



[HOME](#) : [ABOUT ABSA](#) : [OUR HISTORY](#) : [CONTACT US](#)

NEWSLETTER 149



Editor: Stein Boddington
297X (Online)
<info@absa.asn.au
2022

ISSN 2202-

December

Contents

Editorial
Fund for Avian Research - Call for submissions
Committee Changes
ABSAs 2023 AGM and Conference
ABSAs is now a Charity
Constitutional Amendments
Scope of Corella
Birds of the Cumberland Plain Book
Vale Wally Klau and Peter Higgins
Student Research Grant Available
Help with Statistical Analysis of Bird Data
More Captive-bred Regent Honeyeaters Released
The Fairy-wrens of the Aust. National Botanic Gardens
Information Security
Constitutional Amendments - details



Image by Darryl McKay

Editorial

We apologise for the non-appearance of a September newsletter this year. We hope that this month's bumper issue makes up for it.

Members are reminded that application for research grants for 2023 are now open, and due by 31 December 2022. Note that the amount on offer has increased to \$2,500, reflecting the improvement in interest rates and the generosity of members donating to the fund.

It is also time to renew your membership. Prompt renewal is always appreciated.

Constitution Amendments are presented in this Newsletter, and will be put to a vote at the AGM in 2023. These amendments will legalise some practices forced on the Association by COVID Health Orders, namely the use of internet for meetings and decision-making. These practices are likely to continue as they make Australia-wide participation in Committee practical and allow a wider access to participation on the Association's governing body.

Some changes to the Committee have been necessitated by the resignation of

Treasurer Natasha Webb, stepping down due to work and study pressures, and the anticipated stepping down as Secretary of Jeff Hardy at the next AGM. We extend a huge thankyou to both Jeff and Natasha for their diligent work within the Committee. Chris Young has stepped forward to take over as Treasurer, and we welcome Bill Rutherford as a new member of the Committee.

The search is on for someone to take on the role of Secretary, and as always, we hope for an influx of younger members to kick off a generational change. Younger members are reminded that having served a term on a governing body such as the ABSA Committee looks good on any resume, and undertaking management of an organisation is a valuable experience at the start of any career.

Fund for Avian Research - Call for Submissions

The deadline for applications for funding support from ABSA's Fund for Avian Research (FAR) Grants is fast approaching.

The FAR Grants are intended to support researchers with project-related expenses such as buying equipment and/or travel within Australia. It is anticipated that approximately \$2,500 will be available in the 2023 round of funding. That amount is usually distributed across several applications.

The amount of money isn't large, but the applications don't need to be lengthy, either! If you are running a research project on some aspect of the Australian bird fauna and could use some extra funding, give it a go.

Please read the Assessment Criteria below carefully. Applicants should email their signed applications (as attachments either in .pdf or .doc formats) to:

info@absa.asn.au
by 31st December 2022

FAR Grants - Assessment criteria

1. General Criteria

How well does the proposal relate to ABSA's objective "to support, encourage and promote the study of Australian birds and to contribute to their conservation" and the purpose of the avian research fund to "assist with the publication of information, the provision of education or the carrying on of research into various aspects of the avifauna of Australia"?

2. Scientific and Technical Criteria

- a) Does the proposal have a clearly stated objective?
- b) Does the proposal include a clearly stated and practical methodology to achieve its objective?
- c) Is the methodology consistent with good scientific design and with good practice (including ethical considerations)?
- d) Is the achievement of the objective able to be measured or quantitatively assessed?
- e) If successful, how significant and/or useful will the outcome be in terms of our knowledge of the Australian avifauna and its conservation?
- f) How likely is the project to result in formal publication of results?

3. Financial Criteria

- a) Does the proposal provide a clear and itemised account of how the funds will be spent?
- b) Are the allocations in the proposed budget appropriate and do they provide reasonable value for money?

Committee Changes

Natasha Webb, who stepped in to become ABSA Treasurer when we had no-one, resigned from the position. She will remain as an "ordinary member" of the Committee until the 2023 AGM.

Chris Young has stepped up and was confirmed as the new Treasurer at the last Committee meeting.

Jeff Hardy has announced that he will not be standing again as Secretary of the Association, but will stand again for a position as "ordinary member".

Mr Bill Rutherford has been appointed to a vacant position of "ordinary member" on the Committee.

