



## NEWSLETTER 157



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*Image from ABBBS recovery letter*



### ***Editorial:***

Following the latest committee meeting we have seen a few changes of roles within the ABSAs committee. Chris Young has had to resign from the committee and many thanks goes out to him for his valued time operating as the treasurer and committee member for ABSAs. Congratulations also goes out to Michael Paul for volunteering to take over from Chris as the new treasurer.

Congratulations also goes out to Suzie Stockwell who has volunteered to take over from Amy Tipton to organise presentations for 2025. Many thanks go out to Amy Tipton for

organising presentations throughout 2024. These presentations are an amazing way for experts in our field to share their work in ornithology and I look forward to seeing more of them next year.

I would also like to put a call out for photos to be used in the forthcoming newsletters, please enquire at [info@absa.asn.au](mailto:info@absa.asn.au).

### **ABSA Annual General Meeting 2025**

The Annual General Meeting of the Australian Bird Study Association Inc. will be held on the 1st February 2025 and conclude at 5pm (Sydney Time) 8th February 2025. We will again be holding a virtual AGM, so that all members have an opportunity to participate.

A form for nominating members for positions on the Committee will be included in the mailout of “Corella” in December. Nominations must be received by the Secretary by the close of business on Friday 17th January 2025. Members are reminded that all Committee meetings are now held online, enabling participation from anywhere with an internet connection. We hope that this will encourage nominations from members anywhere in the country. There are typically four meetings per year, lasting between one and two hours.

Email messages containing an agenda, reports from all office bearers, audit reports and the nomination form will be forwarded prior to 1st February to financial members, inviting them to participate in this virtual AGM.

### **Annual Conference**

The Annual Conference will once again be held in 2025. This conference contains a series of lectures presented online. Amy Tipton is unable to devote the necessary time to this project, and we welcome Susie Stockwell to the position. As soon as the arrangements have been made, members will be informed of the date, time and download details. Suzie plans to organise a presentation each month starting in late January.

Committee is continuing to debate how to hold this event, and feedback from members with preferences - online, meeting in person, meeting on ZOOM - or something else if you have a bright idea. Comments, suggestions and volunteers to present can be sent to [info@absa.asn.au](mailto:info@absa.asn.au)

### **2025 Membership renewal**

As 2025 is fast approaching, membership renewal forms are being sent out to members with the latest Corella edition. The committee urges all members to pay, if possible, by direct deposit. This option is the most secure, and also the least problematic and time-consuming for the Treasurer. The committee also urges members to scan and email a copy of their renewal form to [treasurer@absa.asn.au](mailto:treasurer@absa.asn.au), however members may also post their renewal forms to:

*The Treasurer, Australian Bird Study Association, PO Box 1867, Penrith BC NSW 2751, Australia.*

### **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 \$3,000 will be available in the 2024 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.

Applicants should email their signed applications (as attachments either in .pdf or .doc formats) to: [info@absa.asn.au](mailto:info@absa.asn.au) by **31st December 2024**

### **FAR Grants – Assessment criteria**

#### **1. General Criteria**

- a. 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?

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### **Painted snipe captures**

Marcelina and Gloria, two tracked Australian Painted Snipes (*Rostratula australis*; EN), have revealed extensive and deliberate migrations, shedding light on the species' critical wetland habitats across vast distances. Marcelina and Gloria have been sighted at key wetlands across Australia, including South Australia's Goyder Lagoon, the Barkly Tableland in Queensland, and Newcastle Creek in the Northern Territory. Marcelina was recorded earlier this year in the Northern Territory and had travelled over 2,100 km from South Australia to the Northern Territory over a few short months.

Before this research, the movements of Australian Painted Snipe were poorly understood, relying on anecdotal evidence of sporadic wetland use. These ground breaking findings

provide essential ecological insights for conserving this elusive species.

[Click here for more information.](#)

Ref: *Marcelina touches down in the NT's top end* (2024) *Australian Painted Snipe Tracking*. Available at: <https://paintedsnipe.com.au/2024/05/15/marcelina-touches-down-in-the-nts-top-end/>.

