

# NEWSLETTER 120

ISSN 2202-297X (Online)

June 2015

**Editor: Stein Boddington**

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

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## The New Committee

We welcome the Committee newly elected at the Gluepot Station AGM in March, and especially the new members.

**President:** Jeff Hardy

**Vice-President:** Alan Lill

**Secretary:** Katie Wilkins

**Treasurer:** John Farrell

**Editor of Corella:** John Farrell

**Ordinary Members:** Darryl MacKay, Ken Gover, Cat Young, Dave Hamilton, Anthony Hunt, Amy Greenwood and Stephen Debus

**Past President:** Stein Boddington

At the AGM, the President thanked the retiring Committee members for their contribution to management of the Association. I would like to pay tribute in particular to Don Ripper, who held various positions in his time on the committee, but especially the demanding post of Mist-net Manager.

## AGM 2016 - advance notice

At its meeting this month, the ABSA Committee decided that the 2016 AGM and Scientific Day would come back to Sydney, probably at a venue near Richmond.

The theme of the Scientific Day will be "Birds of the Cumberland Plain". The Cumberland Plain, stretching across most of Western Sydney, holds many small remnants of its original forest and woodland cover, and much of its original avifauna, which in turn, has been the subject of intensive study by various people. We will hear from them.

## Editorial

The last Newsletter was inadvertently numbered 119, when it should have been 118, for which we apologise. We thought it best to just continue, rather than try to fix it. So there will never be a number 118, and this is 120.

## President's Report to AGM 2015

2014/15 was an interesting year for the Association.

In 2012/13 we published our Newsletter on-line and that continued through 2013/14 and with a few tickles and tweaks to our old website, by Stein Boddington we managed to publish *Corella* on-line as well. The decision to publish *Corella* on-line was not taken lightly, but was essential to maintain the Association's financial viability by reducing printing and postage costs. Four issues were still published quarterly, but on-line and the whole Volume was then printed and posted in December. The on-line journal is only available to financial members for a period of two years, after which the access-bar will be removed to allow public access. I again congratulate John Farrell and Stein Boddington for their tireless effort to achieve the on-line publication of both the journal and the Newsletter. The Hon. Editor will elaborate on the production of *Corella* in his report..

In mid-year we sought to migrate some administrative functions to the website, but unfortunately we were asking too much of the old website platform. The Committee therefore decided to spend some of our accrued investment account money on the professional redevelopment of our website using a more modern and user-friendly software base. The new website went live in December 2014. We believe it is far more attractive, user friendly and functional than the old website.

The revamped website has allowed us, among other things, to better manage membership, allow on-line membership subscription payments, publish all back issues of the journal, the original Bird in the Hand and other publications, establish a members only area for photo galleries and a forum. The website is also linked to Facebook.

Also in mid-2014 we sought and were granted approval by BirdLife Australia to utilise the data and illustrations in the seven volumes of the *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds* (HANZAB) to produce a second edition of Bird in the Hand. This will be achieved by publication on the website of species data sheets to facilitate the use of HANZAB material in the field for ageing and sexing of birds in the hand. Conditions of the approval included that the sheets be freely available and each sheet is to acknowledge the copyright held by BirdLife Australia. So far 154 species profile sheets have been produced and published on the website and other species sheets will be uploaded as they are produced.

Following on from our recent collaboration with BirdLife Australia branches to conduct our AGM and associated Scientific Conferences in Brisbane, Canberra and now here at Gluepot, and the approval to utilise HANZAB material, we sought member input to a proposal to officially affiliate with BirdLife Australia. Only three members responded in the negative and the Committee therefore pursued the issue. An Agreement was finalised in January 2015. The

specific areas of co-operation relating to the Agreement are:

1. Use by the Australian Bird Study Association Inc. (ABSA) of HANZAB data. The resultant field data sheets will be published and be freely available to field workers through the ABSA's website [www.absa.asn.au](http://www.absa.asn.au);
2. BirdLife Australia and the ABSA will jointly promote research on Australian birds through jointly organised scientific lecture and seminar days;
3. The organisations support and promote the bird conservation initiatives and activities of each other through newsletters and email messages.

A copy of the Agreement has been uploaded to our website.

