
FD Grid Ref: _____	Other: _____

LAND TENURE:					
Nature Reserve <input type="checkbox"/>	State Forest <input type="checkbox"/>	Private Property <input type="checkbox"/>	Rail Reserve <input type="checkbox"/>	Aboriginal Reserve <input type="checkbox"/>	Shire Reserve <input type="checkbox"/>
National Park <input type="checkbox"/>	Timber Reserve <input type="checkbox"/>	Pastoral Lease <input type="checkbox"/>	Rd Res. MRD <input type="checkbox"/>	State Waters <5.4km <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/>
Conservation Park <input type="checkbox"/>	Water Reserve <input type="checkbox"/>	UCL <input type="checkbox"/>	Rd Res. Shire <input type="checkbox"/>	Marine Park <input type="checkbox"/>	

CERTAINTY OF ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION:	AGE AND SEX:
Certain <input type="checkbox"/>	Number of Adults:
Photo <input type="checkbox"/>	Number of Juveniles:
Moderately certain <input type="checkbox"/>	Number of Hatchlings:
Specimen <input type="checkbox"/>	Male _____
Not sure <input type="checkbox"/>	Male _____
Identified by expert <input type="checkbox"/>	Female _____
	Female _____
	Unknown _____
	Unknown _____
	Unknown _____

Expert name, qualifications, affiliation: _____

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES / DESCRIPTION OF OBSERVED ANIMAL:

ANIMAL ACTIVITY:

Please return form to:
fauna@dpaw.wa.gov.au

or Species and Communities Branch, Department of Parks and Wildlife, Locked Bag 104, Bentley Delivery Centre WA 6983

Record entered by: _____ Date entered: _____ Database no: _____



Malleefowl Report Form

OBSERVATION METHOD: (Select as many as applicable)			
Survey Level 1 or 2 survey <input type="checkbox"/> Targeted survey <input type="checkbox"/> Census survey <input type="checkbox"/>	Monitoring Regular monitoring <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally monitoring <input type="checkbox"/>	Other Opportunistic/incidental <input type="checkbox"/> Other: (Please specify) _____	
OBSERVATION TYPE: (Select as many as applicable)			
Live Day sighting <input type="checkbox"/> Night sighting <input type="checkbox"/> Dawn sighting <input type="checkbox"/> Dusk sighting <input type="checkbox"/> Remote camera <input type="checkbox"/> Baited camera <input type="checkbox"/> Tapped <input type="checkbox"/> Spotlighting <input type="checkbox"/> Other: (Please specify) _____	Dead Roadkill <input type="checkbox"/> Found shot <input type="checkbox"/> Found poisoned <input type="checkbox"/> Killed by another animal <input type="checkbox"/> Bones <input type="checkbox"/> Degenerated carcass <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown cause of death <input type="checkbox"/> Other: (Please specify) _____	Secondary signs Egg <input type="checkbox"/> Egg shell <input type="checkbox"/> Mound <input type="checkbox"/> Feathers <input type="checkbox"/> Tracks <input type="checkbox"/> Scats <input type="checkbox"/> Bones <input type="checkbox"/> Diggings <input type="checkbox"/> Scratchings <input type="checkbox"/> Heard <input type="checkbox"/> Other: (Please specify) _____	Historical evidence Subfossil material <input type="checkbox"/> Fossil <input type="checkbox"/> Living knowledge (verbal) <input type="checkbox"/> Historical account (written) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: (Please specify) _____
Specific observations:			
Malleefowl egg and egg shell: Egg unhatched <input type="checkbox"/> Egg hatched, recent <input type="checkbox"/> Egg hatched, old <input type="checkbox"/>	Malleefowl mound: state, approximate age and dimensions Active, at time of sighting <input type="checkbox"/> 2 years old <input type="checkbox"/> Active, recently used <input type="checkbox"/> 5 years old <input type="checkbox"/> Inactive <input type="checkbox"/> 10 years old <input type="checkbox"/> State unknown <input type="checkbox"/> >30 years old <input type="checkbox"/> Estimate mound dimensions: _____		
REPRODUCTIVE STATE:			
Non-breeding <input type="checkbox"/> Not known <input type="checkbox"/>	Mound building <input type="checkbox"/> Mating <input type="checkbox"/>	Eggs in mound <input type="checkbox"/> Hatchling emergence <input type="checkbox"/>	Other: (Please specify) _____
Other observation details:			
SPECIMEN: (Select as many as applicable)			
Frozen carcass <input type="checkbox"/> Degenerate carcass <input type="checkbox"/> Spirit specimen <input type="checkbox"/>	Taxidermy specimen <input type="checkbox"/> Skull and/or bones <input type="checkbox"/> Tissue and/or blood sample <input type="checkbox"/>	Egg <input type="checkbox"/> Feather <input type="checkbox"/> Scats <input type="checkbox"/>	No specimen / not retained <input type="checkbox"/> Other: (Please specify) _____
Specimen location:			
WA Museum <input type="checkbox"/> WA Museum Catalogue No. _____	Other Museum / collection <input type="checkbox"/> Museum / collection name and Catalogue No. _____	Given to DPaW Office <input type="checkbox"/> Please specify office location and contact name: _____	Retained by collector <input type="checkbox"/> Collectors Reference No. _____
Specimen identified by (name, qualifications, affiliation etc.): _____			

Please return form to:
fauna@dpaw.wa.gov.au

or Species and Communities Branch, Department of Parks and Wildlife, Locked Bag 104, Bentley Delivery Centre WA 6983

Record entered by: _____ Date entered: _____ Database no: _____



Malleefowl Report Form

HABITAT INFORMATION:

LANDFORM:

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Cave <input type="checkbox"/> | Rocky outcrop <input type="checkbox"/> | Beach <input type="checkbox"/> | Swamp <input type="checkbox"/> | Other: (Please specify) |
| Cliff <input type="checkbox"/> | Flat <input type="checkbox"/> | Ocean <input type="checkbox"/> | Wetland <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Crest <input type="checkbox"/> | Gully <input type="checkbox"/> | Creek <input type="checkbox"/> | Drainage line <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Hill <input type="checkbox"/> | Sand dune <input type="checkbox"/> | Lake <input type="checkbox"/> | Open depression <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Ridge <input type="checkbox"/> | Slope <input type="checkbox"/> | River <input type="checkbox"/> | Closed depression <input type="checkbox"/> | |

VEGETATION TYPE:

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Forest <input type="checkbox"/> | Shrubland <input type="checkbox"/> | Sedgeland <input type="checkbox"/> | Garden <input type="checkbox"/> | Other: (Please specify) |
| Woodland <input type="checkbox"/> | Heathland <input type="checkbox"/> | Rock communities <input type="checkbox"/> | Orchard <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Mallee <input type="checkbox"/> | Grassland <input type="checkbox"/> | Wetland <input type="checkbox"/> | Plantation <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | | | | |

Associated flora species, ecological communities, and other habitat details:

FIRE HISTORY: Last Fire: Season/Month: _____ Year: _____ Fire Intensity: High ☐ Medium ☐ Low ☐ No signs of fire ☐

OTHER COMMENTS:

ATTACHED: Map ☐ Mudmap ☐ GIS data ☐ Photo ☐ Field notes ☐ Other: _____

COPY SENT TO: Regional Office ☐ District Office ☐ Other: _____

Submitter of record: _____	Role: _____	Date submitted: _____
Signature: _____	Organisation: _____	
Contact Details: _____		

Please return form to:
fauna@dpaw.wa.gov.au

or Species and Communities Branch, Department of Parks and Wildlife, Locked Bag 104, Bentley Delivery Centre WA 6983

Record entered by: _____ Date entered: _____ Database no: _____

Attention Photographers!

Photographic submissions for the 2017 BirdLife WA calendar are now open.

Would you like one of your bird photographs to appear in the 2017 BirdLife WA calendar?

Then please contact Robyn Pickering pickeringrobyn29@yahoo.com for more information about the selection criteria, due date, etc.

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A Bird Lover's Paradise.

WINTER BIRD WORKSHOPS ARE COMING BACK!

After a couple of years' break, the BirdLife WA Community Education Committee (CEC) will be running a weekend of bird workshops on the mornings of Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th of July. Saturday will be an *Introduction to Birding* and Sunday will have a number of ID sessions.

We would like your suggestions for the Sunday ID sessions. Along with sessions on identifying particular species or families the CEC is introducing a new session on the birds of a specific location — what you are likely to see and how to identify their calls. This hopefully will then be followed up by an excursion to that location on the following weekend.

Please let us know what species or families of birds around which you would like to learn more about identification (e.g. waders, raptors) or perhaps there is a location you would like us to cover for the bird calls (e.g. a forest or woodland location not far from Perth). All suggestions will be gratefully received and should be directed to Annette Park at the BirdLife WA office (phone 9383 7749 or email wa@birdlife.org.au).

Full details of the workshops and how to book a place will be advertised in the June edition of *WABN* and the WA e-News.

New WA members

The following WA people joined BirdLife Australia during the period 2 Nov 2015 to 29 Jan 2016

H Anderson, E Ashcroft, T Ashton-Graham, M Blyth, L Borrison, D Brennand, P Brown, M Burt, D Cameron, R Cattermole, M Davidson, G De Vos, B Deslands, B Dicker, W Dodd, R du Toit, G Foley, S Foster, A Gaskin, J Grimoldby, C Grohmann, A Gunness, J Hartney, A Harwood, S Holroyd, M Howard, K Howlett, L Jackson, J King, J King, J Kinsella, S Kinsella, A Mackenzie, W MacLeod, B Meredith, B Miller, J Mitchell, S Moir, F Morcombe, V Nelson, I Palmer, M Palmer, N Palmer, R Palmer, H Parton, J Putland, T Redican, L Rogers, C Rose, C Rose, K Sharp, C Stone, S Stone, J Thomas, E Thompson, J Townsend, C Toyn, S Wannan, D Whittaker, M Wood and L Wright

Country branches

ALBANY BRANCH

Excursions report

10 November 2015 outing, Denmark

We met at the Rotunda by the Denmark River and then made our way to the lookout above Ocean Beach, but soon abandoned this exposed spot and headed to the mouth of the Denmark River where we saw several cormorant species, Black Swans and an Australian Pied Oystercatcher with a juvenile. A walk near the mouth of the Denmark River provided the rather unexpected sighting of a Little Corella nesting in a tree opposite the caravan park. Along the river we found nests of Little Pied and Little Black Cormorants. In nearby Karri trees we found a Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike nest. Western White-naped Honeyeaters and Spotted Pardalotes were present as were Western Rosella and Western (Golden) Whistler. Our tally for the day was 48 species.

