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NEWSLETTER 151



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

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Image at right courtesy of Darryl McKay

From the President

Vale Alan Lill

We received some very sad news from Alan Lill's son, Francis, who informed us that Alan had very suddenly passed away. We will miss Alan's valued contributions to our committee and his professional approach to editing our journal, Corella. Australia has lost an extremely dedicated ornithologist. We will be liaising with Alan's family to publish an obituary in our journal at the end of the year.

If you would like to send your condolences to the family the address is as follows:

Chris Lill [Alan's wife]
Denby Dale
2/424-426 Glenferrie Rd
Kooyong Vic 3144

John Farrell
President

Editorial

It is a great sadness to lose colleague and friend Alan Lill, who passed away recently (see note from President above). Alan's measured judgment and collegiate working style will be missed on the ABSA Committee, where he has served for many years, as will his editorship of *Corella*, a core role in the business of the Association which he performed with distinction.

The Australian Conservation Foundation, (ACF) reports that 250 hectares of prime Regent Honeyeater land has been cleared by a beef producer near Armidale, NSW, presumably to increase beef production - See [here](#). Habitat clearance has been long recognised as the primary threat to this iconic bird that was once abundant in NSW and Victoria. It is estimated that only 250 survive in the wild, down from 1500 at the start of this century, despite massive food-tree planting by volunteers, captive breeding programs and other conservation work during that period. We hope that appropriate action is taken to stop this sort of problem, in keeping with the Albanese Government's promise of "No More Extinctions".

Stein Boddington

AOC 2023 and the ABSA Best Student Poster Prize.

The biennial Australasian Ornithological Conference is on 28th to 30th November this year at the Convention and Exhibition Centre in South Brisbane. Registration for the AOC is now open at www.birdlife.org.au/events/australasian-ornithological-conference-2023/

As usual, ABSA will be presenting a prize for the "Best Student Poster" at the Conference. The prize is judged by ABSA representatives attending the conference. We are not sure at this stage who is going to be in Brisbane at the time, and invite members who are definitely attending to volunteer to assist in the task of judging the posters.

So if you are going to AOC, and happy to assist in the judging, please make yourself known to the President, John Farrell by emailing info@absa.asn.au

Seabird Island Series Bears Fruit

The Seabird Island Series was instigated by ABSA back in 1973 with the aim to document where seabirds were located and in what numbers they were breeding, Australia wide. Enthusiasm for visiting seabird islands and producing manuscripts has waxed and waned over the years but has never disappeared. In fact No. 269 was just published last year.

Many islands have now been visited a second time to see how the populations of seabirds had fared over the intervening years.

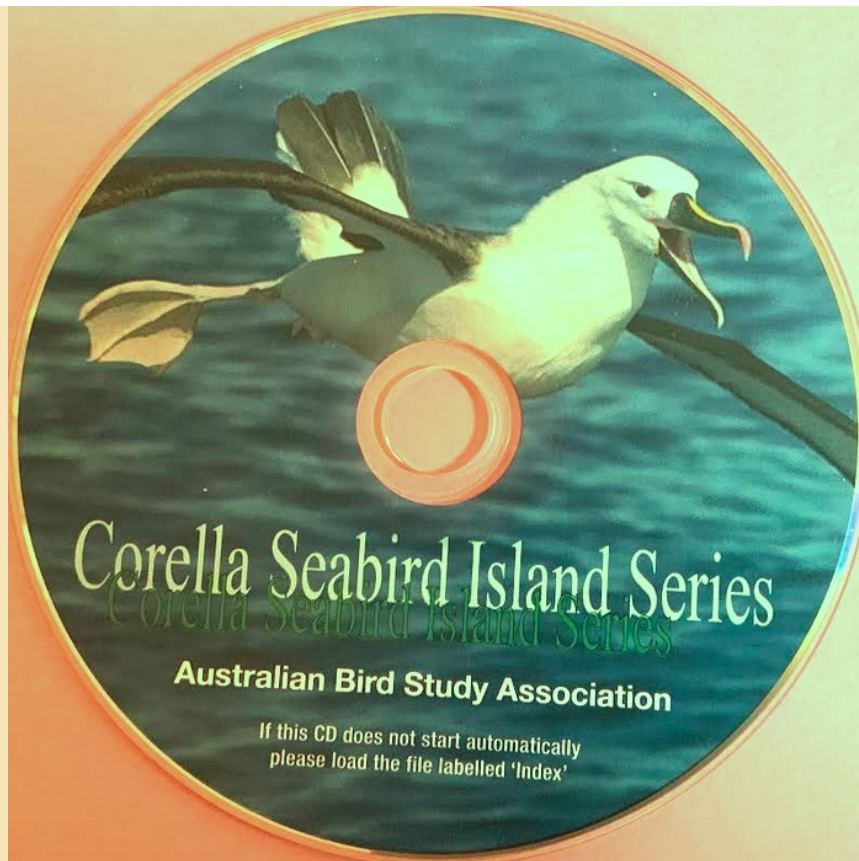
The wealth of data accumulated from visits to the islands off the Western Australian coast has been utilized by Ron Johnstone and Kevin Coate in their new publication '*Birds of the Houtman Abrolhos, Western Australia*' published in *The Western Australian Naturalist*. On glancing at the reference list papers published in *Corella* formed a substantial base for this publication.

