

# NEWSLETTER

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## Editorial

After many years of service to the Association, Don Ripper has passed on the job of managing the Mist Net Service. He has filled orders, maintained the Association's archives, negotiated with suppliers, and even manufactured items such as mist net poles when these were unavailable elsewhere. Don, we thank you for a job well done.

President Jeff Hardy has taken on the job as an interim measure while we search for a replacement for Don.

## Identifying Member:

The Treasurer has informed me that one member has paid their annual subscription but no identification details were received - probably because there was a limit to the number of characters allowed in the field, and that limit was used up by the institution name, before the membership number was typed.

We hope someone might recognise that they attempted to put too much information in the Reference text-box on their bank's payment page. If you think it was you, please contact Treasurer John Farrell at <treasurer@eftel.net.au>, with details of when the payment was made, and he can check if it was you.

**ISSN 2202-297X (Online)**

## Membership renewals

Well, it's crunch time for those members who have not renewed their subscription. They will be unable to access Corella, and will not receive reminder emails about the availability of the Newsletter. So if you are in that number, please contact the treasurer ASAP and arrange payment. Email: <treasurer@eftel.net.au>

## From the WEBMASTER

Well, we had hoped for a 1 March launch of the electronic Corella, but things happen, don't they!

To see the March Corella, just go to "Members" in the main menu and log on. Then go to "Access Corella" in the same menu. We hope that your access to Corella will go smoothly, but contact me on <absamailout@gmail.com> if you have any problems.

Also appearing from now is the entire collection of "The Australian Bird Bander", and within a couple of weeks, the back issues of "Corella" will also be freely available on our website. Access at first will be by name and author. Later we will include keywords as well. To access "The Australian Bird Bander", just go to the main menu under "Publications".

Once the electronic Corella is bedded down, we will be moving to upgrade the content management system (CMS) to Joomla 3.2, with the help of the Joomla Users' Group in Sydney. We will first transfer the secure, members only section, and later, the entire website.

We also wish to expand the Members Only section from its current role of enabling access to Corella. Any suggestions as to what would be good to include would be more than welcome

## Vale Win Filewood

Lionel Winston (Win) Filewood. After a short illness, Win Filewood passed away on 7 January 2014 at the age of 78. Win was well known in bird banding circles in NSW and Victoria and served as President of the ABSA in 1979 and 1980.

## AGM 2014

Just a reminder that the Annual General Meeting and Scientific Day will be held in conjunction with Birdlife Southern NSW in the lecture theatre at:

**National Botanic Gardens, Canberra**

**15 March 2014.**

**Cost: \$40 (\$30 students)**

ABSA will hold its AGM in the theatre during the lunch break. Please note that there are parking fees in the NBG - \$10 per car per day.

At this late stage, do not register using the registration form on the website. Decisions about catering have already been made. Simply turn up on the day, and pay at the door.

## Renewals

As per our last communication, ABSA has now gone online and 2014 subscriptions are now overdue. If you have not received a User Name and Password please send payment to our Treasurer at our Post Office Box or contact him at [treasurer@eftel.net.au](mailto:treasurer@eftel.net.au). Once you have these you can log onto the secure section on our website and download the relevant issues. You will no longer receive separate printed issues of Corella in March, June or September and December will be a printed copy of the full volume.

## World's Oldest Flamingo Dies

It was reported in the Daily Telegraph (1 February 2014) that the Flamingo reputed to be the oldest in the world had died at Adelaide Zoo. Known as "Greater, the Flamingo", the bird had been at the zoo since 1933, having been acquired from Hamburg or Cairo - no-one knows for sure. It was put down after zoo staff judged that the bird's quality of life had significantly deteriorated due to complications associated with old age. Its gender was unknown. Elaine Bensted, Chief Executive at the zoo said "Although this was an extremely sad loss for us all, it was the right thing to do"

## ABSA Library

We wish to remind members that ABSA has accumulated a substantial library of journals which is held by the Discovery Centre in Newington, Sydney, a project of Birdlife Australia - NSW.

The address is:

Newington Armory, Building 133  
1 Jamieson Street  
Sydney Olympic Park NSW 2127

Phone: (02) 9647 1033

Email: [discovery@birdlife.org.au](mailto:discovery@birdlife.org.au)

## Visitor Information

Opening hours: Saturday & Sunday 10am-4pm

**Travelling by car:** park at the end of Jamieson Street and follow the signs.

**Unexpected closures:** If travelling from outside Sydney please contact us during office hours to confirm our opening hours as access is restricted at times due to other events at Sydney Olympic Park.

