

# NEWSLETTER

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**Editor: Stein Boddington**

**<info@absa.asn.au>**

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## Editorial

We had a great AGM, thanks to an enthusiastic partnership with Birdlife Southern Queensland. The venue was great, as were the lectures, the lunch and the company.

Perhaps we will emulate this style of AGM in the future, making it more worthwhile for speakers to travel long distances to speak to 100 rather than 15 to 20 people.

After many year's of service, Don Ripper has advised that he will step down from the position of Mist Net Service Manager (see plea for new Manager below). For many years, Don, with the help of his wife Jude, has carried this business on behalf of the Association. The honorarium hardly does justice to the work put in, and we thank Don for his effort over the years. He has enthusiastically negotiated on our behalf with Japanese and European manufacturers, kept an eye on the local competition for some items, and even manufactured poles for mist nets himself when they were not available commercially. At the same time, Don was the custodian of the Association's archives, and back copies of Corella and the Newsletter. As a committee member he contributed valuable advice and sound judgement based on many years of experience here and in UK.

We wish you all the best, Don and Jude, and thanks.

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## New Members

We welcome the following new members to the Association:

Mr Damien Smith, of Erskine Park, NSW  
Dr Joanne Maclean, of Freshwater, Qld.  
Ms Emily Mowat, of Beecroft, NSW  
Mr Gareth Evans, of Earlwood, NSW  
Jodie Hill & Ernest Waddington, of Annandale, NSW  
Liina and Anthony Pittaway, of Surry Hills, NSW  
Mr Gregory Little, of Marylands, NSW  
Mr Stephen Totterman, of Empire Vale, NSW  
Mr David Exton, of Clayfield, Qld.  
Mr Anthony Hunt, of North Rocks, NSW  
Neil Hermes, of Garran, ACT

## Farewell to Lisa Hardy

It seems a lifetime ago when Lisa joined the ABBBS. I was at that time the Secretary of the Mist Net Service of the Australian Bird Study Association and just starting the setup and co-ordination of the rehab bird banding project with WIRES. As a consequence, I gave Lisa heaps of work and I had lots of contact with her over her first decade in the banding office. She has always been helpful, courteous and prompt and she has been a fantastic asset for the Schemes. I am sure that I speak for all members of ABSA, and particularly bird banders, in wishing Lisa the very best for the future.

*Jeff Hardy* (no relation to Lisa).  
President, ABSA.

## New Mail Box Number for ABSA

Due to ongoing difficulties in clearing the mailbox in the city, it was decided to get a new mail box in Penrith. Mail will be directed from the old address for a year.

The new postal address is:

**Australian Bird Study Association Inc.**  
**PO Box 1867**  
**Penrith BC**  
**NSW 2751**

## Treasurer Wanted

The Association's former Treasurer, Jo Dessmann, was unable to continue in that role following the AGM in March 2013. We are in desperate need of an ABSA member to take on this very important role for the Association. In the interim, Dr John Farrell, has doubled his voluntary commitments to the Association by temporarily adding the Treasurer's tasks to those of the Editor of "Corella". But that arrangement can't last.

If you can help the Association in this vital role of Treasurer, please contact either John or the President at [info@absa.asn.au](mailto:info@absa.asn.au)

## Manager of the Mist Net Service

After many years managing the Association's Mist Net Service, Don Ripper has advised that he plans to relinquish the role from 1 October 2013 to pursue overseas interests..

The Mist Net Service is managed as a small commercial business. It purchases and imports bulk numbers of mist nets, Pesola scales, colour bands, banding pliers etc and also acquires other locally manufactured equipment for on-sale to Australian ornithological researchers. The MNS is a vital Australian source of equipment for researchers.

The small profit from the operations of MNS is essential for ABSA to publish "Corella". The Manager is paid a small honorarium, usually in the region of \$1000 per quarter, dependent on sales turnover.