As mentioned at the 2014 AGM, the ABSA was contracted, under the Saving Our Species Program of the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, to initiate a monitoring program for the threatened NSW population of the Grey Grasswren. The initial survey was conducted over two weeks in April/May 2014. Thirteen members and friends participated in the survey under very trying conditions. A repeat survey will be undertaken in September 2015. A copy of the report has been uploaded to the website.

The Bill Lane Award, a grant of \$150, was again made available to Charles Sturt University for presentation to the most outstanding student in the Graduate Diploma of Ornithology course in 2014. The winner was Sara Judge.

The winner of the Durno Murray Award for the "best" paper, that was published in *Corella* in 2014, will be announced by John Farrell his Editor's Report.

The Fund For Avian Research received two applications for grant funds in the past year. Both research funding proposals were deemed compliant with the outline in the Constitution and both were granted in full. Jacqueline Nguyen sought \$769 to support her project *A phylogenetic and morphological study of Australian passerine birds*; and Zoe Reynolds sought \$1200 to support her study *The importance of unburnt patches for birds in a post-fire landscape*. Part of Zoe's work will be done here at Gluepot.

## Editor's Report to AGM

Last year was the first time the full volume of *Corella* was produced as a complete publication and I have received numerous comments from members praising the production both in general presentation and the quality of papers within. The associated savings by printing only one hard copy will be outlined in the Treasurer's Report.

The volume saw a flock of papers (excuse the pun) on a variety of different species. As mentioned last year several banders have taken the challenge to write up their data for our Banding Project Reports section. Three have been published already with another one on a site in Western Sydney in press. Our Seabird Island Series continues to attract a number of contributions from researchers from coastal NSW and WA.

The number of submitted manuscripts remains high and again we were able to produce four issues. We were able to increase the number of pages slightly this year and we hope

to continue to do this to cut down the time between submission to publication.

As per previous years I would like to 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; Peter Ewin for compiling the volume index; Stephen Debus who continues to track down manuscripts for publication; our book reviewers and the many referees who gave of their time to review submitted manuscripts.

Graham Fry is thanked again for copying back issues of *Corella*. His precise labelling of individual files made it very easy to organise insertion into the various sections of our new website.

Alan Leishman has, as always, done a fantastic job supervising the final production of *Corella* and for continuing to work with the Australian Bird and Bat Banding Scheme in the compilation of Recovery Round-up.

As always it has given me great pleasure to see the work of researchers published in *Corella* – especially those from aspiring ornithologists. This will be my last year as Editor and Associate Professor Alan Lill has kindly agreed to take over this role from 2016.

## Durno Murray Award

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the winner of The Durno Murray Award for the best paper published in *Corella* for 2014. The winners receive a framed certificate, a cash prize of \$150 and a free membership to ABSA for 2015.

This year's winners are: Felicity Hatton, Patrick Mickan, Bernd Gruber and Jerry Olsen for their paper entitled *Modelling the nesting habitat requirements of the Wedge-tailed Eagle Aquila audax in the ACT using nest site characteristics*. They found that ACT eagles chose the tallest and most robust trees on slopes less than 30 degrees, at elevations above 400m and often on north-east facing aspects.

John Farrell

Editor, *Corella*

## Audit Report 2015

The audit was completed for the financial year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September by Ross Fowler & Co. Annual income received was \$29,395.74.

Primary source of income were subscriptions (\$13,230 - down from \$14,400 in 2013) and the Mist Net Service (\$5,000).

Total expenditure was \$19,562 with the main cost being the publication of *Corella*. Total profit was \$9,833.35

The total cost of artwork, printing and postage for *Corella* in 2014 was \$19,620.99, in 2015 it was \$15,366.45. This was a saving of \$4,254.54.

Our term deposits are:

General	\$35,320.00
Fund for Avian Research	\$53,769.09

John Farrell  
Hon. Treasurer

## Corella Contents: June 2015 - Vol. 39(2)

### Papers:

**A survey of outlying populations of the Grey Grasswren *Amytornis barbatus*.** A. Black, G. Carpenter, R. Jaensch, L. Pedler and R. Pedler.

**Dynamics of the waterbird fauna of Peery Lake, arid north-western New South Wales, after flooding.** J. Smith and P. Smith.

**Morphological sexing of Grey-crowned Babblers *Pomatostomus temporalis temporalis*: near enough is not quite good enough.** K. T. A. Lambert and C. J. Blackmore.

