

No. 108 September 2012

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Editorial

Your Committee has been forgiving in the past of people who are egregiously late in paying their subscriptions. However, the belt-tightening we have endured to keep ABSA viable must also focus on the delinquent and forgetful among us. Please respond promptly to the renewal form you will receive later this year. Don't risk being scrubbed!!

Remember that every direct deposit is five minutes or more paperwork that the Treasurer doesn't have to do on our behalf. So do it if you can. Having processed the renewals once myself, when the Treasurer was away, I know the frustration, headache and boredom that attend the credit-card and cheque payments.

New Members

We welcome the following new members to the Association:

Mr Broon Whyllie of Narrellan Vale NSW
Mr David Boyle of Leopold VIC
Mr Christopher Wilson of Newcastle NSW
Mr Ian Northcott of Freshwater QLD
Dr Andrew Black of Malvern SA

We apologise to any new members not publicly welcomed in the last few months due to miscommunication.

AGM 2013 - Advance Notice

Unfortunately, Currumbin is not possible as a venue for the AGM next year. We are searching for an alternative venue in South-east Queensland. Formal notice for the AGM, and more details of the Scientific Day will be in the December Newsletter.

The theme of the Scientific Day will be "Tropical Birds", and would-be presenters are invited to contact Jeff Hardy (President) <info@absa.asn.au>, or phone 02 9613 8884.

'Bill' Lane Memorial Edition of Corella

Corella Volume 36(1) March 2012 was dedicated to the memory of S.G."Bill" Lane, who was a founding member of the Association and prolific bander, researcher, trainer and publisher on Australian birds. We are pleased to inform members that Mrs Lorraine Lane, Bill's widow, was so pleased with the edition that she donated a substantial sum to the organisation. We extend our thanks to her on behalf of all members.

Please Look Out for Banded Swift Parrots

I've been following the reports of Swift Parrots coming in from the mainland and would ask anyone that sees Swift Parrots to please check the birds for leg bands. I've been researching swift parrots in their Tasmanian breeding range for the last two years and there should be quite a few banded Swift Parrots getting around. If you note a leg band on a bird, please let me know where you found it, whether it was foraging or not (and the tree species it was using) and if possible, a photograph of the bird/band would be great. The leg bands are pretty small, so don't worry if you can't discern the numbers, but please report the sighting nonetheless.

You can find more information about my research at: <people.anu.edu.au/robert.heinsohn/index.php/current-students/dejan-stojanovic>

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Corella On-line ?

Unfortunately current annual subscriptions to our Association do not cover the cost of publishing *Corella* and our Newsletter. I need to emphasise that the Association is in no danger of failing financially in the immediate future as we are subsidised by way of revenue from the Mist Net Service and we also have reasonable reserves.

We are aware of trends across the scientific world towards on-line publication of scientific journals. Some university libraries no longer subscribe to journals that are hard copies only and it is said that many students only refer to journals that they can source on-line. On the other hand, we are also aware that many members still value a hard copy.

Our committee has had many discussions about how *Corella* may change in coming years. We are proud of the quality of *Corella* and the resources that it provides for researchers. But sooner or later, we have to make a decision on how *Corella* will relate to the on-line world, whilst still having our Association financially viable.

Below I canvas various options and ask you as members to think about these and to think about your own relationship to usage and valuing of *Corella*. The options are:

REMAIN AS WE ARE. We do not think that this is a viable option in the long term because eventually even the Mist Net subsidy will not stop our reserves being whittled away. Doing nothing also fails to address the need for on-line publishing to meet the needs of those who rely on this.

CONTINUE THE HARD COPY, AND OFFER ON-LINE AS A PAID OPTION. The problem here is that our print run is already at the minimum that is viable. It would make minimal difference to our printing costs to print fewer copies, and every 'on-line only' subscription would put pressure on those remaining. We would end up with the same costs and fewer people paying for them.