### **Night Parrot population discovery**

A recent study published in September highlighted the discovery of the largest known population of Night Parrots (*Pezoporus occidentalis*; EN), with approximately 50 individuals residing in the Ngururrpa Indigenous Protected Area (IPA). Conducted between 2020 and 2023, the research was a collaboration between Ngururrpa rangers and scientists, utilizing audio recorders and camera traps. The study also revealed that dingoes were the most frequent predators present in Night Parrot's roosting habitats. However they primarily preyed on cats, a staple in their diet. Additionally, satellite imagery analysis showed that bushfires, particularly in 2023, pose a significant threat to the area's old-growth spinifex, with one fire destroying 76% of suitable habitat.

The paper recommended predator control strategies that avoid harming dingoes and management that focuses on strategic burning to reduce fuel loads in the surrounding landscape.

[Click here for more information.](#)

Ref: Sunfly, C. *et al.* (2024) 'Potential threats and habitat of the night parrot on the NGURURRPA Indigenous Protected Area', *Wildlife Research*, 51(10). doi:10.1071/wr24083.

### **Theropod trackways as indirect evidence of pre-avian aerial behaviour**

Another interesting paper released over the past few months looked into theropod trackways. They questioned whether these tracks can provide indirect records of important flight behaviours including flap-running, take-off, and landing. They explored this potential by re-examining one of the smallest and fastest known theropod trackways and found that Trackway 2 records a microraptorine engaged in aerial or partially aerial behaviour involving coordination between the forelimbs and hindlimbs. While they could not make any claim linking a specific aerial behaviour to the trackway (e.g., launch, landing, accelerated downward glides, or wing-assisted stride extension), they could say that track making involved a behaviour featuring aerodynamic force production and contact with the substrate.

[Click here for more information.](#)

Ref: Dececchi, T.A. *et al.* (2024) 'Theropod trackways as indirect evidence of pre-avian aerial behavior', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 121(44). doi:10.1073/pnas.2413810121.

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## **Banding report - Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve**

### Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June – Site 2

Participants: Rob, Graham, Louise, Tony, Drew, Sophie, Sooraj, Elaine, Prasad, Padrick, Strax, Cees, McKinley

Rob's nets were situated to the south of the campsite along the base of the rock face, Tony set his nets to the east against the rock face and Louise and Graham set their nets to the North and West of the campsite. Nets were opened at 0700 and closed by 1300. In total there were 279m of net and our bird total for the day was 73. Temperatures remained cool throughout the day and the wind picked up as the morning progressed.

*Image from Louise*



### Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June – Site 2, 5, 6

Participants: Rob, Graham, Louise, Tony, Drew, Sophie, Sooraj, Elaine, Prasad, Padrick, Strax, Cees, McKinley, Britt, Sang, Nicola

Today, Tony stayed at Site 2, moving his nets further north around the rocks in expectation of catching a Rockwarbler (*Origma solitaria*) while the rest of team opened their nets at the end of Moolarben Road. Louise set her nets at Site 5 while Rob and Graham set their nets at the usual places around Site 6. Conditions appeared good at sites 5 and 6 and where there was plenty of bird activity. The creek had flowing water but there was little in flower. Nets were opened at 0700 and closed by 1445.

In total there was 279m of nets set and we caught 70 birds. Site 6 – 46, Site 5 - 16 and Site 2 – 8 including the Rockwarbler. Tony is in the process of creating a species specific Rockwarbler project. It is the only endemic bird to NSW and it is not that well understood.

*Image from Louise*



### Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June – Site 1 and 4

Participants: Rob, Graham, Louise, Tony, Drew, Sophie, Sooraj, Elaine, Prassad, Padrick, Strax, Cees, McKinley, Britt, Sang, Nicola, Greg, Judy

Rob, Graham and Louise set their nets around Site 4 with Graham taking the South, Louise the west and Rob the North. Tony, Greg and Judy took to Site 1 and covered areas around the spring and across the road from the picnic site. A large tree had fallen across the path to the spring which made navigating the path a little awkward.

There were plenty of birds present at Site 4 and the combined capture at this site was 62. Tony, Greg, and Judy had a much quieter morning from their site catching only 13 birds. In total 75 birds were captured. Nets were opened at 0700 and closed by 1200. There was 393m of net set with 120m at Site 1 and 273m at Site 4.

### Summary

We had great time banding with a good variety of species over the long weekend, despite the cold. We banded 218 birds from 27 species with a large re-trap ratio of 47%. We enjoyed open fires in the evening with interesting conversation. We also managed to keep

the fire warm until morning. There were two brush tailed possums seen close to the campsite on one evening and an Emu (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*) was seen walking through the campsite paddock. It was great to meet new friends from overseas and listen to some of their experiences with birds. On Saturday Alie from NPWS called in to say hello and to give us an update on pest control in the park. There were no pigs, goats or deer seen but there were signs of pig routing at Site 5. I look forward to seeing you all again on our Spring banding trip.