8 December 2015 outing, Lake Seppings/ Emu Point

We started our excursion with a walk around Lake Seppings. Apart from all the regularly seen waterfowl, we found a Great Crested Grebe. Purple Swamphens were quite numerous and we even managed to find several Dusky Moorhens. A Buff-banded Rail was encountered on the path. As expected, we had good views of Red-eared Firetail, White-breasted Robin and Red-winged Fairy-wren. At Emu Point we were pleased to see a reasonable number of shorebirds including Red-necked Stint, Common Greenshank, Red-capped Plover, Whimbrel and a Grey Plover in most of its breeding plumage. We counted 62 species for the day. Needless to say that our shared Christmas lunch was very enjoyable.

19 January 2016 outing– Lower King / Riverside Golf Course

Rain was threatening and the easterlies were howling, which kept the number of attendees fairly low. We decided against a planned visit to the Kalgan estuary where we were to look for shorebirds and instead headed to the reserve at Prideaux Road. The Australian Owlet-nightjar didn't seem too pleased with the weather either and refused to show itself. However, we did get to see a reasonable number of bushbirds, most of them at the Bon Accord Road end of the reserve where we found Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Dusky Woodswallow, Red-capped Parrot and White-winged Triller. Further along the road we found a pair of Rainbow Bee-eaters catching insects from a powerline. A Brown Goshawk calling nearby had us somewhat concerned about the safety of the bee-eaters, but they were still present when we returned from our walk through the Riverview Golf Course. Bird numbers here were quite low, but the opportunity to get a close-up look at Western Spinebills including a recently fledged young made the walk worth our while.

Other activities

The local branch also took part in South Coast Natural Resource Management's annual Salty Summer holiday

activities for children and organised a bird walk around Lake Seppings on 11 January.

On 2 February, the local branch participated in a World Wetlands Day event at Lake Seppings and organised a guided bird walk. The inaugural event was a collaboration of the City of Albany, South Coast NRM, BirdLife and a number of other organisations and it is planned to have another World Wetlands Day celebration in 2017.

Future outings

Excursions will take place on Tuesday, 12 April, 10 May, 14 June. More details about destinations, where to meet, etc, will be made available on BWA e-news. You can also check the Albany Bird Group's website and Facebook page:

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

Excursion leaders will be either Ray Garstone (PH: 9844 7540), Brad Kneebone (PH: 9845 2233) or Anne Bondin (PH: 9844 1793). Feel free to contact any of us for further information.

South Coast Festival of Birds

During the month of March, there will be a host of activities and events for bird enthusiasts in the Albany region. The festival, now in its fourth year, offers bird walks, presentations at the local library, a field trip to Gondwana Link nature reserves, a nest box workshop, bird identification courses and a symposium with a variety of speakers at the Albany Town Hall. For more details and information on how to register for some of the events, please go to Green Skills festival website: <http://www.birdfestival.greenskills.org.au/program.html>



Great Knot, Alfred Cove. Photo by Ian Wallace (see report, p46)

Country branches, ctd

BUNBURY GROUP

Excursion reports

Pt Mornington, 31 October 2015

Pt Mornington at the west bank Preston River mouth, Leschenault Estuary, Bunbury was the site for this excursion attended by 21 people.

This is a quiet, sheltered and safe place for shorebirds and we were on the lookout for Siberian migratory birds in particular. There were six species: Red-necked Stint (60), Common Greenshank, Common Sandpiper, Great Knot (7), Bar-tailed Godwit (8) and Grey Plover (7), as well as other birds, 32 species in all, with 172+ plus birds counted.

We welcomed our new member Rose. Many thanks again for such great teamwork, including recording of species and numbers, and morning tea, and to Valerie for including the records in the Atlas data base.

Dalyellup Lake, 21 November 2015

Highlights include majestic ancient Tuarts, one with an enormous nest, and some impressive paperbark wetland. Other highlights included breeding Yellow-billed Spoonbills, a Dusky Moorhen with two tiny juveniles and excellent views of Whistling Kites overhead with their giveaway whistling cries. Thirty-two species, including water and bush birds.

The December boat trip on the estuary to check the sandflats and waterways for birdlife was cancelled due to unfavourable weather. This style of excursion has the added dimension of vino and nibbles with our field guides and binoculars.

Greg Harewood observed five Eastern Curlews at Pt Duoro on Sunday 23 January 2016 (north point of Collie River Mouth). It seems a significant quantity given their low world numbers.

A black-cockatoo workshop is planned for Bunbury in time for the Great Cocky Count in April.

Sue Kalab, Convenor

Black Swan movement to Leschenault Estuary

Each summer some Black Swans are on the move around waterways in Bunbury, making their way down streams, brooks and rivers to the ocean, northwards to the Leschenault Estuary. Here they congregate in large numbers, and in some years up to 5000 are counted.

After breeding, Black Swans lose their flight feathers and are flightless for a month until they moult. Many are juveniles which do not have flight feather until the first moult. Black Swans gather in large numbers for safety — this much is known.

However, I have not been able to find out if this ocean movement commonly occurs in other locations. Not much seems to be known. I asked the great bird Google why

Black Swans go to the ocean but little was revealed in the way of scientific observation. I found these references:

- This link from Broome. <http://10000birds.com/black-swans-in-the-indian-ocean.htm>

"You would not expect to see Black Swans in the ocean, but on several occasions we have observed this and there does not appear to be an obvious explanation why they would be seen floating around in the Indian Ocean. The ocean would be a lot cooler than the relatively warm waters at shallow lake systems, but there would not be the food required and it is doubtful they spend a great deal of time in the ocean. We have observed them in very deep water amongst boats in other years."

- This made worldwide news and shows Black Swans surfing on a Queensland beach in December 2013. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/earth/wildlife/10525388/Four-black-swans-spotted-surfing-in-Australia.html>
- BirdLife Australia's December journal P.58 "Eagle vs Swan" is a photo-story from New South Wales. The author Alana Wilkes was surprised to see a family of Black Swans and three cygnets on a beach. One of the cygnets was taken by a Sea Eagle as she watched.

Here in Bunbury each summer, Black Swans move bravely along the shoreline at Back Beach and adjacent beaches further south on prevailing south-westerlies and navigate their way across Koombana Bay. They travel in small groups but can become isolated from their mates and have to go it alone. They take shortcuts crossing Casuarina Drive to the Bay and on to the Cut (a man-made entrance to Leschenault Estuary) before reaching other birds there.



At the Fairy Tern Conservation Workshop with Nic Dunlop in December 2015 at Peel-Harvey Catchment Council.

L-R: Kimberly Onton, Christine Fleay (DPaW Bunbury and BirdLife Australia) and Grainne Maguire. Photo by Sue Kalab

Country branches: Bunbury Group, ctd

For years, wildlife carer Doreen Jones responded to calls about birds stranded or in trouble from concerned community members and local government rangers. She rounded up the birds and ferried them to safety on the nearest wetland until it was realised that the birds are making their way downstream to the ocean. We became aware it was natural behaviour. However, the birds cross busy roads and negotiate obstacles such as man-made rock walls. I have seen them head out to sea and disappear in choppy waters, frightened by a well-meaning swimmer in an attempt to rescue them. Other hazards along the way include attacks by off-lead dogs with unaware owners.

Bird observer Bruce Buchanan, who lives with ocean views and binoculars at the ready, observes Black Swan movements either in flight, or being in the sea, sometimes surfing and in shallow water and all northbound. Over 2014 and 2015 he's occasionally noticed this pattern (i.e. towards the Estuary) occurs from September onwards. There is a reverse trend from February onwards when Black Swans are seen flying southwards.

Is this known elsewhere?

Sue Kalab
Convenor, Birdlife Bunbury

CAPE TO CAPE GROUP

Program

Sunday 20 March – Full-day excursion: Canebrake and beyond – Margaret River/Whicher Range

Meet at 8.00 am at Canebrake Pool picnic site. This is a full day excursion with the option to leave at any time. We will drive along dirt tracks, suitable for conventional vehicles, stopping to bird watch in a variety of habitats. We may finish up at a different location to the starting point.

From Bussell Highway, travel along Osmington Road, crossing over Jindong-Treeton Road, until you come to Canebrake Road on your left. Drive about 5 km along Canebrake Road (gravel) until you come to the picnic/camping area after entering the Rapids Conservation Park. Bring morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea.

Leader: Boyd Wykes

Saturday 16 April – Half-day excursion: Mowen

Meet at 8.30 am at car park in Rosa Brook. From Margaret River travel along Rosa Brook Road to the car park next to the fire shed, located a few metres past Darnell's Rosa Brook Store (on right) and Crozier Road turnoff (on left). We shall explore known water points in autumn in an attempt to locate cockatoos. Bring morning tea.

Leader: Christine Wilder

Saturday 28 May – Half-day excursion: Wharnccliffe Mill, Margaret River

Meet at 8.30 am at Wharnccliffe Mill. Entry is off Carter's Road, 1 km west of Bussell Highway. Park in the visitors' car park. We shall explore this beautiful Karri stream reserve right on the edge of town. Bring morning tea or buy coffee at the café.