If you are in a position to take on this role from 1 October, please contact the President at [info@absa.asn.au](mailto:info@absa.asn.au)

## AGM Reports

Approximately 100 people attended the Scientific Day in Brisbane, and were treated to a wonderful day of lectures. 14 members of ABSA attended the AGM, at which the following reports were presented:

### President's Report:

The past year had been a challenging year for the Association because of declining membership and mounting publication costs. As a consequence, the Committee decided to cease production of the quarterly Newsletter as a hard copy. From March 2013 the Newsletter will be published only on the Website. However, as we have a small number of members that do not have Internet access, we will continue to print a copy of the Newsletter from the Website and post it to them.

While on the Newsletter, I should mention that the Committee decided in late 2012, that in view of the irregular publication of *Flightlines* the ABBBS be invited to publish its "news" in the quarterly ABSA Newsletter. This offer was gratefully accepted and their first contribution appeared in the March issue which is on the ABSA website.

Publication of *Corella* will continue as a printed and posted quarterly journal in 2013. However, to maintain the financial viability of the Association, it is almost inevitable that the Journal will be published on the web from 2014.

Assuming that this occurs and in response to the survey conducted through the Newsletter in 2012, *Corella* would be published as a single complete printed Volume at the end of the year to be made available to those that request a written copy of the Volume.

Also, as a consequence of declining membership and reducing financial viability of the organization, the Committee considered seeking a link with BirdLife Australia as a special interest group, much the same as the Raptor Association and several other groups. However, as a consequence of decisions to reduce operational costs by ceasing published written Newsletters in 2013 and probably also the journal from 2014, we now believe that the Association can maintain its independence as the "bird bander's organization" for the foreseeable future and the suggested formal link with BirdLife has been suspended.

The Bill Lane Award, a grant of \$100, was again made available to Charles Sturt University for presentation to the most outstanding student in the ornithology course.

There were only two applications for grants from the Fund for Avian Research. \$1800 was available for grants in 2013. The Committee agreed that both had merit, so the available funds were split between Patrick-Jean Guay for his satellite tracking of Grey Teal from Werribee, and Petra Hanke for the purchase of research equipment to enable her to contribute to several existing projects and proposed projects including the application of a European wing measurement technique to Australian passerines.

I also thank retiring Treasurer Jo Dessmann and Membership Officer Peter Ewin for their valued contributions to the management of the Association.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge and thank BirdLife Southern Queensland and especially our member Darryl Jones, for their huge effort to organise today's joint Conservation Conference which is associated with our and BSQ's AGMs. I also thank the numerous sponsors, particularly Griffith University for making this venue available at no cost to either BirdLife or the ABSA and the speakers whose interesting papers contributed greatly to the success of the conference.

*Jeff Hardy*

### Treasurer's Report:

Audit of the 2011/12 general accounts had been completed by Ross Fowler and Associates and the Audit Report was available for inspection.

The annual income was \$23,621.46 which was primarily from subscriptions (\$15,384.25) and this was some \$2500 less than the previous year.

Total expenditure was \$30,468.44 with the main cost being the printing and distribution of *Corella* (\$24,358.58) and the Newsletter (\$1632.00). The cost of printing and distribution of the journal increased by \$4230.38 over the previous year.

The Association is presently operating at a substantial loss, but as the President reported, this is being addressed by reducing the cost of production and distribution by moving toward electronic publication. The Association also still has funds in term deposits: General Account Term Deposit - \$48,279.43 and FAR Term Deposit have recently been reinvested.

*Jo Dessmann*

### **Mist Net Service Report:**

Trading this year has resulted in of GST inclusive sales of \$17,500, which is around the long term average. While the Mist Net Service has provided equipment and advice to many member and private non-member researcher enquirers, the past year has seen the majority of purchases, but more significantly over 85% of the value of purchases, being from Private companies, Universities and Government departments.

Net supply continues to be a serious issue taking an average of five months from order to delivery. Most of the other items we import are readily available. We maintain a good stock of colour bands, around 12000, however supply continues to be an issue with continuing shortage of stock of some items and colours from AC Hughes.