ABSA 2023 AGM and Conference

Committee recently discussed the situation of a reported current fourth wave of Covid infections and uncertainty of being able to attract participants to face-to-face meeting. It was therefore agreed that no conference be held in 2023 and that the 2023 AGM be again conducted by Email to all members as in 2021 and 2022. The Committee agreed that the AGM be held by email from

Saturday 4 February until Friday 11 February 2023

Details and Agenda and reports will be emailed to all members prior to the

commencement of the meeting.

ABSA is Now a Registered Charity

The law was changed making it compulsory for all bodies claiming Tax deductibility for donations to be a registered charity by 12 December. ABSA has successfully applied and was granted charitable status from 25 October 2022.

The Tax Office has confirmed the continuation of tax deductibility for all donations to the Fund for Avian Research, and the tax exempt status for ABSA as an organisation.

Constitutional Amendments

Our constitution was amended last in 2013, to allow the use of email in organisation communications. During the COVID pandemic, many organisations, including ABSA, expanded the use of electronic communication in order to comply with COVID restrictions on face-to-face meetings.

Fair Trading NSW, the government body that implements the Associations Incorporation legislation, has recognised that these new methods of meeting, and making decisions, using online platforms, email etc will be usefully used in the future by organisations. To this end, they have drafted constitutional clauses that formalise these practices.

ABSA operates under a constitution that departs from the department's Model Constitution, and so cannot take advantage of the automatic inclusion of these clauses in their constitution. So it is necessary for us to hold a Special General Meeting as the next AGM, at which these amendments will be put to the members for ratification and subsequent inclusion in the Constitution.

The Amendments are at the end of this newsletter.

Scope of Corella

Earlier this year, Committee agreed to the Editor of Corella's suggestion that we should further emphasise that Corella accepts papers on a wide range of ornithological topics in order to try to broaden the scope of the material that we publish in the journal. Accordingly, a motion was passed that the opening paragraph of the "Notice to Contributors" in Corella be amended to read as follows:

"Corella primarily publishes research on Australian birds, but also on birds in other regions when the findings have clear relevance to Australian ornithology. Field-based studies are the main focus, but investigations of captive birds are acceptable if they provide basic ornithological knowledge rather than just being of avicultural interest. Most aspects of avian biology are considered appropriate topics for the journal, including ecology, behaviour, ecophysiology, genetics, distribution and movements, demography, morphometrics, breeding biology, evolution and field techniques. Systematic reviews and perspectives are also considered suitable contributions to the journal."

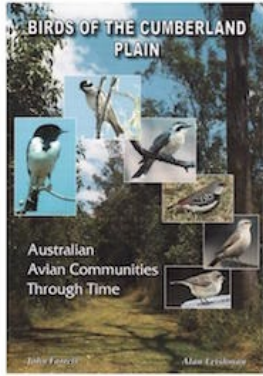
Birds of the Cumberland Plain

Birds of the Cumberland Plain books are still available to members of ABSA and other Bird organisations.



BIRDS OF THE CUMBERLAND PLAIN

Australian Avian Communities Through Time



Editors: John Farrell and Alan Leishman

This book presents data from over 50 years of avian research across the Cumberland Plain, documents the changes in community structure and records the decline and demise of many species. It establishes baseline data that will be extremely valuable for researchers and bird enthusiasts in years to come as the effects of climate change become increasingly apparent.

Foreword by Professor David Lindenmayer

PAPERBACK A4 188 pages

COST: Free (Limit of 1 per person)

POSTAGE AND HANDLING: \$20

Please circle (where appropriate):

ABSA member CBOC member BMBOC member NSWFOC member Birdlife member

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

PAYMENT DETAILS

Debit my Credit Card:

Visa

Mastercard

Card No. _____

Expiry date: _____

Signature: _____

Direct Deposit into the ABSA Account (preferred option)

Australian Bird Study Association Inc. BSB: 062-229 Account No: 00901789

It is essential that you quote your Surname and Initials in the "payee information" text box first, or we will not know who paid us (some banks limit the number of letters that can be displayed on transactions). Please double check the account details as it may not be possible to reverse a payment into an incorrect account.

To obtain a copy please complete this form and forward to: treasurer@absa.asn.au

Death of Wally Klau and Peter Higgins

We sadly note the passing of two members of the birding community.