This is an excellent outcome for all those who braved the elements to visit the islands and record birds in this archipelago.

John Farrell, President

Seabird Island Series CD

Many years ago, the papers published in this series were compiled into a CD and distributed to interested members. A small number of CDs are still held, and are available to any members who wish to have one, until they run out. Just email your request and address to info@absa.asn.au



ABSA Needs a Facebook Manager

ABSA maintains a presence in social media through its Twitter account, and its Facebook page. Committee is keen to recruit a person to manage the Facebook page on behalf of the Association. It is not an onerous position, as we do not develop newsworthy issues on a daily, or hourly basis, as some do. But it is a place to bring information to members more quickly than the quarterly Newsletter, and to gently inform the wider population about what the Association does, and what is happening in the bird world.

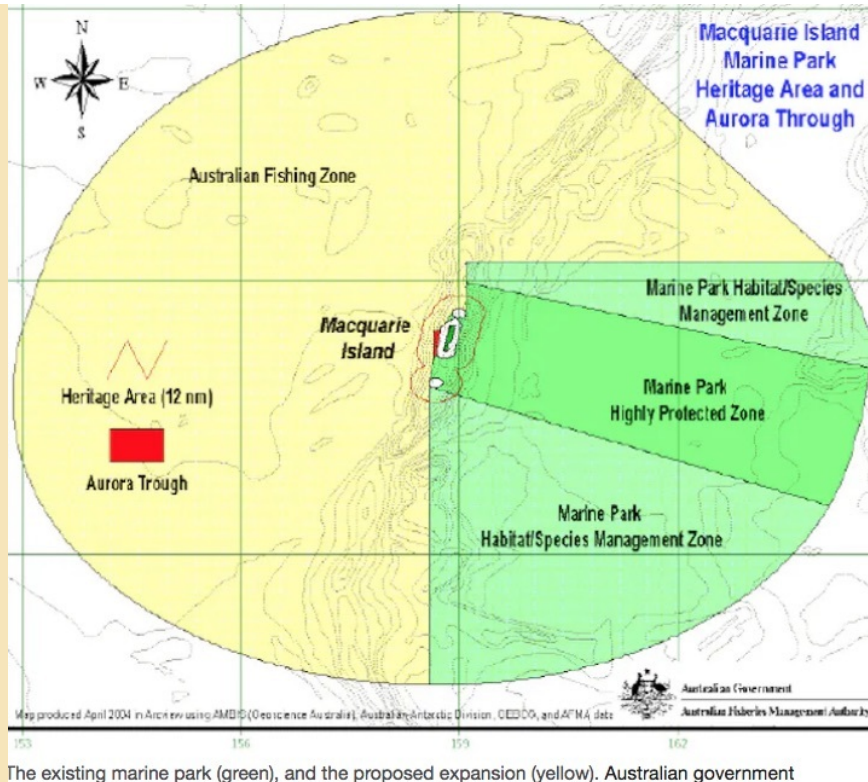
So if your skill-set includes posting stuff on Facebook, consider making this your contribution to the running of the Association. Guidance, access to information and encouragement will be given as required. If interested, please make contact with ABSA President John Farrell by emailing <info@absa.asn.au>

Macquarie Island Marine Park to be Extended

The Australian Government has finalised plans to triple the size of the Macquarie Island Marine Park to protect the entire Exclusive Economic Zone around the island - an area more than twice the size of Victoria. This proposed expansion would bring our marine parks to 48.2 per cent of Australian oceans.