The Mist Net Service provided a donation of \$5000 to ABSA Inc. in 2012. This makes a total contribution to the association of \$40,000 since we took over the operation of the Mist Net Service during 2004.

At the end of our financial year 31st Sept 2012 the working Bank Account balance stood at \$ 13,711.05 plus an additional \$5000 set aside in term deposit for transfer to ABSA Inc. as the 2013 annual donation from the Mist-net Service. The value of stock assets on hand at the same time was \$28,200

The books are still with the Auditor and will be available by Easter. I recommend that the committee be empowered by this meeting to receive the Audited accounts of the Mist Net Service at its next regular meeting. The auditor Robert Cherry principal of Cherry and Co. continues to provide his service pro bono.

The cost of insurance for Mist Net Service assets continue to be covered as part of my own business insurance arrangement as do telephone costs incurred by the Mist-net Service. These matters will need to be taken into account when the Mist-net Service transfers to its next managers.  
*Donald J Ripper JP.*

### **Editor's Report:**

In 2012 we again published a large range of papers covering a variety of Australian birds, including the Black-necked Stork (a major study by Greg Clancy in Northern NSW), White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Grey Grasswren and Little Penguin to name just a few. We also featured papers on survey methods, a pole system for capturing birds in the low to mid-canopy as well as several book reviews and some additions to our Seabird Island Series. The highlight though was the production of a memorial issue – featuring the contribution that Bill Lane made to the study of Australian birds. This year also saw the first of many Banding Project Reports which we hope will assist researchers at Macquarie University to monitor avian populations over Australia.

The number of submitted manuscripts remains high and again we will be able to publish 4 issues this year.

I would like to again thank all those people who have worked behind the scenes: our sub-editors, Geoff Smith, James Brazill-Boast, Patrick-Jean Guay and particularly Peter and Judy Smith, who handle most of the manuscripts submitted, Peter Ewin for compiling the volume index as well as our book reviewers and the many referees who gave of their time to examine the submitted manuscripts.

Alan Leishman has done a fabulous job again this year in supervising the final production of *Corella* and for continuing to work with the Bird and Bat Banding Scheme in the compilation of Recovery Round-up.

It has again been a pleasure working with sub-editors and authors in the publication of *Corella*. I feel that our journal continues to fill an important niche in disseminating knowledge of Australia's rich avian fauna.

*John Farrell*

### **Durno Murray Award:**

The Editor then continued - It is my also pleasure, as per last year, to announce the winner of the Durno Murray Award for the best paper published in *Corella* for 2012. The winners of this award receive a framed certificate noting their achievement, a cash prize of \$150 and membership of our association for 2013. Last year it went to Laurie Corbett and Tony Hertog for their paper on the White-bellied Sea-Eagles in the Northern Territory. This year it goes to Stephen Totterman for his paper "Evaluation of bird survey methods and estimators for species inventory in dry sclerophyll forest". In his research he trialed a number of different survey methods and finally recommended large area, active search methods, patch-scale sampling, results-based stopping rules and species richness estimation to improve bird species inventories. This has ramifications for any group (from community based projects through to government departments) whose task it is to produce management strategies for specific species or avian communities within a particular area. Congratulations Stephen!

### **The New Committee**

The following members were elected to the Committee of the Association at the Annual General meeting in Brisbane.

**President:** Jeff Hardy

**Vice President:** Alan Lill

**Secretary:** Catherine Young

**Treasurer:** No Nominations

**Editor:** John Farrell

**Committee Members:**

Stephen Debus,

Daryl MacKay,

Christian Scholz,

Katy Wilkins

Don Ripper,

Petra Hanke,

Ken Gover and

Stein Boddington continues in the position of **Past President**.

## Artificial Light Affects Breeding Cycles.

Dominoni D., Quetting M. and Partecke J. (2013). Artificial light at night advances avian reproductive physiology. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B-Biological Sciences* 280, 23017-23017.