Leader: Boyd Wykes

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.

Event

Birdlife involvement in Bioblitz

Local volunteers from the Cape to Cape Bird Group were involved with the Bioblitz (organised by the Cape to Cape Catchments Group) at the A Class Reserve in Margaret River over three days (12-14 November).

The Thursday Program for Schools, organised by Tracey Muir, was a great success, with individual classes participating in half hour sessions and locating 19 species of birds overall.

Spotlighting was organised for Friday night and although nocturnal birds were not heard or seen, there were other things to look at — both species of possum with young ones, spiders, bats and frogs. Thanks, Michelle Sheridan, for leading us on a beautiful nocturnal walk.

A total of 29 bird species was recorded over the three days including Crested Shrike-tit, Baudin's Black-Cockatoo, Red-winged Fairy-wren, White-breasted Robin and Gilbert's (Western White-naped) Honeyeater, confirming the value of the A Class Reserve, just a short walk from the main street of Margaret River.

Thanks to visitors who attended the walks on Saturday, especially the UWA contingent for erecting the BirdLife gazebo, and the volunteers who gave their time throughout the birdwatching activities/displays — Cherry Delfs, Steven Castan, Joan Sharpe, Roger Crabtree, Charlie Ward, Hank Durlik, Louisa Robertson, Natalie Bell and Ronen Eyal.

Congratulations to Event Organiser Laura Bailey and Tracey Muir, Lyndsey Cox and other members of the Cape to Cape Catchments Group for a great effort.

Christine Wilder

Excursion report

Ambergate Reserve – 6 December 2015

A small group of six gathered at the Ambergate Reserve car park on a blustery, overcast and somewhat

Country branches: Cape to Cape, ctd

threatening Sunday morning. After a quick briefing by Christine, the group dutifully doused footwear in the 'Dieback-preventing footbath' before commencing our walk through the 75-hectare regional park that protects the remnants of woodlands once common along the coastal plains of Busselton and surrounds.

There are 4 km of walk-trails through this delightful bush oasis, located approximately 9 km south of the city of Busselton and expertly managed by the Busselton Naturalists Club and the Geographe Community Landcare Nursery.

Thankfully, there was little rain during the morning walk and the group was rewarded with a wide variety of birds, particularly on the margins of the reserve where the bush gives way to open paddocks. With a large number of birds calling, listening skills were at a premium and Christine again showed her expertise in recognising many of these, including the somewhat metallic notes of a Rufous Songlark.

After some deft directional tracking, several Rufous Songlarks were located in a neighbouring paddock and the group was able to get excellent views of these wonderful birds. One songlark was observed carrying food, gathered on the reserve side of the fence, several times to the same place in the crop in the paddock. Other highlights included White-winged Trillers, Rainbow Bee-eaters and a variety of parrots including good views of a number of Elegant Parrots.

The group enjoyed a very successful morning's birding. Our thanks to Christine for leading the walk and to Bernie Masters for advertising the walk to Busselton Naturalists Club members — with two newcomers joining us.

Michael Sayers

A black-cockatoo night roost in Margaret River

Knowing that a BirdLife project to survey forest black-cockatoos will soon be underway, I decided to get a head start by catching up with the mob of Baudin's Black-Cockatoos I regularly see in the bush near my home and at my home, with a rowdy mob waking me early as they lap up nectar from callistemon blossom.

I have summarised my observations from the afternoon of 20 October 2015, to encourage others to share the fun of helping uncover the little described habits of this iconic, endangered species.

I found my first group of half a dozen birds at 6.15 pm, downstream of the bush block avenue in very tall Marri, rapidly working and then dropping nuts. I could hear two other small groups, one to the south and one to the north-east. From there I headed for a pool in an old gravel pit, where I have been hearing birds in the evening, and I settled down under a low Peppermint.

The first four birds arrived at 6.35 pm, including an immature whose constant begging calls were rewarded with feeding by an adult. The birds dropped down to logs protruding from the water, drank quickly then retreated to nearby trees. More birds arrived in groups of around

four for the next half hour, totalling 24-30. The birds flew over me when making their way to and from the water.

I am confident that I was unobserved and not a disturbance.

At 7.10 pm, all the birds were perched for about ten minutes in Marri trees close to the waterhole, quietly calling to each other in their small groups.

They then all peeled off in their groups to introduced eucalypts on the edge of a large residential property immediately north where I almost left them, presuming this to be their final roost site for the night.

However, in the half dark, well after sunset, the groups then peeled away silently (except for the immature bird still calling), heading to a stand of introduced gums on the creek-line 100 metres away. This is the same area that I recorded up to 70+ birds roosting when I conducted some monitoring in April 2014.

Boyd Wykes

Black-cockatoos widespread within the capes – October/November 2015

Michael Sayers reported Baudin's Black-Cockatoos feeding in callistemon in his Dunsborough garden on 26 October 2015. When driving to Margaret River around 10.00 am on 28 October, Roger Crabtree and Helena Blom counted around 50 cockatoos at Kudardup, but unfortunately was unable to stop in traffic to identify them. Other reports were received in early November of more than 50 birds in Brookfield Estate (east Margaret River) and 100 birds or more in Metricup.

At certain times of the year, black-cockatoos are much more visible here in west Margaret River. Depending upon the amount of flowering plants in gardens, black-cockatoos often move from their roost sites in nearby forests to feed on cultivated Callistemons.

During October, in my garden, flocks from five to 50 Baudin's Black-Cockatoos made the most of the plentiful callistemon blossoms, and perched in the flowering Peppermints and nearby pine tree. Early every morning they came for several weeks, to dangle from and destroy the vegetation. Noisy! Carnaby's Black-Cockatoos and Forest Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos also visited throughout the month but they weren't interested in the blossoms.

Does this spectacle happen all up and down the capes?

How many black-cockatoos are there in total?

Do they remain in the general area of the capes?

There are always more questions than answers when watching black-cockatoos.

Each autumn and spring, black-cockatoos are attracted to roost noisily during daytime in the forest opposite my home. I have looked at this small area of forest where I conduct a regular bird survey and it doesn't look all that different to other sections of forest — there are Marris of all sizes and water points nearby, possibly all the requirements for black-cockatoos — food, water, roosts and hollows — and it is loosely connected to other portions of forest in all directions from town.

Country branches: Cape to Cape, ctd

Often the black-cockatoos present something quite unexpected, as happened on 27 October, when I visited the lookout to the cut at the mouth of the Blackwood River, Augusta.

There on the other side of the channel, I counted 38 black-cockatoos feeding in the Marram grass in the dunes right next to the water's edge. For no apparent reason they flew off almost as soon as I saw them, so I was unable to see what they were actually feeding on (no binoculars either) but I managed to identify a couple of Baudin's Black-Cockatoos as they flew over a dune.

Following black-cockatoos in thick forest and identifying them too can be a real challenge and researchers trying to piece together what happens with the forest species in the south-west have a major task.

No matter how puzzling these birds are, every observation may ultimately assist in working out what occurs within the capes (and adjacent areas in the south west).

Christine Wilder

PS: Later when looking at a very blurry photograph taken at the Augusta cut, it appears the black-cockatoos may have been feeding on a pelargonium species.



Negotiating a river crossing near Margaret River confluence. Photo by Christine Wilder

PEEL-MANDURAH GROUP

See Coming Events for future excursions.

For further information, please contact Bob Paterson:
email peelbirds1@westnet.com.au

or phone 0400 664 453.

WHEATBELT-AVON BRANCH

Excursion report

Corrigin and surrounds, 24-25 October 2015

A small group of six met at the caravan park Friday night, joined by Robin who is a Corrigin wildflower enthusiast. She was also very keen to learn about the birds. This added a lot of local knowledge to the group. The idea of the campout was to survey as many reserves within the Corrigin Shire as possible, in line with the Wheatbelt-Avon Branch aim to survey all reserves within the Wheatbelt. We set off at 7:00 am on Saturday. Seven areas were surveyed including four reserves, two water bodies (sewerage and dam) and the rifle range. We also went just out of the shire for lunch at Lake Yealering. Whilst travelling, three Regent Parrots flew across the road.

Other highlights of the day were a 2 m+ Carpet Python at Gorge Rocks and a juvenile Red-capped Robin which took a bit of identifying. Rainbow Bee-eaters were seen at several reserves. On Sunday, we were off at 7:00 am again, this time heading to the Corrigin Wildflower Drive. We were first shown the rare, very delicate Corrigin Grevillea. Birding here was the best of all spots visited, with 21 species being identified including the Elegant Parrot. We were invited to morning tea by Robin, who has a largish property on the outskirts of town. At least one more bird species was added to the list.

A total of 60 species were sighted which was considered a good number as the weather was not favourable.

Henny Knight

Excursion reports

PERUP RESERVE CAMPOUT, 30 OCTOBER-1 NOVEMBER 2015

Sixteen of us camped in the Perup homestead for a superb weekend of fur and feathers. The accommodation was wonderful with great views of the bush from the bedrooms, as well as the huge lounge-cum-kitchen.

Perup was rather dry for this time of year due to the low rainfall (646 mm as against the average 926 mm in Manjimup), so three wetlands within the reserve were dry, and the dam near the homestead held little water.

In the wider region, Kulunilup Swamp was dry and Lake Unicap was very low while Bokerup Swamp and Red Lake had good water levels. The latter held numerous waterbirds including several Chestnut Teals and Yellow-billed Spoonbills. Despite the poor rainfall, the bush looked good with some flowering bushes and trees.

The bush was alive with Shining Bronze-Cuckoos, Fan-tailed Cuckoos and Western (Golden) Whistlers. They were a distraction when we were attempting to listen for anything else. We were fortunate to see some great bushbirds such as Western Yellow and Scarlet Robins, Western Spinebills, Splendid Fairy-wrens and a Restless Flycatcher. We saw only three raptor species which I found surprising. We also saw 16 waterbird species in the surrounding lakes, adding to the numbers. The final list had 90 bird species with 41 of those recorded within the confines of Perup Reserve.