'ON-LINE ONLY' BY SUBSCRIPTION. This is the way chosen by many journal publishers already. They offer options of full subscription, with the journal accessible by password, or spot purchase of individual articles as needed. This option would see the cost of producing *Corella* drop. But we believe there are still many members who value the hard copy with many binding them into hard-cover volumes to be part of a valued personal library. Many others just prefer to read a hard copy, finding a screen copy difficult and inconvenient (e.g. for reading in bed).

ON-LINE PUBLISHING WITH A COLLATED YEARLY HARD COPY. This option steers a path between many of the problems. It would reduce our publishing costs whilst still delivering a hard copy to members but providing quarterly access on-line to the latest 'edition'. Universities that so desired would have access to a fully on-line journal; researchers would have immediate access to papers when published on-line; and members would have both on-line access and a hard copy for their libraries.

We would be delighted to hear what you think by mail or email. We will publish as much as we can of the discussion in the newsletter, so you can see other people's points of view. We may conduct an on-line poll if a clear-cut course of action fails to emerge.
<info@absa.asn.au>

Wing-tagged pelicans

Some 1500 Australian pelicans have been wing-tagged at a breeding colony near Adelaide since 2002. Each yellow wing tag has an individual number and the words "Adelaide Zoo" written on it. Adelaide Zoo was chosen because I was working there when I started the project, and because it is a public organization that people can usually find in order to report a tagged pelican. There is a "report a pelican page on the Zoo's website which automatically forwards reports to me for inclusion in our data base. If you see a wing tagged pelican please report it either via this website:

<www.zoossa.com.au/conservation-ark/research/report-a-pelican-sighting> or to me directly. We would be really interested to know when and where you saw the pelican, is it dead or alive and any other observations.

These wing-tagged pelicans are wild birds and don't belong to Adelaide Zoo. One wing tagged bird lives in the pelican enclosure at Adelaide Zoo. No pelicans move regularly between the zoo and the wild.

The Wing-tags have been applied by the Adelaide Pelican Volunteers through the Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resource Management Board. Wing-tagging is part of a broader research project that I've lead and which is aimed at understanding breeding biology of Australian pelicans - in particular why they engage in siblicidal brood reduction.

Early in the study we used traditional leg bands from the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme, as well as wing tags. We found that the leg tags were often lost, whereas most wing tags remained on birds. We've had two wing tags break off, whereas we have had tens of leg bands lost from pelicans. During the last few years we've only used wing tags. To date we've received several hundred reports from the public of pelicans wing-tagged near Adelaide. Reports have come from the Northern Territory, Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. Several individual pelicans have been reported numerous times and we have been able to build a picture of their movements over several years and the frequency with which they return to our study colony and breed. Some pelicans tagged as chicks near Adelaide have been found breeding on the Coorong over the past few years.

If anyone else sees/has seen wing-tagged pelicans I'd really appreciate it if you would report them.

Dr Greg Johnston
South Australian Museum
Email: <pelecanus85@gmail.com>

Subscription Rates Remain the Same

The Committee has decided that there will be no change in the subscription rates for the coming year.

Remember that there is always room on the renewal to donate a small (or large) something to the Research Fund.

Birds Are Just Baby Dinosaurs!!!

Bhullar, B.S. *et al* (12 July 2012) **Birds have paedomorphic dinosaur skulls** *Nature* 487, 223–226 doi:10.1038/nature11146