**Abstract:** Artificial light at night is a rapidly increasing phenomenon and it is presumed to have global implications. Light at night has been associated with health problems in humans as a consequence of altered biological rhythms. Effects on wild animals have been less investigated, but light at night has often been assumed to affect seasonal cycles of urban dwellers. Using light loggers attached to free-living European blackbirds (*Turdus merula*), we first measured light intensity at night which forest and city birds are subjected to in the wild. Then we used these measurements to test for the effect of light at night on timing of reproductive physiology. Captive city and forest blackbirds were exposed to either dark nights or very low light intensities at night (0.3 lux).

Birds exposed to light at night developed their reproductive system up to one month earlier, and also moulted earlier, than birds kept under dark nights. Furthermore, city birds responded differently than forest individuals to the light at night treatment, suggesting that urbanization can alter the physiological phenotype of songbirds. Our results emphasize the impact of human-induced lighting on the ecology of millions of animals living in cities and call for an understanding of the fitness consequences of light pollution.

## Masked Owls on Lord Howe Island

Lord Howe Island has a long-standing problem with Black rats *Rattus rattus*. In the 1920s, Masked Owls supposedly from the Tasmanian race *Tyto novaehollandiae castanops* were introduced to control them. This was unsuccessful, and both the rats and the owls flourished.

Proposals now being considered include the eradication of both introduced species. But, as the Tasmanian Masked Owl is considered to be endangered, it was proposed to transfer the Masked Owls to Tasmania, to boost the population there.

This study shows that there is evidence that some LHI owls are from mainland south eastern Australia, and not from Tasmania as originally claimed. The authors therefore caution against translocation of this population.

Hogan, F. E., Campbell, C., Harrison, K. A., Milledge, D. and Cooke, R. 2012 **Molecular data contradicts historical records and cautions translocation of the Lord Howe Island masked owl.**

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2012.12.006>

**Note: ABSA has received a small grant to assist with publication of an entire issue (probably December 2013) of *Corella* devoted to the Sea Birds of the Lord Howe Island Group - a set of islands near LHI. More details next issue. Ed.**

## Australian Bird Names

**By:** Ian Fraser and Jeannie Gray  
**Publisher:** CSIRO PUBLISHING

**Publisher's blurb:** *Australian Bird Names* is aimed at anyone with an interest in birds, words, or the history of Australian bird-watching. It discusses common and scientific names of every Australian bird, to tease out the meanings, be they useful, useless or downright misleading!

The authors examine every species: its often many-and-varied common names, its full scientific name, with derivation, translation and a guide to pronunciation. Stories behind the name are included, as well as relevant aspects of biology, conservation and history. Original descriptions, translated, have been sourced for many species.

As well as being a book about names this is a book about the history of ever-developing understandings of birds, about the people who contributed and, most of all, about the birds themselves.

## Birds of the Pilbara region

R.E. Johnstone, Allan H. Burbidge and J.C. Darnell

**Abstract** The geographic range, status and breeding season are documented for 325 bird species known to occur in the Pilbara, Western Australia, since the first records were made in 1699. The fauna is a mixture of Torresian, Eyrean and Bassian components, along with a variety of seabirds, migratory wading birds and Asian vagrants. The region lies entirely within the arid zone and the overall harshness of the environment means that few species are resident.

The richness of the total avifauna (resident and non-resident) is due mainly to the diversity of habitats, especially those on or near the coast. The region is an important refugial destination for a variety of Australian species and includes a range of endemic subspecies and colour morphs. The area from Eighty Mile Beach to Port Hedland saltworks is of international importance for shorebirds and, following cyclonic rains, Mandora Marsh and Fortescue Marsh are of continental importance for waterbirds. The 204 breeding species are mapped, and each species is assessed for possible changes in distribution or abundance since 1900.

The full paper is available free online [here](#).