The best parts of the whole trip were the nightly spot-lighting tours led by David Secomb. Not only does David do birds, he does fur. He is a super sleuth. We were amazed by the number of possums with young as well as the woylies, bandicoot, kangaroos and wallabies that he managed to find for us. The highlight of course was the view of a Brush-tailed Phascogale in one of the red flowering gums. Few of us had ever seen one in the wild before, so we all were rather impressed.

This was an amazing weekend thanks to David's organisation and great leadership. Thanks also to the volunteer camp hosts for their contribution to the weekend.

Jill Hobbs

COLLINS ROAD, FLINT, 1 NOVEMBER 2015

Seventeen participants turned up for the annual walk in this part of the Flint State Forest. Good views of Blue-breasted Fairy-wrens were had but no Crested Shrike-tits were seen. The total of only 24 species probably reflected the drier than usual conditions for this time of year. Breeding was recorded for Blue-breasted Fairy-Wrens, Restless Flycatchers, Willie Wagtails (sitting or building) and Western Yellow Robins (fledglings).

As this was the 10th consecutive excursion to Collins Road, we have made some reflections. The number of birders has varied from seven to 22 over this period,



White-browed Scrubwren, Perup (see also p57). Photo by Andrew Hobbs

and the number of species from 17 to 36, giving a grand total of 56. We have breeding records for at least 16 species. Only three species (Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Galah and Singing Honeyeater) have been added to the list from 20 visits during the last seven years. Shrike-tits were recorded on six of the ten excursions. A further 12 species have been seen by us during 39 additional visits, most made during October, November or December.

Michael and Lesley Brooker

FORRESTDALE LAKE, 8 NOVEMBER 2015

With the lake only two days from becoming dry, the 21 people who came along were lucky to see the few remaining waders in the shallow water. Walking out from the observation platform off Moore Street, waders seen were 20+ Red-capped Plover, 5 Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, 1 Black-winged Stilt and 1 Red-necked Stint. Other species still present were Australian White Ibis, White-faced Heron, Straw-necked Ibis and 9 White-necked Herons.

We then walked south from the Broome Street Primary School along the Banksia Woodland trail and back for bird-call and morning tea. Five raptor species were the highlights here: Marsh Harrier, Nankeen Kestrel, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Little Eagle and Brown Goshawk.

With time still remaining, most of us went on to see the privately owned Stirling Road Swamp (viewed from the roadside) opposite the golf course. Twenty-three species were seen here; the highlights were 18 White-necked Heron, 1 Great Egret, an Australian Hobby, a Sacred Kingfisher and a Rainbow Bee-eater.

The combined total for both areas was 60 species, with 17 being waterbirds and six raptors.

David James

Excursion reports, ctd

PELICAN POINT, 12 NOVEMBER 2015

Eighteen members assembled at Pelican Point in calm conditions and pleasant temperatures. Once inside the reserve, we set off in a clockwise direction along the edge of the lagoon. Sadly, due to low winter rainfall, and the silting up of the channel linking the lagoon to the river, the quality of the water and its level has fluctuated, and there has been a decreasing number of visiting waders.

However, the Black-winged Stilts have managed to raise various chicks and we were fortunate enough to see the latest additions running around the lagoon edge. The resident Australian Pied Oystercatchers haven't been so lucky and have had three attempts at trying to hatch their eggs. Each time, the eggs have disappeared, and the regular Pelican Point group is at a loss to know what caused their disappearance.

Black Swans have taken a liking to the river area around the point and there was a large group in the water, plus some on the river edge, along with a mixture of Fairy Terns, Caspian and Crested Terns.

The usual selection of Little Pied and Little Black Cormorants were flying around and a Great Cormorant also made an appearance. A White-faced Heron and a Little Egret were welcome additions to the area and we had good views of an Eastern Osprey flying overhead.

A number of Red-capped Plovers were seen on the sand and in the growing area of grass directly next to the river edge, which now provides a relatively safe area for breeding. Over the past two years, Buff-banded Rails have also become regular residents, passing between the reserve and the bush area adjacent to the fence. Most people managed to catch sight of one during the walk.

We saw all four regular honeyeaters: Singing, Brown, White-cheeked Honeyeaters and Red Wattlebird, and the resident group of Variegated Fairy-wrens was heard but not seen.

We had an enjoyable walk and saw 35 species in total.

Kath Lindann

LAKE CLAREMONT, 14 NOVEMBER 2015

About 30 people, almost all members but including a visitor from the USA, gathered for what has become our regular spring walk at Lake Claremont. A very hot morning was forecast and I was keen to complete the walk around the lake in the advertised two hours. We did make it and it was indeed hot by the time we finished walking at 0930. Forty-seven species was the count, despite the water level being somewhat lower than in recent years

because of reduced rainfall. Nothing really unexpected was sighted but it is always good to see the babies. Recently hatched species included Pink-eared Duck, Australasian Grebe, Black-winged Stilt and Willy Wagtail.

Several members commented on the impressive re-vegetation work done by the Town of Claremont and the Friends of Lake Claremont. Bruce Haynes was on hand to give additional background information.

David Free

WEARNE ROAD, NORTH BANNISTER, 22 NOVEMBER 2015

The Wearne Road excursion was held on a hot day with the bush fly number increasing as the day went on! Twelve members attended and together we saw 40 bird species.

Highlights from the morning were Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo, Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo, Western Rosella, Elegant Parrot, Western Yellow Robin, Restless Flycatcher, Rufous Treecreeper, Blue-breasted Fairy-wren and White-browed Babbler. During the morning session we saw 35 species.

Those who stayed after the break added Painted Button-quail and Hooded Robin to the list at Wearne Road, but we all also had much better views of the Blue-breasted Fairy-wrens. Given it was so hot, we decided to have a quick look at the Metro Road waterhole. On arrival we scared off a pair of Emus. We also heard a Grey Currawong and those who stayed until the end also saw some juvenile Gilbert's (Western White-naped) Honeyeaters perched above the waterhole.

Robyn Pickering

ALFRED COVE, 29 NOVEMBER 2015

The weather on this Sunday morning excursion was mild, with light winds and a low tide, giving the 28 members and guests a better opportunity to observe the birds on the mud flats.

Though shorebird species numbers were low, Grey Plovers, Common Greenshanks, Bar-tailed Godwits, Great Knots, Black-winged Stilts and a healthy number of Australian Pied Oystercatchers were seen on the flats along with herons and egrets. (see photos, pp31,40,59)

A Buff-banded Rail was perched on a shrub in the samphire and on our return walk we noted five Ospreys soaring above us. Many bushbirds were spotted, including Western Gerygone, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Striated Pardalote, Mistletoebird, and three



Immature Black-fronted Dotterel, Lake Claremont. Photo by David Free (see also p2)

Excursion reports, ctd

honeyeater species, and we heard the Little Grassbird. A White-necked Heron flying overhead gave us a total of 46 species for the morning.

Toni Webster

CLARKSON RESERVE, MAYLANDS, 16 DECEMBER 2015

Fourteen BirdLife members had a very enjoyable outing in perfect weather. We walked up river to the boatshed, stopping for birds on the way. Several birds were feeding on the flowering mistletoe, including female Mistletoebirds. A very young Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike was seen, as well as waterbirds. Three duck species, Black Swans and two ibis species were noted.

Several honeyeaters were seen in flowering vegetation along the walk, including White-cheeked and New Holland Honeyeaters. The only shorebirds were Black-winged Stilts. Good views were had of Buff-banded Rail parents caring for their three young. An Australian Spotted Crake was seen several times on a muddy area alongside the river.

A highlight was watching an Australasian Darter manoeuvring a speared fish in order to swallow it. It took a minute or two and attracted the attention of a roosting Caspian Tern. The tern was a moment too late for a free meal and we watched the fish's passage down the darter's long, thin neck.

A total of 45 species were seen, the last being our only raptor, Australian Hobbies, as we were having our morning tea (see photo, p59).

Thanks to Clive Nealon for taking over the leadership.

Claire Gerrish

Just inside the gates, the Woody Pear was flowering and we walked in this area of Jarrah/Marri for an hour, finding Scarlet Robin and Collared Sparrowhawk though it was generally quiet. On to the shed where we had morning tea, followed by scoping Lake Mealup and Little Mealup. There were five duck species, numerous Black Swans and breeding Australasian Darter. The accurate forecast of 36° did nothing for the bushbird numbers. Seventeen people attended and we saw 37 species.

Sue Abbotts



Straw-necked Ibis, Lake Gwelup. Photo by John McMullan

LAKE GWELUP, 9 JANUARY

After an earlier recce, Clive Nealon and Claire Gerrish were able to point out many of the interesting birds on a productive walk for 24 members and visitors around Lake Gwelup on a hot and humid morning.

The water level was good despite the dry season, but was receding at the margins. We saw quite a few Black-winged Stilts along with numerous waterbirds including Pink-eared and Musk Ducks

and Australasian Shovelers. From the viewing platform we also had some wonderful views of a Chestnut Teal and some Freckled Ducks.

In addition, there was a good variety of bushbirds. It was most exciting to see three cuckoo species: Pallid, Fan-tailed and Shining Bronze. Some were fortunate enough to observe the Shining Bronze-Cuckoo being fed by Yellow-rumped Thornbills. The highlight of the walk for me, however, was the sighting of a family of Tawny Frogmouths snuggled up together in their usual spot.

Thanks to the leaders we had a wonderful morning. The bird count for the day was 57 species.