The new park would also achieve a globally significant contribution to marine conservation, increasing the area of Australia's waters under high protection by over 388,000 square kilometres, an increase larger than the total land area of Germany.

Macquarie Island's sub-Antarctic marine environment is a critical feeding ground for millions of seabirds and thousands of seals and penguins that breed on the island.



The existing marine park (green), and the proposed expansion (yellow). Australian government

Nine Birds Added to the Threatened Species List in March

Nine bird species were added to the threatened species list in March this year, four of which, including the iconic outback bird, Major Mitchell's Cockatoo, are considered "endangered".

The other three are:

- Red Goshawk
- South-Eastern Hooded Robin
- Painted Button-quail

One bird, Coxen's Fig-parrot was upgraded to "Critically Endangered".

Twitchathon 2023

The 2023 Twitchathon will happen on the last weekend in October this year - the 28th and 29th. Funds raised will be donated to Matt Herring's project: "**Engaging the Custodians of the Australian Painted Snipe**". Keep a lookout for their Facebook page for details.

"Birds of the Cumberland Plain" Book Still Available

We have a number of copies of this book available for postage/handling of \$20 only to members of the Association and associated organisations. Just fill in the form below and email or post to <treasurer@absa.asn.au>



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

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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

Biodiversity Council Fact-sheet on Cats

The Biodiversity Council has released a fact-sheet on the impact of domestic cats on bird life. Some progress has been made in convincing cat-owners to keep their cats confined 24/7, but there is still a distressing toll taken on our bird life by these super-efficient predators.

The full fact-sheet is available at:

https://biodiversitycouncil.org.au/media/uploads/2023_6/pet_cat_impacts_fs_june_2023.pdf

Birding as a Blind Person

In what may be a world first, a series of six 'bird trails' have been set up in the Western Andes in Colombia, that are accessible to people who are blind or vision impaired. The six trails are near the 18 kilometre mark on the highway that connects Cali with the port city of Buenaventura. The trails are accessible, with guide ropes, tours with trained guides, and audio guides featuring the calls of the common birds of the region. Read the full story on the website of the Audubon Society at:

<https://www.audubon.org/news/birding-blind-person-now-easier-colombia-thanks-tourism-project>

Trip Report

Agnes Banks Nature Reserve, Western Sydney

In May this year some members of the original Cumberland Plain Research Group decided to revisit one of the first study sites featured in "Birds of the Cumberland Plain - Australian Avian Communities Through Time" which was last sampled in 2013. We wished to collect data for a year to see if any changes in the community of birds had occurred over that time. Well the Banksias were out in bloom and the honeyeaters were having a field day. Our honeyeater tally for the morning was:

- Silvereye (2)
- White-naped Honeyeater (2)
- Brown-headed Honeyeater (7)
- Eastern Spinebill (22)
- Fuscous Honeyeater (1)

- Yellow-faced Honeyeater (47)
- White-eared Honeyeater (2)
- New Holland Honeyeater (3)
- White-cheeked Honeyeater (5)

In addition we also scored:

- Eastern Yellow Robin (3)
- Golden Whistler (2)
- Yellow Thornbill (2)
- Brown Thornbill (2)
- White-browed Scrubwren (1)
- Superb Fairy-wren (2)
- Variegated Fairy-wren (1)
- Red-browed Finch (2)
- Rainbow Lorikeet (1)

A surprising overall catch for the morning! Amongst all these we trapped 2 old friends - a female Eastern Spinebill banded in 2013 as a juvenile, and now over 11 years old; and a female 3+ Golden Whistler, again banded in 2013, which makes her over 13 years old.



One re-trapped White-cheeked Honeyeater was a big surprise. Its band number didn't show up on any previous Agnes Bank data but when we delved a little further we discovered that it was banded at one of our Blue Mountains sites at Cripple Creek (Warrimoo). This bird had flown 10.7 km across the Nepean River, and was partaking in the pleasures of Banksia nectar at Agnes Banks Nature Reserve before being trapped.

John Farrell - on behalf of our group

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