## Some Birds Avoid Cuckoos by Nesting Near Humans

Wen Liang, from Hainan Normal University in China has found that swallows nest in and around human habitation as a tactic to reduce parasitism by cuckoos. He found that swallows in China had better defences in detecting and rejecting cuckoo eggs compared to those in Europe, where similar species have a much closer relationship with human habitation.

Reference: Liang, W. et al. (2013). Avoiding parasitism by breeding indoors: cuckoo parasitism of hirundines and rejection of eggs. *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology*. DOI 10.1007/s00265-013-1514-9

## Bush Stone-curlew

Gosford Council in NSW is showing its conservation credentials with its support for the Bush Stone-curlew recovery program. They recently started to erect signs:



### Background

In June 2009 the Community Environment Network (CEN) was appointed host to a Birds Australia NSW Twitchathon grant on behalf of the 'Friends of the Bush Stone-curlew' group in Gosford, to provide administrative support for conservation activities regarding the endangered Bush Stone-curlew.

A small population (less than 15 individuals) of Bush Stone-curlews *Burhinus grallarius* occurs around the foreshores of Brisbane Water. It is highly likely that the population is declining and therefore fine scale information on Bush Stone-curlew home ranges, dispersal distances and movements is urgently required to enhance the ability to conserve the local population. The funding from Birds Australia was provided to the CEN to employ a person to provide administrative support to ensure that monitoring and conservation activities are carried out.

This is a joint project of the Central Coast Marine Discovery Centre (CCMDC), Hunter- Central Rivers CMA, CEN and the "Friends of the Bush Stone-curlew.

## Constitution Amendments

All but one of the constitutional amendments put to the Annual General meeting were passed. The one which was rejected concerned altering the criteria for concessional membership to make it available only to Aged Pension recipients. So the concession will now be available to any person who has retired.

## BANDING OFFICE NEWS

### Lisa is leaving the banding office!

After 25 years of dedicated service to the banding scheme, Lisa Hardy has decided to leave the ABBBS behind and make a new start outside of the public service. We are very sorry to see her go, myself in particular, and will miss her fantastic work ethic, sense of humour and cheekiness. Her last day is 19 June.

Lisa's stay with the ABBBS represents one of the longest tenures in a banding scheme anywhere in the world, with perhaps the late Rod Cossee from the New Zealand Banding Scheme being the only officer to outlast her. Lisa has worked for many of the former ABBBS Secretaries, Executive Officers and Senior Project Officers including myself, Barry Baker, James Pook, Bruce Male, Kim Lowe, Tom Scotney (RIP), Belinda Dettmann, Jason Ferris, Tony Stokes and Narelle Montgomery.

At this stage, we are trying to locate a replacement for Lisa (yes, I know, an almost impossible task). Lisa's replacement will be dealing with your data submissions from now on, so please be patient as they get up to speed with the administrative processes in the ABBBS. We are confident will find a great replacement for Lisa.

Lisa's email address will be decommissioned when she leaves, and no-one will be checking her email. Please use the [abbbs@environment.gov.au](mailto:abbbs@environment.gov.au) address for all correspondence from now on. And a couple of reminders: your banding and re-trap data must be validated and submitted via the secure web portal on our website and all project renewal reports are due by 31/7. We thank Lisa for all of her hard work and dedication to the ABBBS and wish her well in her new endeavours.

David Drynan  
Senior Project Officer, ABBBS  
5 June 2013

## Better Looking Birds Have Healthier Babies

Vladimír Remeš and Beata Matysioková. **More ornamented females produce higher-quality offspring in a socially monogamous bird: an experimental study in the great tit *Parus major*.** *Frontiers in Zoology*, 2013;

A female great tits' *Parus major* appearance is shown to signal healthy attributes in offspring in a paper in *Frontiers in Zoology*. The black stripe across her breast and white patches on her cheeks correlate to a chick's weight at two weeks and immune strength respectively - though the former seems to signal a genetic benefit and the latter can affect an 'adopted' chick's health, suggesting nurture is involved.

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