Jill Hobbs

LAKE MEALUP, 27 DECEMBER 2015

After a very dry spring, Lake McLarty was dry and so the excursion was changed to Lake Mealup with the generous assistance of Peter Wilmot of the Lake Mealup Preservation Society. Firstly, we stopped at the 'weir' or diversion gates and Peter told us how they had saved Lake Mealup with additional water from the agricultural drain and their fight to eradicate typha and neutralise acid soils. Maybe lessons can be learnt here for saving Lake McLarty? (see photo, p59)

BWA PHOTOGROUP EXCURSION TO KENT ST WEIR, 17 JANUARY 2016

The excursion was led by Richard Mazanec and 16 members and guests turned up on an overcast but pleasant morning. After usual pleasantries and arrangements, the group broke up and headed in different directions. Some of us followed Sandra and Ian who knew of a lagoon back along Kent Street and others headed across the bridge over the weir.

Excursion reports, ctd

The lagoon yielded cormorants and Australasian Grebes but little else and no crakes to be seen. The hide was visited by all but soon vacated.

Given the numbers of people resulting from a fun-run, the reserve was not its usual productive self for birders. Nevertheless, a darter's nest attracted much attention along with nest sites of Galahs and Striated Pardalotes. Some were preoccupied trying to catch Mistletoebirds in the lens but, I believe, without success.

There were several of the usual waterbirds such as Australasian Darters, Little Black Cormorants, Dusky Moorhens and several ducks, including a single Pink eared. Willie Wagtails were prominent, too. A couple of us were surprised by two Ospreys that materialised from over trees, unfortunately leading to shots from behind as they cruised away. A couple of participants managed good shots of Sacred Kingfishers. (see photos, p59)

This location has the advantage of a good local coffee shop so the post excursion meeting under a tree was well lubricated.

Ken Glasson

NAMBEELUP SETTLING PONDS, 17 JANUARY

After car-pooling, 18 members arrived at the Nambelup Settling Ponds east of Mandurah. The ponds utilise effluent from a nearby piggery and some of these ponds regularly attract numbers of waterbirds and shorebirds including in the austral summer, some trans-equatorial migratory species.

Good views were had of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers with small numbers of Red-necked Stints, Wood Sandpipers, Common Greenshanks, two cryptic Long-toed Stints and one Pectoral Sandpiper. Many Black-winged Stilts, and small numbers of Black-fronted Dotterels, Red-capped Plovers and White-fronted Chats also kept the photographers happy. (see photos, pp6,60)

However, the Bird of the Day was undoubtedly the unexpected presence of an Australian Pratincole (*Stiltia isabellae*). This tall, slim, graceful bird with its long legs and pointed black wings gave everyone splendid views. The brown flanks and short bill with red base and black tip suggested an adult in breeding plumage. This is an extremely unusual sighting so far south.

We all left feeling very satisfied having seen 42 species and privileged to have had permission to visit this ecofriendly complex with such knowledgeable leaders as Bob Paterson and Bill Russell.

Xenia Dennett

PEMBERTON CAMPOUT, 22 - 25 JANUARY

Andrew and Jill Hobbs successfully shepherded 27 participants in the recent campout where we saw a total of 81 species.

The weather was perfect, which was a change from the previous week when Pemberton had record rainfalls of 175 mm in 24 hours. We saw evidence of the downpour with good water flows over both the Cascades and Beedelup Falls as well as many other streams in the area.

On the first day, we went to the Gloucester Tree where Gilbert's (Western White-naped) Honeyeaters, Western Rosellas, Australian Ringnecks and Rufous Treecreepers were in abundance. After that, we went to the Cascades where we saw Purple-crowned Lorikeets and some Western Spinebills. We then drove to Big Brook Dam, walked around the dam, and saw a good number of Western Wattlebirds.

On the second day we visited Forest Park Reserve in Northcliffe where we saw numerous Red-winged Fairy-wrens, Red-eared Firetails and Crested Shrike-tits. Visiting Mt Chudalup we saw more Crested Shrike-tits and a Fan-tailed Cuckoo. Much of the countryside around

Windy Harbour was recovering from a bush fire a year ago, so not a lot of birds, but we did see a pair of Hooded Plovers at Salmon Beach.

The final day saw us first at Goblins Swamp, followed by Beedelup Falls, which was living up to its name. That afternoon, we visited Acacia Picnic area in Northcliffe, followed by a return drive through the Karri forest along several logging trails back to Pemberton.

The most common species for the weekend was the Grey Fantail. It seemed to be everywhere.

Thanks also to Peter Taylor, for his advice, local knowledge and help with some of the walks.

Wendy Gager



Grey Shrike-thrush, Pemberton.
Photo by Andrew Hobbs (see also p59)

WELLARD WETLANDS, 23 JANUARY

Twenty people took part in the morning's walk despite a forecast high temperature and a weekend campout in Pemberton. The water levels in the main ponds were down somewhat, providing good, muddy edges and a few sandbars for the birds. We saw a good selection of ducks on the water with good numbers of Grey Teal and Musk Ducks as well as Australasian Shovelers, Pacific Black Ducks, Blue-billed Ducks, Hardheads, Australian Shelducks and Black Swans.

Excursion reports, ctd

Australian Pelicans were taking advantage of a large, exposed, sand area in one of the ponds, along with Black-winged Stilts and a few waders. We saw Common, Wood and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers along with Common Greenshanks, Black-fronted Dotterels and Red-necked Avocets.

Most of the expected bushbirds were seen although there was a dearth of honeyeaters, and we saw just three raptors — a Black-shouldered Kite, several Whistling Kites, and an untidy, juvenile White-bellied Sea-Eagle (see photo, p59).

The total species count for the morning was 57.

Unfortunately, the most notable event of the day was an ankle injury suffered by one attendee that required calling an ambulance. We were fortunate to have three retired nurses on hand to help before the arrival of the ambulance — perhaps that may become a requirement on future walks, or should that be 'extreme sports'?

Clive Nealon

LAKE JOONDALUP, 31 JANUARY

A threat of rain greeted the 29 participants for a great morning's birding. The group was split into two with Pete White leading the second group.

Water levels had dropped, thus allowing for waders to be seen. Marsh and Sharp-tailed Sandpipers, Common Greenshank, Red-necked Stint all showed, along with Whiskered Tern, three ibis species and the highlight of the day, two Oriental Honey-buzzards soaring over the east side of the lake.

Bird call at Neil Hawkins Park gave 74 species. Some of the group proceeded to the southern end where another five species was added, giving a total of 79 species for the morning. This is possibly a record for a half-day excursion.

Wayne Merritt++



At the 2015 Bird Studies Course, Eyre (see report, p51). (above left) The participants prepare for the after-dinner 'round-table' roundup of birds seen, lessons learned, and awaiting activities. Photo by Alan Pilkington. (above right) The birders' look-out: spotting a raptor on the wing while returning from point-counting along the West Track. Photo by Joe PorterJ

Cards and badges are great to have on hand

The Sales Committee would like to remind all members that greeting cards and lapel/hat badges can be purchased through the BirdLife Western Australia website.

Just click on Sales at:

www.birdlife.org.au/locations/birdlife-western-australia/sales

Observatory report

EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY

A total of 112 bird species have been reported in EBO territory in the period October to December 2015. The dominant species in the period was New Holland Honeyeater, followed by Welcome Swallow.



Although we've witnessed a lot of bird breeding activity, across a range of species, we're thinking that the 2015 breeding season at EBO has not been very successful as we've seen and trapped fewer immature birds than we would have expected. Immature Major Mitchell's Cockatoos (at least three but maybe more) arrived at the north bird baths early January (later than in 2013). Their begging/feeding sessions are a very noisy affair. However, we have watched three Australian Pied Oystercatcher chicks grow up. A lot of immature Pacific Gulls (probably not first year birds) have appeared on Kanidal Beach in recent weeks but there is no evidence of this species breeding here.

Interesting sightings

We have been treated to some unusual bird sightings:

On 2 October 2015, a **Malleefowl** was spotted on North Track.

Guests, experienced birders, reported seeing four **Shy Heathwren** and hearing a **Southern Scrub-robin** on 12 October — there are no other reports for either species in 2015.

Guests reported a **Black-eared Cuckoo** at Burnabbie on 5 November 2015 and on 6 November one was spotted at the sewage treatment ponds at Cocklebiddy — these are the only reports of this species in 2015.

A **Wood Sandpiper** was flushed from near the Starling Cage on 6 November 2015 — it came to rest on the garden shade cloth, where it obligingly posed for photos; on 6 December a single **Magpie-lark** visited our bird baths.

After hearing reports of regular sightings by previous caretakers, we spent many hours looking but it wasn't until 11 November 2015 that we finally found a **Ground Cuckoo-shrike** on Pannikin Plains — we had six more sightings of this species in December.

On 2 December 2015, guests, very good birders, found two **Slender-billed Thornbills** at Burnabbie.

Along Kanidal Beach we had the only sightings of **Bar-tailed Godwits**. This species was last reported present in October and November 2013; **Whimbrel** was also present — this species was not reported in either 2013 or 2014.

There were two sightings of beach-washed **Little**

Penguins: the first of two penguins tangled in fishing net and presumably drowned. These birds were photographed and the net retrieved for disposal the following day. The second was a freshly dead bird found on west Kanidal Beach on 13 January 2016.

From 17 October 2015, we had regular sightings of 8-13 **Great Crested Grebes** in the shallow water off Nine Mile Beach — there had been two sightings of single birds in July 2015 but this species was not reported as present in 2014 or 2013 and it is very unusual to find them in a beach habitat.

There appeared to be fewer migratory waders using Kanidal and Nine Mile Beaches in 2015 than we'd seen in our five month stay in 2013 and we've not spotted any flagged birds.

A single **Marsh Sandpiper** was seen regularly on the sewage pond in Cocklebiddy throughout November, December and January; and a **Straw-necked Ibis** appeared at the observatory on 9 December — it strutted around seemingly unconcerned about the excitement it was causing but avoided all invites to step into a noose so that we could capture and band it (we never would have imagined being excited by the appearance of this species!).