Walter (Wally) Lawrence Klau (13/10/36 - 28/6/22) was an ABSA member and hosted our 2003 Annual Conference and AGM at the Gluepot Reserve in South Australia. He was a regular part of AWSG expeditions to Broome, 80 Mile Beach and Port Headland Saltworks in the late 80s and early 90s. He was also a regular at the Iron Range cooperative banding site in north Queensland.

Peter Jeffrey Higgins (1959 - 2022) Peter won renown for being the driving force behind the spectacular publishing achievement, the Handbook of Australian New Zealand and Antarctic Birds (HANZAAB), bringing to gether in seven volumes almost the entirety of research into the birds of those regions to date. A full obituary was published in the Sydney Morning Herald digital edition of 19 August 2022. It is available [here](#).

Birdlife Shoalhaven Student Research Grant

BirdLife Shoalhaven will provide a grant of up to \$4,000 to fund a research project in 2023, that will improve bird conservation and a better understanding of birds in the Shoalhaven on the NSW South Coast.

To be eligible you must be a student currently enrolled in a higher degree course at a NSW or ACT university. While it is not a requirement, projects focused on threatened species or with field work carried out within the Shoalhaven, will be highly regarded. The grant must be used to directly support the project, e.g. on-ground work, education programs, project equipment or travel to relevant conferences.



The deadline for applications is 31st March 2023. For more information and to download the application guidelines and form, go to www.birdlifeshoalhaven.org/grant.html. If you have any queries, please contact Rob Dunn at president@birdlifeshoalhaven.org.

Statistical Analysis of Bird Data

Opportunity for Statistical Experience, Assistance and Training

Macquarie University maths, statistics and data people run a project every Spring term, where final year students taking MATH3599 assist researchers and organisations with analysis of their data sets, giving the students practical experience in the real world, and adding resources and academic rigour and experience to the project.


A collaboration typically requires a scoping document to be prepared by the project manager or researcher, outlining the needs of the project. On acceptance, a small group of students will work on the project, typically spending an hour or two per week in a Zoom meeting with the project manager to track progress and discuss results. The students also do a final presentation to their lecturers which the client & guests attend, and write a report on their findings.

Dorothy Lutherau has been using this resource in her work on the Wolli Creek Birdos database for a couple of years, and has offered to field any questions people might have.

Just contact by email to <dlutherau@yahoo.com.au>

Download the Course Flyer with all details from [here](#)

Paid Advertisement



Neil Hermes Safaris - birding tours next year

2023 June TBA **PARADISE BIRDS - TASTE OF NEW GUINEA**
7 day 6 nights exploring the birds of Cairns and Port Moresby
Highlights Birds of Paradise, bowerbirds and Palm Cockatoos
Led by Mark Clayton and Neil Hermes Tour is open for
expressions of interest, details to come.

Book at neilhermes.com.au/safaris/
Enquiries at neil@neilhermes.com.au

More Captive-bred Regent Honeyeaters Released

Fifty more captive-bred Regent Honeyeaters were recently released in the Lower Hunter region of NSW, part of a 50-birds-per-year program to boost numbers of this iconic and critically endangered bird. An article in the Sun-Herald (20/11/22) went on to say that the birds in the Taronga Zoo initially had learned a mish-mash of zoo noises and exotic animal calls, and it was thought unlikely that this would appeal to the wild birds of the Lower Hunter. So now the birds are bred in an enclosure with recordings of wild birds, and the other natural sounds of the bush in the Lower Hunter, in the hope that eventually the released birds will sing the right song, and breed with the wild population in that area. Two released birds have bred together so far.

The Superb Fairy-Wrens of the Aust. National Botanic Gardens

These notes are extracted from a longer article by Olivia Congdon from Science ANU, and are reproduced with her kind permission. The

full article can be accessed [here](#)

“Cumquat needs to leave very soon,” Helen Osmond says in a concerned, parental kind of way, as she pulls a pair of binoculars back from her face. Cumquat is a fluffy, round, one-year-old female superb fairy-wren. She’s about the size of her fruity namesake and lives in the Australian National Botanic Gardens in Canberra.

Helen, a research officer with the Research School of Biology at ANU, has known Cumquat since the wren was a tiny featherless chick. In fact, it’s quite likely it was Helen who put the coloured ID band on Cumquat’s leg. She also knows it’s now time for Cumquat to move away from this patch of garden where the bird has been living with her brother, and find new territory for breeding – hence the concern.