### Recovery Round-up.

## PhD at UWS - Emus

The Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment (HIE) at the University of Western Sydney (UWS) is seeking a highly motivated and dynamic PhD candidate to research the “conservation biology and management of emus in urban environments.

The project will investigate urban ecology and adaptive management of large native wildlife in western Sydney. Research could focus on:

- Population dynamics and carrying capacity of emus in urban environments (Wianamatta Regional Park)
- Adaptive population and habitat management of urban emus and kangaroos
- Human-animal interactions and community education.

The PhD candidate is anticipated to commence in 2015. More info: <[http://www.uws.edu.au/graduate\\_research\\_school/grs/scholarships/current\\_scholarships/current\\_scholarships/hie\\_conservation\\_biology\\_and\\_management\\_of\\_emus\\_in\\_urban\\_environments](http://www.uws.edu.au/graduate_research_school/grs/scholarships/current_scholarships/current_scholarships/hie_conservation_biology_and_management_of_emus_in_urban_environments)>

## Feral Cats

“To eradicate feral cats, we need to know how many are out there.” That was the title of an interesting discussion on “The Conversation” on ABC TV. The transcript is an exploration of the problems associated with estimating the number of feral cats in Australia.

Go to: <<https://theconversation.com/to-eradicate-feral-cats-we-need-to-know-how-many-are-out-there-33014>>

## Bird Fair in Sydney in 2016

There will be no Australasian Bird fair in 2015, but it will return, bigger and better, in 2016. It will aim to:

- Provide targeted funding for conservation projects;
- Engage with the public and keeping them informed of the latest conservation news, issues and projects;
- Lift the profile of bird conservation across the broader community.

Follow on Facebook for updates.

## AOC

Registration for the Australasian Ornithological Conference in Adelaide 25-27 November is now open. Click on the link on this BirdLife AOC page to access registration:

<<http://www.birdlife.org.au/get-involved/whats-on/aoc>>

## Corella Contents: Sept 2015 - Vol.39(3)

### Papers

**Post-fledging spatial use by a juvenile Wedge-tailed Eagle *Aquila audax* using satellite telemetry**  
*F. Hatton, J. Olsen and B. Gruber*

**The Tasman Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra tasmani* of Nepean and Phillip Islands in the Norfolk Island Group**  
*P. Coyne, B. Evans, O. Evans and H. McCoy*

**Assessment of band recoveries for three Australian eagle species** *S. J. S. Debus*

**Some vocalisations of the Grey Falcon *Falco hypoleucos***  
*T. Baylis, F. W. van Gessel and S. J. S. Debus*

**Ageing Southern Boobook nestlings and fledglings.**  
*J. Olsen, D. Judge and S. Trost*

### Book Reviews:

Climate Change Adaptation Plan for Australian Birds

*J. Brazill-Boast*

The World of Birds

*G. Fry*

### Recovery Round-up.

## Shorebirds Heading for Extinction

From BirdLife Australia E-News:

BirdLife Australia’s Threatened Species Committee has released grim news confirming that seven of Australia’s migratory shorebirds are on a trajectory to extinction.

“It’s a very sad roll call,” said Samantha Vine, BirdLife Australia’s Head of Conservation. “Once common species like Eastern Curlew and Curlew Sandpiper are now Critically Endangered with Bar-tailed Godwit, Red Knot and Great Knot not far behind”.

“Without urgent conservation action, in the 30 years it takes for the average Australian to pay off their mortgage, many of these species will have become extinct. Gone. Lost to the world forever,” continued Ms Vine. Perhaps most alarming is the fact that the once numerous and widespread Red-necked Stint has moved onto the Near Threatened list.

However, BirdLife Australia is not going to let these birds disappear without a fight. We are calling on the Australian Government to do more to protect migratory shorebirds at home and in Asia. BirdLife has launched a petition asking Federal Environment Minister, Greg Hunt to develop:

- A strong national wetlands policy to address the cumulative impacts of threats to our shorebirds; and
- An ambitious strategy to engage our international partners in the protection of habitat important to the survival of our shorebirds.

BirdLife Australia will also release an interactive shorebird map to allow the public to document actions at shorebird sites across Australia – the good, the bad and the ugly.

“Our new interactive map will allow the community to work with us to develop a comprehensive picture of the state of shorebird habitat across Australia,” said Ms Vine.

“We believe it will show just how much important habitat is being lost to port developments, housing and industry in Australia each year. But it will also put a spotlight on communities taking action to protect the wetlands and shorebirds they love.”

