

NEWSLETTER

Number 116
September 2014

Editor: Stein Boddington
<info@absa.asn.au>

Contents

National Malleefowl Forum.....	2
Vale Ken Simpson.....	2
A Photographic Guide Book.....	2
Australasian Shorebird Conference	2
Banding Office News - Robins.....	2
Centennial History of NSW.....	3
AOC - 2015.....	3
Regent Honeyeaters on Facebook!.....	3
Murray Darling and Environmental Water.....	3
Save the Coastal Emu - petition.....	3
iPad eBook - Evolution of Birds.....	3
Origin of Migration	4
In Your December Corella.....	4
All about Christmas island.....	4

Editorial

The Committee has engaged a professional designer to develop a new website for ABSA. For many years, we have not been able to afford this, but costs have now reduced so as to bring it within our means.

The availability of this newsletter is currently notified by email to all registered members of the Association, who are invited to download it from the website. We recognise that this is an awkward way of doing it, and apologise for doing so. The current website does not allow otherwise. This will change when the new website is commissioned, hopefully later this year. The Newsletter will then be sent as part of the email. We beg your indulgence for the time being.

We continue our search for a permanent person to take on the management of the Association's Mist Net Service.

AGM 2015

The proposal at this stage is to hold our AGM and seminar in 2015 at the BirdLife Gluepot Reserve in South Australia on 21-23 March.

Don Ripper has taken the lead on this, to organise the venue, speakers and a field day, but he advises that we cannot confirm the venue until after the Gluepot Management Committee makes a decision on 14 September on the availability of the facilities. We will confirm a venue with members as soon as possible by Email and via the Website.

Jeff Hardy

President

ISSN 2202-297X (Online)

Proposal to Affiliate with Birdlife Australia - have your say!

In 2013 the Committee considered and rejected a proposal to seek amalgamation with Birdlife Australia as a Special Interest Group - concern was raised that ABSA would lose its independence and identity. Some members have now suggested that rather than seek amalgamation, the ABSA should officially affiliate with BirdLife to encourage a closer relationship where both organisations would benefit. Numerous other organisations have already taken this step.

In recent years the ABSA has linked with Birdlife Branches and Affiliates to organise and conduct its AGM and scientific seminars. More recently Birdlife has agreed to allow ABSA to utilise data and artwork from HANZAB to produce a new series of "Bird in the Hand" articles that will be published on our new website (presently under professional development). Affiliation could see even greater cooperation between the two organisation. However, before any further consideration is given to affiliation, all members are offered the opportunity to express their views.

First of all, have a look at the "Head Cooperative Agreement Between Affiliated Groups and Birdlife Australia". A copy of the agreement can be viewed/downloaded by following this link: <http://www.birdlife.org.au/locations/affiliates>

If you wish to make comment on the proposal. Please send an email message to info@absa.asn.au or write to us.

2014 Australasian Bird Fair - Reminder

The 2014 Australasian Bird Fair will be the first large-scale bird and wildlife event of its kind in Australasia. It will be held from 25-26 October 2014 at the Newington Armory, Sydney Olympic Park.

For more information: www.birdfair.com.au or contact:

Phil Straw

admin@birdfair.com.au

National Malleefowl Forum

The Organising Committee of the 2014 Fifth National Malleefowl Forum takes pleasure in inviting you to attend the Forum at the Taronga Western Plains Zoo, Dubbo NSW from Friday 12th to Monday 15th September 2014.

The National Malleefowl Forum will review progress in improving the conservation status of the Malleefowl *Leipoa ocellata* and exchange new information about its biology and management. Progress on Malleefowl conservation will be reviewed in each state, and the application of research findings to management will be discussed.

Topics of the Forum include:

Involvement of community groups in Malleefowl conservation
Land management to aid Malleefowl Recovery
Adaptive Management to benefit Malleefowl
New technologies in monitoring Malleefowl
The role of fire in Malleefowl conservation

Vale Ken Simpson

Ken Simpson passed away on 9th July 2014 after a long illness, at the age of 75.