On 11 December 2015, we spotted a flock of ten **Australian Bustard** and a single **Australian Hobby** during our routine run to Cocklebiddy; the only **Black-shouldered Kite** reported in 2015 was seen on Pannikin Plains on 30

December.

Banding highlights

We've had a busy bird banding season: between 1 August 2015 and 15 January 2016, we captured 1370 birds/28 species. The highlights were: three Fan-tailed Cuckoos (two immature), an immature Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo, one Dusky Woodswallow, three Rainbow Bee-eaters, five Yellow-plumed Honeyeaters and a single Purple-gaped Honeyeater. The most impressive catch came when Alan hand caught a male Brown Goshawk (6 January) that found itself cornered and confused by fencing and shade cloth in our garden — the only prior records for EBO was three birds (two females and a male) being banded on North Track on 27 October 1992.

Other wildlife

We regularly encounter other wildlife e.g. snakes (mainly Death Adder and Dugite but one python was spotted in the dunes by the January Dune Course), lizards, dolphins; New Zealand Fur Seals, camels, kangaroos,



Malleefowl, Eyre. Photo by Rod Smith (see also pp2,24)

Observatory reports: Eyre, ctd

butterflies, beetles and the occasional Pygmy Possum (when we check their nest boxes). Alan has become adept with the snake handling equipment although he hasn't had much luck in catching Dugites. Our favourite sighting was of three New Zealand Fur Seal on a trip to Twilight Cove on 17 December — we stopped to watch them frolicking in the shallow surf and when they spotted the car they came closer and put on quite a show, seemingly stopping to check frequently that we were watching and admiring them.

Wendy & Alan Pilkington

FIELD TECHNIQUES 2015 — REPORT AND SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Each year a small group of ornithologists meets at the Eyre Bird Observatory for a short course on techniques for studying birds. In 2015, the course was led by Lauren Gilson and Joe Porter while Tegan Douglas presented her own bird study results to ornithologists at the Australasian Ornithological Conference and Australian and New Zealand Society for Comparative Physiology and Biochemistry conferences. The 2015 Field Techniques course might be remembered as the

course that almost wasn't. Immediately preceding the course dates, major bush fires were burning in the Esperance area and in the Dundas Nature Reserve abutting the Eyre Highway east of Norseman, but after determining that we would be safe from fire danger and smoke at Newman Rocks, Lauren and four of this year's participants departed for our rendezvous with this year's 'Father Emu,' herpetologist/ naturalist Joe Porter. At the observatory, students William (supported by BirdLife WA), Angus (supported by the Sowilo Community High School), Annika and Hayden were joined by former EBO caretakers/current course participants Danie and Delene van Dyk, and current EBO caretakers/former course participants Alan and Wendy Pilkington.

Our mist-netting session had everyone's hands onto some birds, with New Holland Honeyeaters and Silvereyes volunteering to help train our flock in extracting and processing captured birds. A single Blue-breasted Fairy-wren and White-browed Scrubwren provided a modicum of variety, with three Singing Honeyeaters and three Welcome Swallows completing the species list. Seven of 51 processed birds were recaptured, the oldest from 2014. Alan and Wendy supervised the extraction and banding, and the light sampling enabled students to take their time practicing measurement and moult evaluation. It also enabled us to discuss how banding could be used and misused, and the kinds of information that may be extrapolated from a mist-net sampling effort.

Table 1. Density of birds (birds/ha) determined by Point Count along the West Track in November 2015, with comparative data from 2012-2014. '—' denotes where birds were not present in sufficient numbers to run the analysis.

	Density (birds per ha)			
Year	2012	2013	2014	2015
Species				
Brush Bronzewing	--	0.64	0.74	--
Blue-breasted Fairy-wren	--	--	2.55	--
Spotted Pardalote	1.09	2.55	6.37	3.50
Striated Pardalote	--	--	0.64	--
Inland Thornbill	--	--	0.32	1.27
White-browed Scrubwren	0.4	1.91	0.64	6.05
Weebill	--	0.74	3.82	5.09
Singing Honeyeater	0.82	5.00	2.23	0.64
White-eared Honeyeater	--	3.50	7.32	--
Brown Honeyeater	1.59	0.38	7.96	--
New Holland Honeyeater	1.59	8.64	36.6	4.03
Red Wattlebird	1.90	1.27	0.64	0.64
Brown-headed Honeyeater	--	1.60	--	--
Western (Golden) Whistler	--	0.32	--	--
Grey Shrike-thrush	--	0.85	0.42	--
Grey Currawong	0.29	2.23	0.64	0.21
Australian Raven	0.13	0.13	0.23	0.32
Silvereye	2.75	7.0	22.9	20.69

Table 2: Bird densities determined by territory mapping a 22.5 ha grid around the observatory. Densities are shown as birds per hectare, and '—' denotes where birds were not present, or density was unable to be determined.

	Density (birds per ha)			
Year	2012	2013	2014	2015
Species				
Red Wattlebird	--	0.34	--	0.58
Weebill	--	0.47	0.53	1.11
Inland Thornbill	0.62	0.57	0.44	0.49
Spotted Pardalote	0.53	0.74	1.29	0.71
Striated Pardalote	--	--	0.49	--
Blue-breasted Fairy-wren	0.53	1.26	1.47	0.76
White-browed Scrubwren	0.89	0.91	0.71	0.89
Brown-headed Honeyeater	0.35	0.46	0.98	0.04
Dusky Woodswallow	--	0.51	0.31	--
White-browed Babbler	0.89	0.91	1.64	0.71
White-winged Triller	--	0.34	0.09	--
Western (Golden) Whistler	--	--	0.18	0.13
Grey Shrike-thrush	0.27	0.57	0.58	0.31
Grey Currawong	0.19	0.11	--	0.44
Willie Wagtail	--	--	0.36	0.13
Grey Butcherbird	--	--	--	0.36

Observatory reports, Eyre, ctd

The wader count along Kanidal and Nine Mile beaches was reasonable, with four transcontinental migrants, the Red-necked Stint (5), Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (1), Grey Plover (5) and Common Greenshank (6) sighted. Of the more resident birds, we recorded Grey Teal (4), Great Crested Grebe (8), Pied Cormorant (8), Australian Pelican (1), Eastern Reef Egret (1), White-bellied Sea-Eagle (1), Wedge-tailed Eagle (2), Nankeen Kestrel (2), Australian Pied (16) and Sooty (25) Oystercatchers, Red-capped Plovers (57), Pacific (11) and Silver (118) Gulls, Caspian (6) and Crested (14) Terns, as well as Singing Honeyeater (4), White-fronted Chat (15), Dusky Woodswallow (3), Australian Raven (13), Australian Pipit (3), Welcome Swallow (78), Tree Martin (166) and White-browed Scrubwren (1). We identified a total of 27 species along Kanidal Beach.

In addition to these bird identification exercises, we undertook several survey methods to measure bird density and abundance around the observatory. These

exercises have been conducted every year on this course, so compiling the results over the years gives us a long-term picture of the changes in bird numbers around EBO. In some years there are few honeyeaters and silvereyes; in other years, they are prolific. Point counts are good indicators of density for mobile birds. On the other hand, mapping techniques give good figures for resident, territorial species, and also provide indication of changes in abundance of these species. Comparisons between counting methods usually show some agreement in trends within the year, but comparison of the results derived from the same method in consecutive years elucidate trends for individual species over time. Results of 30 years of abundance data collected during the courses at EBO have been published in *Corella* (Davies 2010). (see photos, p49)

Lauren Gilson, Joe Porter, and Tegan Douglas

Table 3: Reptiles captured in pit-fall traps at Eyre Bird Observatory, November 2015.

Common name	Scientific name	Sex	Number of captures	Recaptures
Bight Wedge-snouted Ctenotus	<i>Ctenotus euclae</i>	Unknown	7	1
Spotted Military Dragon	<i>Ctenophorus maculatus</i>	Males Females	6 6	1 2

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Coming events

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.

Tuesday 9 March: Albany Group excursion

Details about destination, where to meet, etc, will be made available on BWA e-news. You can also check the Albany Bird Group's website:

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

Excursion leaders will be either Ray Garstone (PH: 9844 7540), Brad Kneebone (PH: 9845 2233) or Anne Bondin (PH: 9844 1793)

Sunday 13 March: Penguin Island, Rockingham Half-day excursion

Meet at Mersey Point Jetty, off Arcadia Drive, Shoalwater at 8:45 am for Penguin Island. The ferries travel hourly between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm and cost \$14 return. We will catch the 9:00 am ferry.

The group will walk to the various places of interest on the island and, if participants wish, can attend the penguin feeding in the DPaW facility housing injured or orphaned penguins (additional cost). Bridled Tern, Little Penguin and Buff-banded Rail are often seen here and it is a haven for nesting seabirds.

There is a nice picnic area on the island but no shop so please bring all food and drink requirements. Also there are nice beaches and it is a good swimming area.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Gavin White

Thursday 17 March: Lake Monger, Cambridge Half-day excursion

Meet at 7:30 am at the most westerly car park off Lake Monger Drive. The walk around the lake will take two to three hours. This is a good opportunity to see many duck species, waterbirds and some bushbirds. Spotless Crake is often seen, depending on the water level.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Claire Gerrish

Friday 18 March: Nairns

For details, contact Peel-Mandurah Branch:

Bob Paterson peelbirds1@westnet.au or phone 0400 664 453.

Saturday 19 March: Lake Monger, Cambridge Photography excursion

Meet at 7:30 am at the most westerly car park off Lake Monger Drive. This is a good opportunity to photograph many duck species, waterbirds and some bushbirds. Spotless Crake is often seen, depending on the water level.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Keith Wilcox

Sunday 20 March: 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 the general public.

Leaders: George and Pam Agar

Sunday 20 March: Canebrake and beyond – Margaret River/Whicher Range Full-day excursion

For details, see Cape to Cape Bird Group report, p42.