Abstract: The interplay of evolution and development has been at the heart of evolutionary theory for more than a century. Heterochrony—change in the timing or rate of developmental events—has been implicated in the evolution of major vertebrate lineages such as mammals, including humans. Birds are the most speciose land vertebrates, with more than 10,000 living species representing a bewildering array of ecologies. Their anatomy is radically different from that of other vertebrates. The unique bird skull houses two highly specialized systems: the sophisticated visual and neuromuscular coordination system allows flight coordination and exploitation of diverse visual landscapes, and the astonishing variations of the beak enable a wide range of avian lifestyles. Here we use a geometric morphometric approach integrating developmental, neontological and palaeontological data to show that the heterochronic process of paedomorphosis, by which descendants resemble the juveniles of their ancestors, is responsible for several major evolutionary transitions in the origin of birds. We analysed the variability of a series of landmarks on all known theropod dinosaur skull ontogenies as well as outgroups and birds. The first dimension of variability captured ontogeny, indicating a conserved ontogenetic trajectory. The second dimension accounted for phylogenetic change towards more bird-like dinosaurs. Basally branching eumaniraptorans and avialans clustered with embryos of other archosaurs, indicating paedomorphosis. Our results reveal at least four paedomorphic episodes in the history of birds combined with localized peramorphosis (development beyond the adult state of ancestors) in the beak. Paedomorphic enlargement of the eyes and associated brain regions parallels the enlargement of the nasal cavity and olfactory brain in mammals. This study can be a model for investigations of heterochrony in evolutionary transitions, illuminating the origin of adaptive features and inspiring studies of developmental mechanisms.

Remarkable Film of an Osprey fishing

We have all seen film at one time or another of raptors fishing, but this one is extraordinary in its detail and the repeated shots of an Osprey struggling with gigantic fish both in the water and in the air.

Go to: <<http://www.youtube.com/embed/nA3LtXnNIto?>>

SOSSA Southport Report

The annual report for Southport for 2011 is available online, at: <<http://www.sossa-international.org/forum/showthread.php?140-SOSSA-Southport-QLD-2011-Annual-Report>>. As well as the usual stuff it also has informative articles from Rob Morris, Dave Stewart and this year an article by Brian Russell on digital seabird photography. Brian has judged on international panels.

Paul Walbridge.

SOSSA

Impacts of wind farms

See <<http://www.nature.com/news/the-trouble-with-turbines-an-ill-wind-1.10849>>

Amongst other things, it notes that wind farms cause fewer mortalities than:

- Power lines
- Farm pesticides
- Cats
- Cars
- Buildings
- Communication towers

From Latin American Science

<<http://latinamericascience.org>>

August 2: Argentine scientists with the Wildlife Conservation Society have captured video of never-before-seen behavior from a cormorant diving 150 feet to the sea floor in search of food. The bird made the trip in 40 seconds and returned to the surface with a small fish. A team of scientists has been studying 3,500 pairs of cormorants at Punta Leon in Patagonia for seven years.

August 30: A booming gull population in Patagonia is causing strange foraging behavior in the birds. The gulls have been attacking and feeding on southern right whales off the coast of Chubut province in Argentina. Marcelo Bertelotti—a researcher at the National Patagonian Center, a government-funded scientific institute—has proposed shooting the gulls that display this behavior. Other environmentalist groups say the seagull population can be reduced by denying the birds food from open-air garbage dumps and other places.

Secrets of Digital Photography

Check out this web site, called ‘The Secrets of Digital Bird Photography’ : <www.digitalbirdphotography.com/1.1.html>

It seems at first glance to be a comprehensive and understandable account of the ins and outs of digital photography of birds, and so of interest to all those of us who struggle with our digital zooms!

[A review of the content by an experienced bird photographer would be appreciated. Ed.]

You Sleep, You Lose

Male Pectoral Sandpipers have been shown to be more successful breeding the less they sleep. The polygynous males mate in Arctic summer conditions of continuous daylight, and those that sleep least are most successful in both deterring competition and courting females, and hence sire more offspring.

<www.orn.mpg.de/191871/news_publication_5976385?c=2168>

Emus

There is an isolated population of Emus on the coast between Yamba and Red Rock (NSW North Coast). The population is estimated at about 120 birds with their range contracting considerably over the last 12 years. Gina Hart, a NPWS Ranger raised awareness about their plight with BVBW and the ball is rolling. Their greatest challenge is persuading the NSW Government to re-route the proposed Grafton by-pass. Current plans will not only cut through Emu foraging habitat but also destroy many other fragile flora and fauna communities.