For the past thirty years, Helen has been undertaking fieldwork for a project following the fairy-wrens of the botanic gardens, giving her a unique view of their complex lives. She confesses that she has more conversations with the birds than with people. “I’ve always wanted to understand animals and this project has enabled me to enter their world,” Helen says. You could call her the Jane Goodall of superb fairy-wrens.

Thanks to the long-term nature of the study, run since 1986, researchers from the ANU Cockburn group have produced valuable insights about the unusual behaviours of the wrens. Helen joined the team after her ANU biology degree, and was instantly drawn to these teensy, charming, sometimes feisty birds and their intricate social lives. Helen’s job is to observe and collect data all year-round. She spends her working days banding wrens, collecting blood samples for DNA analysis and tracking population changes. In the spring and summer, she becomes a nest hunter.

Helen can walk past any random section of the gardens and tell you where the thornbills frequent, which bird species use that spindly grass for nesting, and that the high-pitched *p’chock* sound in the distance is one of the first noisy friarbirds back this season. And of course, she can tell you exactly what each fairy-wren has been up to, where they live, their ancestry and who they’re friends with (or not friends with).



“It’s like a soap opera,” she says. “One of the most surprising and rewarding things about this job has been learning to understand their vocalisations,” Helen says. “When I first started, I thought they only had a handful of call types.”

But then after repeated exposure – a privilege of spending so much time in the field – she started to match specific sounds with particular social situations, behaviour or life stages. “But I think it must be close to 20 different calls for different purposes. It has been a slow process of de-coding. It takes time to realise that the calls that are commonly heard are not a ‘typical’ wren call, made by every bird at any time.”

In the thirty years that Helen has been in the gardens, she’s been privy to countless secrets that have become scientific data. In turn, this data has fed into research papers and PhD theses on topics such as the wrens’ unique breeding strategies and population dynamics, the impact of disease, potential genetic causes of population declines, and the dramatic effects of climate change on wild populations.

All of this science is the result of everyday observations made one at a time, penned by Helen’s hand, just like the notes on Cumquat and her friends.



Information Security

In the light of recent Medicare security breaches, Committee has commenced a review of the security of information held by the Association, to ensure that it remains safe, and is held strictly in accordance with our privacy policy. We are continuing to recommend that where possible, all payments to the Association be made by direct deposit, so that credit card information does not have to be exchanged, thus reducing risk. We will undertake to make this option available at all times. We ask only that you always include your name in the reference section, so that the Treasurer does not have to track down the source of any funds received.

PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

For those interested, here are links to the current ABSA Constitution, and to the Model Constitution prepared by the Department of Fair Trading

ABSA CONSTITUTION: Download from [here](#).

MODEL CONSTITUTION: Download from [here](#).

AMENDMENT 1. [Model Constitution (M.C.) Clause 3(2)]

Clause 3 (1) Membership application.

After “...with the Treasurer.”, add: “The Committee may determine that an application may be made or lodged by email or other electronic means.”

AMENDMENT 2. [M.C. Clause 4(2)(a) and 4(2)(e)]

Clause 7 (1) Register of members.

After “...became a member.”, add; “The register may be in written or electronic form. If kept in electronic form, it must be able to be converted to hard copy.”

AMENDMENT 3. [M.C. 18(3)(a) and (b)]

Clause 15 (3) Secretary (duties).

15(3) is to be replaced by new clause:

“15(3) The minutes may be kept in written or electronic form, and for minutes of proceedings at a meeting, shall be signed, in writing or by electronic means, by:

- (i) the member presiding at the meeting, or
- (ii) the member presiding at the subsequent meeting.”

AMENDMENT 4. [M.C. Clause 27]

Clause 21 Voting and decisions (of the committee).

Insert new Subclause:

"21 (5) Transaction of business outside meetings or by telephone or other means.

(i) The Committee may transact its business by the circulation of papers, including by electronic means, among all committee members.

(ii) If the committee transacts business by the circulation of papers, a written resolution, approved in writing by a majority of committee members, is taken to be a decision of the committee made at a meeting of the committee.