Monday 21 March: Bold Park Eco Centre, Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat Monthly meeting, 7:30 pm

Simon Taylor from the Department of Premier and Cabinet will speak on the draft documents of the Strategic Assessment of the Perth Peel Regions — Perth and Peel Green Growth Plan for 3.5 million. This document is now open for comment (closing 8 April). BWA will be compiling informed, effective submissions. (see Notice, p33 for details)

Friday 25 to Monday 28 March: Easter Great Western Woodlands survey, Jilbadji Nature Reserve

Meet in Southern Cross on Thursday at 6:00 pm at the Southern Cross Caravan Park. On Friday, we travel south-east of Marvel Lock to a campsite in Jilbadji Nature Reserve which will be our base for the next two nights while surveys are undertaken. On Monday, exit the area to the south-west via Lake Cronin and Hyden or return to Southern Cross.

A 4x4 or all-wheel drive vehicle is essential and the camping will be without facilities. Bring everything you need including food and water. Fuel should not be a problem as the distances are not great. More details will be sent to participants closer to the time.

Numbers will be limited to 12 so please register at the BirdLife WA office on 9383 7749.

Members and guests only.

Leader: Maris Lauva

Friday 25 to Monday 28 March: Easter campout, Albany

Albany is not only on the cooler south coast but has excellent birdwatching. It has a wide variety of habitats from the ocean (sheltered and open), waders, shorebirds, fresh water lakes and bushbirds in many different vegetation types. Albany is central to other birding locations such as Two Peoples Bay, Cheynes Beach, Waychinicup and Torbay and Wilson Inlet.

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We will be based at the Kalgan River Chalets and Caravan Park. The park telephone number is 9844 7937 and their website www.caravan-wa.com.au/krcpp.html. Fifteen camping and tent sites have been set aside for BirdLife WA and you need to book directly with them.

The Albany Group will be assisting with birding locations. On previous Albany campouts, 100+ species have been seen.

Numbers will be limited to 25 so please register at the BirdLife WA office on 9383 7749.

Members and guests only.

Leader: Sue Abbotts

Sunday 27 March: Yangebup Lake, Cockburn Half-day excursion

Meet at 7:30 am in Parkes Street west. Turn into Osprey Drive from North Lake Road and immediately turn into Parkes Street. Parkes Street now only runs for about 200 m before being shut off. Park on the grassed area on the left. #

There should be a good variety of waterbirds and bushbirds. Bring your 'scope if you have one.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Robyn Pickering

Saturday 2 April: Woodman Point, Cockburn Jaeger watch

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.

This excursion has been timed to coincide with the northward jaeger migration. We will look for the three species of jaegers and other birds at the spit. We will spend 2-3 hours sea watching on Woodman Point. Bring your telescope if you have one.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Martin Cake

Sunday 3 April: Great Cocky count

For details, see Notices, p34.

Sunday 3 April: Herdsman Lake, Churchlands Photogroup excursion

Meet at 2:30 pm at 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.

Over 140 species of birds have been recorded here. Late afternoon, especially the golden hour, is an ideal time to photograph birds on the water and in flight in this location.

For members and guests only

Leaders: Sandra and Ian Wallace

Thursday 7 April: Tomato Lake, Kewdale Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am near the small tearooms at Tomato Lake off Oats Street, Kewdale. Travelling south along Orrong Road turn left into Oats Street and about 800 m on the right there is a drive-way into the parking area. Bring morning tea.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Ian Wallace

Coming events, ctd

Sunday 10 April: Ray Marshall Park, Viveash

Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park of Ray Marshall Park. Go to the end of First Avenue, Woodbridge, off Great Eastern Highway, just east of Governor Stirling Senior High School. We will take a morning walk along the John George Trail that runs beside the Swan River. On the return walk, we will divert to a swampy area 250 m off the track, and this will usually add up to six extra species to the list.

The walk includes big river redgums, waterbirds along the river, and the walk to the swamp mentioned above.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Peter White

Tuesday 12 April: Albany Bird Group outing

For details, see the group's report on p40.

Saturday 16 April: Lake Coogee, Munster

Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am in Fawcett Road, 100 m from Mayor Road. Nearly 100 species of birds have been seen on and around the lake, including nine raptors. It is a large lake and has a path right around it so some people may wish to do the full circuit.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Jan and Dave Crossley

Saturday 16 April: Mowen

Half-day excursion

For details, see Cape to Cape Bird Group report on p42.

Monday 18 April: Bold Park Eco Centre, Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat

Monthly meeting, 7:30 pm

Note: Date changed due to Anzac Day public holiday.

David Bettini, freelance nature photographer, will give a talk on "Kimberley birds and other wildlife".

Friday 22 April: Trotter's Reserve / Nell's Block

For details, contact Peel-Mandurah Branch:

Bob Paterson peelbirds1@westnet.au or phone 0400 664 453.

Saturday 23 to Monday 25 April: Anzac Day Campout, Stirling Ranges

The campout will be based at the Stirling Ranges Retreat (Caravan Park) on Chester Pass Road, which has a range of chalets and camping facilities.

There are always wildflowers here and it is well-known for its rich diversity of flora and fauna. The area has a long bird list including Western Whipbird, Western Yellow Robin, Rufous Treecreeper, Elegant and Regent Parrots, Australian Owlet-nightjar and Crested Shrike-tit. We will go spotlighting one night and have a BBQ on another night. There are many different habitats in and adjacent to the ranges.

Book your own accommodation at the retreat (phone 9827 9229) as soon as possible as this is a popular area.

Numbers will be limited to 25 so please call the BirdLife WA office on 9383 7749 to put your name on the list.

For members and guests only.

Leaders: Clive Nealon and Sue Abbotts

Sunday 24 April: Ellis Brook, Gosnells

Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 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 Robin.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Steve Burns

Sunday 1 May: Victoria Reservoir, Canning Mills

Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am in the car park beside the information board at the entrance to the dam. From Perth, travel east along Welshpool Road and Welshpool

Road East to the T-junction at Canning Road, turn right and travel for about 400 m to Masonmill Road. Continue along this road for about 600 m, following the signs to the dam past Mason Mills Garden, to the entrance to the car park. We will follow several walking track down to the dam.

This 3 km walk passes through Jarrah/Marri woodland down to the dam in a deep valley and then back up the hill. Red-eared Firetails, Western Rosella, Red-winged Fairy-wren, Western Spinebill and Western Thornbill can be seen here.

For members and the guests only.

Leaders: John and Ruth Luyer

Saturday 7 May: Bull Creek Wetlands, Brentwood

Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am at Spinaway Crescent. Travel along Leach Highway and turn north into Pulo Road then turn right into Spinaway Crescent.

This walk follows Bull Creek from the mouth where it runs into Canning River and we should get all the usual waterbirds there, including crakes, Buff-banded Rail, Purple Swampphen, Musk Duck and Nankeen Night-Heron. We will then cross over Leach Highway to walk around Richard Lewis Park and Reg Bourke Reserve. The creek has flooded gums, Jarrah, Marri, paperbark and casuarinas along its banks. Splendid Fairy-wren, Western Wattlebird, White-faced Heron, Red-capped Parrot and Yellow-rumped Thornbill have been recorded here.

Bring water, sun screen and morning tea.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Sue Keogh

Sunday 8 May: Lake Gwelup, Stirling

Photogroup excursion

Meet at 7:30 am in the car park at the corner of Stoneman Street and Huntriss Road, north of Karrinyup Road. We should see waterbirds and bushbirds, and raptors are often seen here. The lake dries up in summer, but it should be reasonable after some winter rain.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Richard Mazenac

Coming events, ctd

Tuesday 10 May: Albany Bird Group outing

For details, see the group's report on p40.

Thursday 12 May: Beenyup Swamp, Woodvale Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am in the car park on the south side of Ocean Reef Road near the old buildings. From the Mitchell Freeway travel east along Ocean Reef Road and continue approximately 800 m past Trappers Drive until you see a cleared paddock with some old stone buildings on the right. Park in the limestone area in front of these buildings.

Beenyup Swamp is part of the Yellogonga Regional Park. There should be a good variety of bushbirds and waterbirds.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Wayne Merritt

Saturday 14 May: Lake Goollelal, Kingsley Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am at the car park on Woodlake Retreat. From the junction of Wanneroo Road and Hepburn Avenue, travel north on Wanneroo Road to the first set of traffic lights and turn left into Woodlake Retreat. The car park is 50 m from the turn off.

This lake offers a good selection of bushbirds and waterbirds. It is part of the Northern Swan Coastal Plain IBA for Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo. Bring your scope if you have one.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Clive Nealon

Saturday 21 May: Lake Richmond, Rockingham Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am on Safety Bay Road, Rockingham, opposite the Naragubup Centre on the western side of Lake Richmond. The walk around the lake will take 2 to 3 hours. One hundred and twenty-five species have been recorded at the lake, including 14 raptor species seen regularly. Another interesting feature of the lake is the thrombolites.

There are picnic facilities at the Centre, but you need to bring your own lunch.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Mary Vaughan

Sunday 22 May: Preston Beach

For details, contact Peel-Mandurah Branch:

Bob Paterson peelbirds1@westnet.au or phone 0400 664 453.

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

The Great Western Woodlands Committee, with Alasdair Bulloch, Liz Fox or Shapelle McNee, will present the GWW video on the Helena and Aurora campaign.

Saturday 28 May: Webb's Lease, Jarrahdale Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am in the car park at Webb's Lease. Travel from Armadale on South Western Highway. Turn left into Jarrahdale Road and go through Jarrahdale township. After approximately 5.5 km, turn right into Acacia Road (signed 'Wetland Experience'). Keep to the left to get to the car park. White-breasted Robin and Red-winged Fairy-wren are regularly seen here. We will visit a second site on Balmoral Road if time permits.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Robyn Pickering

Saturday 28 May: Wharncliffe Mill, Margaret River Half-day excursion

For details, see Cape to Cape Bird Group report, p42.