Ken wintered over twice at Macquarie Island during the mid-1960s, where he conducted research on the Royal Penguin and the Wandering Albatross. His interest in penguins was revived in recent years when he began a study of the various *Eudyptes* penguin species on Australian shores and coastal waters, a work that is still in progress.

He was author several books on birds and bird-watching, but his lasting legacy is the highly successful "The Birds of Australia" (along with illustrator Nicholas Day and art director Peter Trusler), published in 1984 in hardback, with a second edition in 1986, followed by the softcover "Field Guide to the Birds of Australia", now in its eighth edition.

Ken is survived by his daughters Catherine, Joanne, Helen and Elizabeth; his long-time partner Zoë, and his brother Peter.

(From information supplied to the ANARE club by Peter Simpson, Ken's brother.)

A Photographic Guide Book

In November Princeton University Press will be publishing a new guidebook to the birds of Australia which we believe would be of interest to members:

Birds of Australia: A Photographic Guide by Ian Campbell, Sam Woods and Nick Leseberg

More at : <<http://press.princeton.edu/titles/10338.html>>

9th Australasian Shorebird Conference

Please join us at the 9th Australasian Shorebird Conference in Darwin, Northern Territory on 20-21 September.

Program: See <http://awsg.org.au/australasian-shorebird-conference.php>

40+ presentations covering contentious issues such as:
the role of constructed wetlands in the face of extensive habitat loss throughout the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, including SE Australia;
the increased role of community participation in shorebird research and conservation;
as well as a comprehensive coverage of policy, threats and monitoring, ecology and migration of shorebirds.

It will be a packed two days with exciting opportunities to engage with leading shorebird researchers from the Australasian region. There will be excursions and opportunities to visit a cannon-netting research project after the conference.

BANDING OFFICE NEWS

Dear Bander

I am writing to alert you to an issue that has been reported to us that concerns placing colour bands on Robin species.

In short, we no longer support the placement of plastic colour bands on Red-capped Robins in any position due to leg damage and loss. Erring on the side of caution, plastic colour bands are also not to be placed on top of each other on any other Robin species. This change has been made in the interests of animal welfare after reports of leg damage and loss from Red-capped Robins carrying standard colour bands from AC Hughes.

I realise this may have significant impacts on current studies, so am happy to discuss alternative marking techniques. Please contact me as a priority to discuss.

I have also copied in the Regional Organiser for each State and Territory for their information. This notice will also be published in the next issue of flightlines so that all banders are aware of the situation.

Feel free to pass this notice onto any of your banding team members.

David Drynan
Senior Project Officer
Australian Bird & Bat Banding Scheme
GPO Box 8 CANBERRA ACT 2601
p: +61-2-62742407

Please send all ABBBS related emails to:
abbbs@environment.gov.au

The Centennial History of NSW

by W. Frederick Morrison

From Chapter VI - Fauna

“The Honey Eater (*Melephagidae*) is represented in more than fifty species, and is among the most numerous of the birds of this land. Their chief delight seems to be an increasing devotion to the flowers of the field. Their low songs of gladness speedily announce their presence with the coming of spring time. Where the flowers bloom they congregate. These birds are not remarkable for the sweetness of their music, yet their notes are sufficiently clear to win for them names which they have fairly won - as the Bell Bird, whose notes are clear as the ringing of a bell; Friar Bird, whose voice, low and solemn, chants forth a strain as doleful as the tomb; and Knife Grinder, as sharp as the grindstone’s wail till its work is done. They prefer the *Banksiae*, or Honeysuckle.

“The Top-knot Pigeon is chiefly found on the eastern coast, but is speedily disappearing, on account of the resistance he meets with from civilisation. His habits lead him in immense numbers to visit the corn-fields of the farmer in preference to the wild fig and cabbage palm of the forest; and hence he is deemed an enemy, and as such has fallen under the ban of the white settler. His flesh is coarse, and is not valued highly either by black or white.