The petition is online at <<http://birdlife.org.au/shorebirds-in-crisis>>

## **“Bird Ringing Station Manual”**

by P. Busse and W. Meissner

This book outlines the organisation, standardisation of and collaboration between ringing, or banding, stations, based on the authors' extensive experience in the Baltic and along the South Eastern European Flyway. The detailed press release is not reprinted here as the intensive, multi-station banding effort is not characteristic of the Australian banding scene. But the sections on banding techniques and other research methods may be of interest to readers.

Anyone interested can download the book at no cost, as it is available to read, download and share fully in open access on the De Gruyter Online site:

<<http://www.degruyteropen.com>>

## **Yandina Creek Wetlands being drained**

From Greg Roberts via Birding-Aus.

“Work has begun to drain the 200-hectare Yandina Creek Wetlands on the Sunshine Coast. As has been reported, the wetlands are home to an extraordinary variety of birds including several threatened species.

The drainage works are proceeding in defiance of federal and state investigations into potential breaches of environmental laws. An update can be found at this link, along with further suggestions about who people can email if they are concerned:

<<http://sunshinecoastbirds.blogspot.com.au/2015/05/drainage-works-begin-at-yandina-creek.html>>”

## **Latest Edition of Tattler Now Available**

The latest edition of the Tattler is now available online. This issue covers latest field work and research updates, including:

- Upward trajectory of Great Knot at sites in S-E Asia.
- Are flyway changes causing a shift in non-breeding distribution?
- Satellite tracking of the Great Knot - 7 of 8 are winging their way north.
- Southward migration of waders studied on the western coast of Kamchatka Peninsula, Russia.
- Issues for shorebird conservation in the Yellow Sea.
- Ageing Australian Oystercatchers - a couple of "old birds" still going strong in Victoria.
- New site for Spoon-billed Sandpiper in Bangladesh.
- Report on the 8th Meeting of East Asian–Australasian Flyway Partnership.
- Remembrance of Allan Baker, 1943–2014, one of the greatest minds of the worldwide shorebird community.

Go to: <<http://www.awsg.org.au/tattler/Tattler-35.pdf>>

## **Norfolk Island Bird Week**

Wild Mob, a non-profit conservation organisation that organises expeditions and volunteer work in various spots has teamed with Norfolk Island Travel Centre to run week long trips to Norfolk in November 2015, out of Sydney and Brisbane.

“Join local Norfolk Island bird expert Margaret Christian, along with Derek Ball, Director of WildMob and Chair of Island Arks Australia. Their wealth of knowledge will provide a fun-filled week of bird watching. A highlight of the week will be a presentation on the endemic and endangered Norfolk Island Green Parrot.

The Norfolk Island Group is a globally important biodiversity hotspot and has been designated as an ‘Important Bird Area’ by Birdlife International. The group is a breeding site for several 100,000 seabirds including the Masked Booby, Grey Ternlet, White Tern, Sooty Tern, and Wedge-tailed Shearwater. Phillip Island supports one of the largest breeding populations of Red-tailed Tropic Birds in Australia. Norfolk is also home to the endemic and endangered Norfolk Island Green Parakeet, and other endemic birds such as the Norfolk Island Golden Whistler and Norfolk Island Scarlet Robin.

You will also get the opportunity to explore this amazing place and lots of time to relax in the incredible surroundings.”

Visit the Wild Mob website for details of these and other trips to Norfolk:

<http://wildmob.org/event/norfolk-island/>

## **It’s A Dog’s Life**

Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary hosts the captive component of the Northern Eastern Bristlebird Recovery Program. In collaboration with the New South Wales Office of Environment and Heritage, their goal is to breed and release captive bred birds to the wild whilst continuing to refine captive husbandry protocols.

In further collaboration with OEH, Currumbin Sanctuary hosts a conservation detector dog named ‘Penny’. Penny is an English Working Springer Spaniel, who has been specially trained to sniff out the Eastern Bristlebird in the field. She has made herself right at home with her primary handler and CWS staff member Shannon Harriden and travels to work with her for extra training with a dedicated CWS Bristlebird team. In 2015 with the help of our canine superstar, our goals of collecting from the wild were achieved. These important birds were hand reared by Clancy Hall and Lianne Knipe and will form an integral part of the captive breeding program and ultimately the successful recovery of the species in the wild.