Saturday 4 to Monday 6 June: Foundation Day campout, Dryandra Woodland

Dryandra is one of the most important remnant bushlands in the wheatbelt, and has over 100 species of birds including Crested Shrike-tit and Bush Stone-curlew.

Dryandra is 164 km south-east of Perth and 22 km north-west of Narrogin. From Perth, travel down Albany Highway and just past North Bannister turn left to Wandering. Travel 3 km past Wandering and turn into Fourteen Mile Brook Road for 25 km and then turn left into Williams York Road for 3 km.

We will be camping at a new campground 'Gnaala Mia' which has 18 large camp sites. The entry road

into Gnaala Mia is almost opposite the Congelin Campground and is well sign posted. There are camping bays, toilets and gas barbecue facilities. Bring your own firewood and water. Cost \$7.50 per night and concession \$5.50 per night. The cottages in Dryandra Village were not available at the time of writing.

For those interested, on Saturday night (4 June) there is a very good evening guided walk in the Barna Mia enclosure, where many native animals are protected from predators. To book, call DEC at Narrogin on 9881 9200 and the cost is \$20 adults and \$15.50 concession.

Numbers will be limited to 20 so please call the BirdLife WA office on 9383 7749 to put your name on the list.

For members and guests only.

Leader: David Secomb

Sunday 5 June: Wungong Gorge Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am at the first car park for Wungong Dam at the end of Admiral Road, off Albany Highway. Over 90 species of birds have been recorded here including Red-eared Firetail, White-breasted Robin and Red-winged Fairy-wren.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Steve Burns

Thursday 9 June: The Spectacles, Kwinana Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:30 am in the car park in McLaughlan Road. Proceed along Kwinana Freeway and turn right (west) into Anketell Road. Travel



**Buff-banded Rail, Lake Claremont.
Photo by John McMullan**

Coming events, ctd

approximately 2 km then turn left into McLaughlan Road. A good variety of bushbirds including Grey Currawong can be found here.

For members and the general public.

Leader: Maris Lauva

Saturday 11 June: Serpentine and Pipehead Dams, Serpentine Photography excursion

Meet at the Pipehead Dam car park at 8:00 am. From the South Western Highway turn east into Jarrahdale Road and into the town of Jarrahdale. Turn right onto Kingsbury Drive after you pass the Jarrahdale General Store café, then follow the signs to the Pipehead Dam.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Ken Glasson

Sunday 12 June: Tom Bateman Reserve, Thornlie Half-day excursion

Meet at 8:00 am beside the playground/sporting complex at the corner of Nicholson and Wilfred Roads (car park entry is off Wilfred Road). We will look at a series of wetlands constructed to remove nutrients from water draining into the Canning River. We will also look at small bushland areas if they are accessible.

Rubber boots may be a good idea, and insect repellent. Bring morning tea to have while we do a combined bird list.

For members and the general public.

Leaders: George and Pam Agar



White-breasted Robin, Perup (see report, p45). Photo by Andrew Hobbs

Tuesday 14 June: Albany Bird Group outing

For details, see the group's report on p40.

Saturday 18 June: Flynn Road, Mundaring Half/Full-day excursion

Meet at 9:00 am at the corner of Flynn Road and Great Eastern Highway, about 10 km past Sawyers Valley or 1 km on the Perth side of The Lakes (the York turnoff). We will look at several areas of Wandoo woodland. Species often seen here are Crested Shrike-tit, Western Yellow Robin and Restless Flycatcher.

Bring morning tea that you can carry. Bring lunch if you would like to continue with us at a further area nearby.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Charles Merriam

Friday 24 June: Fairbridge

For details, contact Peel-Mandurah Branch:

Bob Paterson peelbirds1@westnet.au or phone 0400 664 453.

Saturday 25 June: Yanchep National Park Half-day excursion

Meet at the Lakeview picnic area inside the park at 9:00 am. Entry is \$12 per vehicle or \$6 per vehicle for seniors. Proceed through the entrance gate and go left at the roundabout. There is a large parking area and I suggest we meet near the covered barbecue area which is adjacent to the toilet block. There should be a variety of bushbirds and waterbirds. Yanchep National Park is part of the Northern Swan Coastal Plain IBA for Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo.

For members and guests only.

Leader: Clive Nealon

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

Frank O'Connor, a BirdLife member, will discuss the bird families of the world, and his goal to see a member of each family.

Friday 22 July: Wellard Wetlands

For details, contact Peel-Mandurah Branch:

Bob Paterson peelbirds1@westnet.au or phone 0400 664 453.

Monday 25 July: Bold Park Eco Centre, Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat Monthly meeting, 7:30 pm

Shane Kearney from the Rottnest Island Authority will give a talk on 'Rottnest Island driving conservation and sustainability'.

Crossword No. 26, answers

ACROSS

1 spangled, 4 lilac, 8 palms, 11 Pintail, 13 avocet, 15 din, 16 error, 18 still, 19 glossy, 22 scratch, 23 vigilant, 25 weed, 26 preen, 27 wingbar, 28 mask, 29 gular, 30 Muir

DOWN

2 pipe, 3 gum, 5 into, 6 colonial, 7 filter, 9 live, 10 society, 12 sting, 14 terrestrial, 15 dowitcher, 17 congress, 20 silent, 21 trigger, 24 odour, 25 warm

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Calendar of events

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7/2013

- Tue 9 Mar:** Albany Group excursion
- Sun 13 Mar:** Penguin Island, Rockingham, Half-day excursion
- Thu 17 Mar:** Lake Monger, Cambridge, Half-day excursion
- Fri 18 Mar:** Nairns
- Sat 19 Mar:** Lake Monger, Cambridge, Photography excursion
- Sun 20 Mar:** Canning River Regional Park, Wilson, Half-day excursion
- Sun 20 Mar:** Canebrake and beyond – Margaret River/Whicher Range, Full-day excursion
- Mon 21 Mar:** Bold Park Eco Centre, Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat, Monthly meeting, 7:30 pm
- Fri 25 to Mon 28 Mar:** Easter Great Western Woodlands survey, Jilbadji Nature Reserve
- Fri 25 to Mon 28 Mar:** Easter campout, Albany
- Sun 27 Mar:** Yangebup Lake, Cockburn, Half-day excursion
- Sat 2 Apr:** Woodman Point, Cockburn, Jaeger watch
- Sun 3 Apr:** Great Cocky count
- Sun 3 Apr:** Herdsman Lake, Churchlands, Photogroup excursion
- Thu 7 Apr:** Tomato Lake, Kewdale, Half-day excursion
- Sun 10 Apr:** Ray Marshall Park, Viveash, Half-day excursion
- Tue 12 Apr:** Albany Bird Group outing
- Sat 16 Apr:** Lake Coogee, Munster, Half-day excursion
- Sat 16 Apr:** Mowen, Half-day excursion
- Mon 18 Apr:** Bold Park Eco Centre, Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat, Monthly meeting, 7:30 pm
- Fri 22 Apr:** Trotter's Reserve/Nell's Block
- Sat 23 to Mon 25 Apr:** Anzac Day campout, Stirling Ranges
- Sun 24 Apr:** Ellis Brook, Gosnells, Half-day excursion
- Sun 1 May:** Victoria Reservoir, Canning Mills, Half-day excursion
- Sat 7 May:** Bull Creek Wetlands, Brentwood, Half-day excursion
- Sun 8 May:** Lake Gwelup, Stirling, Photogroup excursion
- Tue 10 May:** Albany Bird Group outing
- Thu 12 May:** Beenyup Swamp, Woodvale, Half-day excursion
- Sat 14 May:** Lake Goollelal, Kingsley, Half-day excursion
- Sat 21 May:** Lake Richmond, Rockingham, Half-day excursion
- Sun 22 May:** Preston Beach
- Mon 23 May:** Bold Park Eco Centre, Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat, Monthly meeting, 7:30 pm
- Sat 28 May:** Webb's Lease, Jarrahdale, Half-day excursion
- Sat 28 May:** Wharnccliffe Mill, Margaret River, Half-day excursion
- Sat 4 to Mon 6 Jun:** Foundation Day campout, Dryandra Woodland
- Sun 5 Jun:** Wungong Gorge, Half-day excursion
- Thu 9 Jun:** The Spectacles, Kwinana, Half-day excursion
- Sat 11 Jun:** Serpentine and Pipehead Dams, Serpentine, Photography excursion
- Sun 12 Jun:** Tom Bateman Reserve, Thornlie, Half-day excursion
- Tue 14 Jun:** Albany Bird Group outing
- Sat 18 Jun:** Flynn Road, Mundaring, Half/Full-day excursion
- Fri 24 Jun:** Fairbridge
- Sat 25 Jun:** Yanchep National Park, Half-day excursion
- Mon 27 Jun:** Bold Park Eco Centre, Perry Lakes Drive, Floreat, Monthly meeting, 7:30 pm

Members in the field



Enjoying a sit-down, Clarkson Reserve. Photo by Penny Lee (see report, p47)



Peter Wilmott explains the Lake Mealup restoration process to members. Photo by Penny Lee (see report, p47)



Our leader behind the lens, Pemberton campout. Photo by Alan Watson (see report, p48)

Photogroup: Kent Street weir



Little Black Cormorant and Dusky Moorhen. Photos by Ken Glasson (see report, p47)



Immature Buff-banded Rail, Penguin Island. Photo by Ian Wallace



Australian Bustard displaying, Kimberley. Photo by Liz Rosenberg



Great Egret, Kalbarri riverfront. Photo by Graham Little



Grey Plover showing dark 'armpits', Alfred Cove. Photo by Ian Wallace (see report, p46)



White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Wellard (see report, p49). Photo by Ian Wallace



Regent Parrot breakfasting, Dalyellup. Photo by Mavis Norgard (see report, p28)



Great Egret, Booragoon Lake. Photo by Ian Wallace



White-fronted Chat, Nambellup. Photo by Dusty Millar (see report, p48)

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