“The Brush Turkey (*Talegalla*) is a bird about half the size of the domestic turkey, the same in colour and general appearance, except in the tail, which more nearly resembles that of the barn fowl. It is remarkable for its mound-building. It scratches together an immense pyramid of leaves, brush, and dirt, until a mound about eight feet wide and six feet high has been formed, and then it proceeds to place its eggs, a few inches apart, as one would plant potatoes and covers them up a foot deep, and allows the heated mass to do the work of incubation.”

The Lyre Bird (*Menura superba*), called sometimes the Australian Pheasant, is not of that family, but is said to belong to the thrush genera. It is about as large as a domestic fowl, with a tail two feet long in the male, the chief feathers of which are arranged in the form of a lyre. It is one of the most beautiful of the bird creation, very shy and timid, and seeks the most sequestered spots. It is never seen near the abodes of civilisation, except when captured. In the seclusion of some ravine, overgrown with masses of tangled creepers, whose solitude is only broken by the rushing of the mountain stream, the loud and liquid notes of this bird is heard sometimes for days together, resembling the sound of “bleu-bleu,” with the emphasis on the letter “u”. It is said that this bird can make a perpendicular spring of ten feet from the ground to a branch, and, repeating the feat, rise from branch to branch in a remarkably short time, and reach the highest point almost as if in a continuous ascent. It is a mimic of great power, and can imitate the howl of the dingo, the scream of the cockatoo, or the bleating of the lamb.

AOC - 2015

Birdlife Australia has announced that the [2015 Australasian Ornithological Conference](#) will be held at Flinders University in Adelaide, on 2-4 December, 2015. Mark the dates in your diary. We will bring you more details later.

This is a biennial conference that provides a regular forum for the exchange of information and ideas between avian-based researchers and conservationists throughout the Australasian region. There is always a lively program of lectures and presentations, several prizes, including ABSA’s Best Student Poster Prize, and a number of excursions in the area around the conference venue.

Regent Honeyeater Recovery Program - on social media

The national Regent Honeyeater recovery program, has recently gone high tech - they now have a Facebook and a YouTube page. They will be using the Facebook page as a means to communicate with volunteers and the broader community.

As an incentive to visit the YouTube account, our first video is a great one recorded recently by Mick Roderick. It is of a male Regent Honeyeater doing superb Little Wattlebird mimicry at Belmont, NSW. We hope to post more videos of Regents from previous years and other sightings as they come in.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=55IQwd_ynH0

Murray Darling Basin Authority - Environmental Water

The Authority has identified the following environmental watering opportunities for 2014-15 as a basis for discussion and feedback in the finalisation of priorities. These environmental watering opportunities are based on early information and may alter with changing climate and weather conditions and as more information comes to hand towards the end of the 2013-14 water year. The forecast indicates average to dry conditions throughout much of the Basin in 2014-15. The Authority may add, remove or modify these ideas in response to feedback received to formulate the 2014-15 environmental watering priorities.

Waterbird breeding and/or waterbird habitat

The priority for 2013-14 was to “improve the resilience of colonial waterbird populations by supporting breeding events and improving breeding habitat in the Northern Basin wetlands”. There is potential for a similar priority for 2014-15 to support waterbirds in the Northern and Southern basin. Under forecast conditions the priority watering needs for waterbirds are likely to focus on maintaining habitat and refuge sites such as the Narran Lakes, Macquarie Marshes, Gwydir wetlands, Lachlan catchment, Coorong and Lower Lakes.