#### Interesting captures

Brown Treecreeper (*Climacteris picumnus*) first banded by Greg Little in August 2018 at this site. The bird was aged 6+ and it has been captured 5 times.

Eastern Spinebill (*Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*) first banded by Alan Leishman in August 2019 at this site. The bird was aged 6+ and this has also been captured 5 times.

Yellow-tufted Honeyeater (*Lichenostomus melanops*) first banded by Daryl McKay at this site in October 2019. The bird was aged 12 and this was the third time it had been captured.

Eastern Yellow Robin (*Eopsaltria australis*) first banded by Greg Little in April 2019 at site 4. The bird was caught at site 6 and aged 6+.

Golden Whistler (*Pachycephala pectoralis*) first banded by Graham Fry in August 2015 at site 4. The bird was caught at site 6 and aged 10+.

Yellow-rumped Thornbill (*Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*) first banded at this site in August 2015. This amazing 10g bird was aged 10+ and this is the first time it has been captured since being banded.

Brown Thornbill (*Acanthiza pusilla*) first banded by Graham Fry at this site in April 2014. Another fantastic record with this bird aged 11+. This bird has been recaptured 6 sites, all at site 4.

*Image from Louise*



### **Banding Report - Herdsman Lake Bird Banding Group**

Since our last newsletter in September, the Herdsman Lake Bird Banding Group has managed to get out a few times in-between the teams busy field schedule. As the breeding season is well upon us the number of captures has dropped significantly, with our busiest morning, on the 19th of October, only netting 5 birds. This included Silvereyes (*Zosterops lateralis*), Singing Honeyeaters (*Lichenostomus virescens*), and Rufous Whistlers (*Pachycephala rufiventris*).

One of the two Singer Honeyeaters re-trapped on 19<sup>th</sup> October however did have an interesting story to tell. We first banded this bird 5 years and 9 months ago on the 29 December 2018. We have subsequently re-trapped this individual on 5 occasions including: December 2019, February 2020, August 2021, September 2021, October 2024). While this bird has been re-trapped several times it is still far from reaching the longevity record for the species. ABBBS records the longevity record for this species as 13 years and 1 month.

A Rainbow Bee-eater (*Merops ornatus*) was also captured on the 2nd of November. This also present an interesting data point for the project, as this species is so rarely re-trapped. According to the ABBBS website, there are only 68 recoveries of the species, with most occurring less than a year after their release. Our bird was first captured in December 2023, and 10 months have passed since we released it.

The project has also had several recovery letters from the ABBBS for a few species including a Laughing Kookaburra (*Dacelo novaeguineae*), and a Brown Goshawk

(*Tachyspiza fasciata*). The Laughing Kookaburra was determined to be a 2+ female and it has been 5 years since we banded her. The Brown Goshawk was a first-year male, and it has been 2 years and 9 months since we banded him.

*Image by Bill Rutherford*



### **Banding Report - South West Seabird Monitoring**

From October 4th to 6th, a team of six banders and a skipper conducted mist-netting and banding of Wedge-tailed Shearwaters (*Ardenna pacifica*) and White-faced Storm Petrels (*Pelagodroma marina*) on Boullanger Island, Jurien Bay, Western Australia. The island's dense network of burrows posed a logistical challenge, requiring careful planning to minimise disturbance. Nets were positioned along the edge of the vegetation line to avoid sensitive nesting areas, with a banding station established nearby.

Nets were opened shortly after sunset each evening. Wedge-tailed Shearwaters were the first to arrive, with activity peaking early in the night. Approximately an hour later, White-faced Storm Petrels began arriving and maintained steady activity until the nets closed.

Over two nights, the team banded a total of 227 birds, including 20 Wedge-tailed Shearwaters and 207 White-faced Storm Petrels. Night two saw the highest capture rates, with 157 birds banded compared to 70 on the first night.

Across the two nights, 360 feet of mist nets were used (140 ft on the first night and 220 ft on the second) for 3 and 3.5 hours per night, respectively. Night one resulted in 7 Wedge-

tailed Shearwaters and 63 White-faced Storm Petrels banded, while night two captured 13 Wedge-tailed Shearwaters and 144 White-faced Storm Petrels.

*Image from Nick Hart*



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