Feathers/tissue samples have been collected from birds on the coast over the years with the aim of comparing genetics with their western counterparts. Researchers at Macquarie University now want samples from out west in order to undertake some comparisons

This is a call for feather samples from Emus west of the Great Dividing Range. Feathers can be collected off a fence or a carcass. A bunch of 4-5 feathers with base of feather intact is preferred - any tissue attached to the base of a feather/s would be great, but avoid touching the base. Put the feather/s in a paper envelope together with the record of the locality, grid reference, date, and name of person/s collecting.

Send samples to Gina Hart, NPWS Ranger, PO Box 361, Grafton NSW 2360 and Gina will forward them to Macquarie University.

8th Australasian Shorebird Conference

"The Role of Science in the Conservation of Shorebirds"
Napier Building, University of Adelaide, SA
29 & 30 Sep 2012.

With the conference just one month away, the provisional ASC Program is now available! Registration is encouraged and is open to anyone interested in the study and conservation of shorebirds.

Australasian Shorebird Conferences are held every two years at a time and location to focus on local issues and to provide the best opportunity for attendees to see shorebirds at key shorebird sites in the company with local experts, as well as to hear about the latest research and developments in Australia and the wider East Asian Australasian Flyway.

See <[awsg.org.au/pdfs/ASC-program2012\(2\).pdf](http://awsg.org.au/pdfs/ASC-program2012(2).pdf)>

Band in the USA!!

For those of us who don't mind learning something from the Americans, here is the URL of a video on how to erect a mist net. The details differ from the standard way(s) used in Australian research (or at least what I was taught!), and can only add to the post-banding over-a-cup-of-tea debates that go on. No doubt there will be more videos later, on other aspects of banding - extraction, holding, measuring etc. for us to debate, ridicule, imitate or ignore.

See: <www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJJ2V6Rrfh0>

Victorians Decide Not to List Mynas as "Threatening process"

The Victorian Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) recently declined to list the presence of Indian Mynas as a 'Threatening Process.

"Insufficient published or scientifically rigorous evidence is available to demonstrate that 'Competition with native fauna by the Common Myna' poses a threat to the survival of any taxon (as opposed to individuals) within Victoria."

This is only a preliminary recommendation.

See: <www.dse.vic.gov.au/plants-and-animals/native-plants-and-animals/threatened-species-and-communities/flora-and-fauna-guarantee-act/recent-sac-recommendation-reports>

Ivor Beatty (1937 - 2012)

We note with sorrow the passing of Ivor Beatty in July this year. Ivor was the guiding light behind Surrey Beatty & Sons publishers. Located in Chipping Norton, they were the printers of the Association's journal Corella for most of its life, until we reluctantly switched to Penrith Art Printing Works several years ago. He was always helpful, co-operative and a pleasure to work with in the fraught process of publishing a journal every three months, year after year.

Ivor had two children with cystic fibrosis, and was instrumental in the formation of Cystic Fibrosis NSW, at a time when there were very few services for people with disabilities in NSW, let alone for a lesser known, indeed often unrecognised disorder like cystic fibrosis. He rose to become vice-president and then president in 1970.

Ivor himself worked at Fairfax as a letter press operator, later joining his father's toolmaking business, and then slowly expanding the printing and publishing arm until it became the dominant part of the business.

In 1981, Professor Mike Archer of the University of NSW asked him if he could publish the papers of a conference at a reasonable cost. This started Ivor and his company on a trajectory that saw them established as a major printer and publisher of scientific texts, journals and books. Ivor even started and published a new journal, Pacific Conservation Biology, almost unique in scientific publishing for being privately published. His publications received many awards over time, and Ivor himself received a medal of the Order of Australia in 2007.

Ivor's two children with cystic fibrosis sadly pre-deceased him, Sharon at age 6, and Ivor Jn in his early forties. Ivor Beatty is survived by his wife Lillian, daughters Kim and Kayley and their families.

Stein Boddington

Editor