Source: <http://www.mdba.gov.au/what-we-do/environmental-water/environmental-watering-priorities/baew-14-15/identified-opportunities-for-2014-15>

Save the Coastal Emu petition

I have started a petition on Care2: Save the Coastal Emu. I'm hoping that if enough people sign my petition, we can make a difference. Right now I've got 422 signatures — will you help me collect more by adding your name:

Here's a link: <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/768/595/306/save-the-coastal-emu/#>

Thanks so much -- I really appreciate your help!
Dr Greg. P. Clancy, Ecologist and Birding-wildlife Guide 02 6649 3153 | 0429 601 960

<http://www.gregclancyecologistguide.com>

iPad ebook - evolution of birds

There is a children’s interactive animated eBook for the iPad called, "What became of the feathered raptor?", which tells the story of how dinosaurs evolved into birds:
<http://itunes.apple.com/app/id850930884>

Origins of Migration

Abstract

Migratory species exhibit seasonal variation in their geographic ranges, often inhabiting geographically and ecologically distinct breeding and non-breeding areas. The complicated geography of seasonal migration has long posed a challenge for inferring the geographic origins of migratory species as well as evolutionary sequences of change in migratory behaviour. To address this challenge, we developed a phylogenetic model of the joint evolution of breeding and non-breeding (winter) ranges and applied it to the inference of biogeographic history in the emberizoid passerine birds. We found that seasonal migration between breeding ranges in North America and winter ranges in the Neotropics evolved primarily via shifts of winter ranges toward the tropics from ancestral ranges in North America. This result contrasts with a dominant paradigm that hypothesised migration evolving out of the tropics via shifts of the breeding ranges. We also show that major lineages of tropical, sedentary emberizoids are derived from northern, migratory ancestors. In these lineages, the winter ranges served as a biogeographic conduit for temperate-to-tropical colonisation: winter-range shifts toward the tropics during the evolution of long-distance migration often preceded southward shifts of breeding ranges, the loss of migration, and in situ tropical diversification. Meanwhile, the evolution of long-distance migration enabled the persistence of old lineages in North America. These results illuminate how the evolution of seasonal migration has contributed to greater niche conservatism among tropical members of this diverse avian radiation.

Wingera B.M., et al. **Temperate origins of long-distance seasonal migration in New World songbirds.** *PNAS* 2014 111 (33) 12115-12120

In Your December Corella

Volume 38 Number 4 December 2014

Diet of 25 sympatric raptors at Kapalga, Northern Territory, Australia 1979–89, with data on prey availability.
L. Corbett, T. Hertog and J. Estbergs 81

Breeding ecology of Welcome Swallows *Hirundo neoxena* in the Yarra Valley, Victoria: the nestling stage. A. Lill 95

The utility of closed aluminium and butt-ended stainless steel leg bands for Australian Pelicans *Pelecanus conspicillatus*.
M. H. Waterman, C. E. Manning, G. R. Johnston and O. Fuller 104

Book Review:

Finding Australian Birds: A Field Guide to Birding Locations.Kurtis Lindsay 107

Recovery Round-up. 108

All About Christmas Island

David J. James, D.W. & Ian A.W. McAllan, I.A.W. (2014) The birds of Christmas Island, Indian Ocean: A review *Australian Field Ornithology* 31, Supplement

Summary. This paper is an account of all known records of birds from Christmas Island in the eastern Indian Ocean. It also includes reviews of the history of the Island's ornithology, its avian biogeography, the taxonomy of selected endemic taxa, population estimates of resident species, and current and past threats to its birds. One hundred and forty-nine species of birds have been recorded from the Island, of which 14 are breeding land-birds, nine are breeding seabirds, 18 are visitors and 108 are vagrant species. The Island has a high degree of endemism and this is expressed in the avifauna through 11 endemic taxa among the 23 breeding species. Biogeographically, Christmas Island is an oceanic island, with breeding and visiting species originating from several sources including South-East Asia, Australia, the Palearctic, pelagic, and other undetermined sources. Links to the Greater Sunda Islands and Wallacea are very minor. The Island was first occupied by humans in 1888. Since then, three bird species have been introduced (two deliberately) and four have self-colonised. No bird taxa have become extinct locally, despite several extinctions of other endemic and indigenous fauna. However, numerous threatening processes are placing increasing pressure on native birds.



Yellow-billed Kingfisher *Syma torotoro*

©Australian Bird Study Association

Unsubscribe: Send "paper email please" to <info@absa.asn.au>