**Note:** The BirdLife Discovery Centre is not open on weekdays.

## Queensland Ornithological Conference

After the generous co-hosting of the ABSA annual Scientific Day last year, we are pleased to inform members that Birdlife Southern Queensland and Birds Queensland are holding another event this year:

**Date:** 31 May and 1 June 2014

**Location:** Abel Smith Lecture Theatre, St Lucia, Qld, University of Queensland

**Theme:** The State of Australia's Birds

**Cost:** \$30 Student \$50 Others.

They are still taking offers of presentations, until 28 March. More details on: <[www.birdlife.org.au/locations/birdlife-southern-queensland](http://www.birdlife.org.au/locations/birdlife-southern-queensland)>

## Bush Stone-curlew on Yorke Peninsular

The first Bush Stone-curlew in Innes National Park for four decades has been sighted. The bird was recently spotted on a time lapse camera set up to monitor wildlife and fox movement as part of an extensive fox baiting program on southern Yorke Peninsula.

The fox-baiting program was introduced to Innes National Park by the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources in 2003 to reduce fox numbers prior to the re-release of South Australia's mainland Tammar Wallaby, previously believed extinct.

Other birds expected to benefit from the program include Malleefowl, Western Whipbirds and the Hooded Plover.

More info: <http://goo.gl/Gb1jtc>

## Adaptive value of same-sex pairing in Laysan albatross

Lindsay C. Young and Eric A. VanderWerf

Published by Royal Society 27 November 2013

doi: 10.1098/rspb.2013.2473

Abstract:

Same-sex pairing is widespread among animals but is difficult to explain in an evolutionary context because it does not result in reproduction, and thus same-sex behaviour often is viewed as maladaptive. Here, we compare survival, fecundity and transition probabilities of female Laysan albatross in different pair types, and we show how female-female pairing could be an adaptive alternative mating strategy, albeit one that resulted in lower fitness than male-female pairing. Females in same-sex pairs produced 80% fewer chicks, had lower survival and skipped breeding more often than those in male-female pairs. Females in same-sex pairs that raised a chick sometimes acquired a male mate in the following year, but females in failed same-sex pairs never did, suggesting that males exert sexual selection by assessing female quality and relegating low-quality females into same-sex pairs. Sexual selection by males in a monomorphic, non-ornamented species is rare and suggests that reconsideration is needed of the circumstances in which alternative reproductive behaviour evolves. Given the lack of males and obligate biparental care in this species, this research demonstrates how same-sex pairing was better than not breeding and highlights how it could be an adaptive strategy under certain demographic conditions.

## Are We Underestimating the Threat to Australia's Migratory Land Birds?

By Hugh Ford

Pacific Conservation Biology Vol. 19 No. 3/4 (Dec 2013)

### Abstract:

Few migratory land birds in Australia are currently regarded as threatened or near threatened. In contrast, many of Australia's migratory seabirds and shorebirds are threatened or near threatened, with most of the latter being added over the last two decades.

Furthermore, many long-distance migratory land birds that breed in North America and Europe have experienced major declines, probably due to threats in their breeding or wintering grounds or both. I suggest that knowledge of our migratory land birds is limited, and almost non-existent outside their breeding areas. Some are already declining and I predict that others will decline in the near future.

The priority now is to increase our knowledge of the locations of major wintering areas in northern Australia of land birds that breed in the south, and to study their ecology and behaviour outside the breeding season. We also have limited knowledge of how migrants in Australia prepare physiologically and behaviourally for migration. If they migrate in large hops, then we need to find and protect departure, refuelling and arrival sites.

## Budgies Choosing Where to Fly

**"Behavioral Lateralization and Optimal Route Choice in Flying Budgerigars".**

P. S. Bhagavatula et al

**PLOS Computational Biology. 6 March 2014**

DOI: 10.1371/journal.pcbi.1003473

### Author Summary

Birds display a clear mastery of the skill of flying rapidly and safely through complex and cluttered environments. An example of this can be viewed at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-\\_RHRAzUHM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-_RHRAzUHM), which shows a bird flying at high speed through a dense forest. Such mastery requires the ability to determine, from moment to moment, which of several possible routes would provide the safest and quickest passage. Our study is one of the first to investigate how birds achieve this. Our experiments reveal that, when flying budgerigars are required to choose between two passages, they tend to favor the wider passage. However, this tendency is superimposed upon a bias that, surprisingly, varies from bird to bird: some individuals show an intrinsic preference for the left-hand passage, and others for the passage on the right. This is very different from handedness in humans, where the majority of humans are right-handed. We develop a mathematical model of the interaction between the birds' individual biases with their tendency to prefer the wider passage. The model reveals that this interplay is actually beneficial – it can expedite the passage of a flock of birds through a complex environment.

## Fifth National Malleefowl Forum

We give advance notice that the Fifth National Malleefowl Forum will be held in Dubbo NSW on 12-15 September 2014. Organisers are keen to hear from researchers involved with Malleefowl who wish to make a presentation, at this Forum. Submissions may be for oral or poster presentations. The deadline for making submissions is 14th April.