(iii) The committee may transact its business at a meeting at which 1 or more committee members participate by telephone or other electronic means, provided a member who speaks on a matter can be heard by the other members.

(iv) The member presiding at the meeting and each other member have the same voting rights as they would have at an ordinary meeting of the committee for the purposes of

(a) the approval of a resolution under subclause (ii), or

(b) a meeting held in accordance with subclause (iii).

(v) A resolution approved under subclause (ii) must be recorded in the minutes of the meetings of the committee.

Note: The Act, section 30(2) and (3) contains requirements relating to meetings held at 2 or more venues using technology."

AMENDMENT 5. [M.C. Clause 29(3)(f)]

Clause 24 (3). Special general meeting - calling of.

Add new subclause 24(3)(5):

"(5) may be in electronic form and signed and lodged by electronic means."

AMENDMENT 6. [M.C. Clause 34(3)(b)]

Clause 29 Making of decisions (general meeting)

Add new subclause (4)

"(4) If clause 29(6) applies, a question raised at the meeting may be decided by an appropriate method as determined by the committee."

AMENDMENT 7. [M.C. Clause 35]

Clause 29. Making of decisions (general meeting)

Add new subclause (5)

"(5) Postal or electronic ballots

(i) The association may hold a postal or electronic ballot, as determined by the committee. (Note: the clause 8 exemption in the M.C. does not apply as ABSA has

no rules for disciplining members, or appealing against such decisions.)

(ii) The ballot must be conducted in accordance with Schedule 2 of the Regulation."

AMENDMENT 8. [M.C. Clause 36]

Clause 29. Making of decisions (general meeting)

Add new subclause (6).

"(6) Transaction of business outside meetings or by telephone or other means.

(i) The association may transact its business by the circulation of papers, including by electronic means, among all members of the association.

(ii) If the association transacts business by the circulation of papers, a written resolution, approved in writing by a majority of members, is taken to be a decision of the association made at a general meeting.

(iii) The association may transact its business at a general meeting at which 1 or

more members participate by telephone or other electronic means, provided a

member who speaks on a matter can be heard by the other members.

(iv) The member presiding at the meeting and each other member have the same voting rights as they would have at an ordinary meeting of the association for the purposes of

(a) the approval of a resolution under subclause (ii), or

(b) a meeting held in accordance with subclause (iii).

(v) A resolution approved under subclause (ii) must be recorded in

the minutes
of the meetings of the association.

Note: The Act, section 37(3) and (4) contains requirements relating to meetings held at 2 or more venues using technology."

AMENDMENT 9. [M.C. Clause 43(2)]

Clause 39. Inspection of books etc.

Replace with new Clause 39

"(39). (1) The records, books and other documents of the association shall be open to inspection, free of charge, by a member of the association at any reasonable hour.

(2) A member may inspect a document referred to in subclause (1):

- (i) in hard copy, or
- (ii) in electronic form, if available."

AMENDMENT 10. [M.C. Clause 41(1)(c)]

Clause 40 service of notices

40 (1). After "...shown in the register of members", delete "or by email by the member", and insert "or by sending the notice by electronic transmission to an address specified by the person for giving or serving the notice."

AMENDMENT 11. [M.C. Clause 41(2)(c)]

Clause 40. Service of notices

40(2) Delete "If a document or notice time of sending"

Insert. "Where a notice is sent by electronic transmission, the notice shall, unless the contrary is proved, be deemed for the purposes of this constitution to have been

served on the person:

- (i) on the date the notice was sent, or
- (ii) if the machine from which the transmission was sent produces a report indicating the notice was sent on a later date - on that later date."

AMENDMENT 12. [Not derived from the Model Constitution]

Clause 14 Election of Committee members.

14 (1) (3). After "...the annual general meeting.", add the following sentence: "Should the Past President cease to be a member of the Association for any reason, the position of Past President will become vacant until a suitably qualified person is available, and shall not be treated as a casual vacancy under Clause 13(4). Should any other Committee Member cease to be a member of the Association for any reason, their position will be declared vacant, and treated as a casual vacancy under Clause 13(4).

This email was sent to {{ contact.EMAIL }}

You received this email because you are registered with Australian Bird Study Association

PO Box 1867 · Penrith BC, New South Wales 2751 · Australia

Contact us at info@absa.asn.au

[Unsubscribe here](#)



© 2021 Australian Bird Study Association