Enquiries to Tim Burnard at <[tim.burnard@birdlife.org.au](mailto:tim.burnard@birdlife.org.au)> or phone 03 5581 2205

## Pizze and Knight Digital Edition

Marc Anderson shared this on Birding-aus email network:

### Video Overview: Pizze & Knight Digital Edition

After using the Pizze and Knight Digital Edition (PC Windows version - beta) for a couple of months now, I've put together a video overview so others can see it in action.

<http://wildambience.com/2013/11/pizze-knight-birds-australia-digital/>

I've divided the video into six parts as follows:

- 1) Introduction, Field & Bird Guide.
- 2) Comparing Species
- 3) Identification.
- 4) Location Lists.
- 5) My Lists
- 6) Editing Data. Birding Sites & Habitats.

The video overview/review is based on my experience using the program and personal viewpoint.



## Prime Minister Tony Abbott:

"We don't support, as a government and as a Coalition, further lockouts of our forests," the Sydney Morning Herald quoted Abbott as saying. "We have quite enough National Parks, we have quite enough locked up forests already. In fact, in an important respect, we have too much locked up forest."

"I don't buy the Green ideology, which has done so much damage to our country over the last couple of decades," Abbott said. "When I look out tonight at an audience of people who work with timber, who work in forests, I don't see people who are environmental bandits, I see people who are the ultimate conservationists."



## Climate Change and Unusual Effects

Polar Bears are taking to eating birds eggs when the formation of ice is delayed and they cannot reach their more favoured food - seals. Samuel Iverson, a PhD candidate at Carleton University described in an interview on CBC Canada, watching a bear eat its way through an Eider Duck nesting colony with 300 nests each containing four or five eggs. Within 48 hours, they were all eaten.

“Longer ice-free seasons increase the risk of nest depredation by polar bears for colonial breeding birds in the Canadian Arctic”

Samuel A. Iverson et al

Published 5 February 2014 doi: 10.1098/rspb.2013.3128

Proc. R. Soc. B 22 March 2014 vol. 281 no. 1779 20133128

### Abstract

Northern polar regions have warmed more than other parts of the globe potentially amplifying the effects of climate change on biological communities. Ice-free seasons are becoming longer in many areas, which has reduced the time available to polar bears (*Ursus maritimus*) to hunt for seals and hampered bears' ability to meet their energetic demands. In this study, we examined polar bears' use of an ancillary prey resource, eggs of colonial nesting birds, in relation to diminishing sea ice coverage in a low latitude region of the Canadian Arctic. Long-term monitoring reveals that bear incursions onto common eider (*Somateria mollissima*) and thick-billed murre (*Uria lomvia*) nesting colonies have increased greater than sevenfold since the 1980s and that there is an inverse correlation between ice season length and bear presence. In surveys encompassing more than 1000 km of coastline during years of record low ice coverage (2010–2012), we encountered bears or bear sign on 34% of eider colonies and estimated greater egg loss as a consequence of depredation by bears than by more customary nest predators, such as foxes and gulls. Our findings demonstrate how changes in abiotic conditions caused by climate change have altered predator–prey dynamics and are leading to cascading ecological impacts in Arctic ecosystems.

## Mallee Emu-wrens Lost in Fire

In an article in the Age (9 Feb 2014, Bridie Smith tells of the loss of up to 60 breeding pairs of Mallee Emu-wren at two sites during bushfires in January this year. The species is now restricted to the Murray-sunset National park, with about 1000 individuals remaining. Monash University's Dr Rohan Clarke warned that a single fire, in this country where dry lightning strikes are common, could wipe out the entire species.

## Dinner - 1864

“A record of the second Acclimatisation Society of Victoria dinner, held for about 60 guests (including the Governor Sir Charles Darling), and described as “a fitting tribute to the cause of acclimatisation [and] a complete triumph of gastronomy.” The dinner occupied three and a half hours and was followed by speeches, which are reproduced. Both indigenous and imported dishes are detailed in the menu, with the Australian cuisine including Sydney rock oysters, kangaroo tail, Yan Yean eels, vol au vont of frogs, wombat, bandicoot, parakeet, Murray lobster, venison (from Phillip Island), bronze-wing pigeon, brush turkey, rabbit (from Thomas Austin of Barwon Park, who introduced rabbits to Australia), mutton, lamb, guinea fowl, wild Goulburn pig, Cape Barron goose, Queensland yams and pineapple, etc., topped off with 14 wines from South Australia and New South Wales and 11 foreign wines.”



## V-Formations explained

Portugal, S.J., et al (2014). Upwash exploitation and downwash avoidance by flap phasing in ibis formation flight. *Nature* 505, 399-402. doi:10.1038/nature12939

This article explores the aerodynamics of birds flying in v-formation, and how they alter the wing-beat phasing in different formations to maximise up-lift from the previous bird's wash.

The study used birds from a program in Austria that uses imprinting and micro-light aircraft to teach Northern Bald Ibis their ancestors' migration routes.