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Editorial

We are on the point of mailing out the annual hard copy of Corella - now up to Volume 39. With this mail out is a flyer for the ABSA Annual Conference (Scientific Day), at Yarramundi Conference Centre, between Richmond and Springwood, NSW. We hope as many members as possible can make it.

Please note that the deadline for the receipt of applications to the ABSA Fund for Avian Research has been brought forward to December 2015. See note in this newsletter.

We note with sadness the passing on 27th October 2015 of ABSA member and former Secretary of the Australian Bird Banding Scheme David Purchase. An obituary will appear in Corella in due course.

A small number of address labels in this mail-out were missing the member number. If you need that number (eg for your renewal) and don't know it, please email info@absa.asn.au

AGM 2016

Formal notice is hereby given to members of the Association that the Annual General Meeting will be held, in conjunction with the Association's Annual Conference, on January 23 2016, at the Yarramundi Conference Centre, Yarramundi, NSW. The AGM will be held during the lunch break. Nominations for election to the Committee of the Association need to be in the hands of the Secretary seven days before the meeting. Please contact info@absa.asn.au for a copy of the nomination form.

On the day after the Conference, there will be (weather permitting) a field trip to Wianamatta Reserve at cranberry near Penrith, where there will be opportunities to join, assist or watch banding in progress as appropriate.

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Papers:

Morphological sexing of Grey-crowned Babblers *Pomatostomus temporalis temporalis*: near enough is not quite good enough. *K. Teare, et al*

Parental time-budgets, breeding behaviour and affinities of the Red Goshawk *Erythrotriorchis radiatus*. *S.J.S. Debus, et al*

Banding Project Report:

No. 4. Nurragingy Reserve, New South Wales. *J. R. Farrell, et al*

Seabird Islands:

No. 42/1. Tollgate Islands, New South Wales. *N. Carlile, et al*

No. 263. Snapper Island, New South Wales. *N. Carlile and D. Priddel*

Book Reviews:

Contributions to the History of Australasian Ornithology, Volume II. *Reviewed by S. Debus*

Pigeons and Doves in Australia. *Reviewed by J. Hardy*

Comments on the review of 'Australian High Country Raptors' by Greg Clancy. *J. Olsen*

Recovery Round-up.

Funding Applications Sought

The Australian Bird Study Association Inc. operates a fund to provide financial assistance to ornithological researchers, both amateur and professional. This fund, known as the ABSA Fund for Avian Research (FAR), comprises a special deposit account that was established from donations made to the Association to support research on Australian native birds.

The total amount available for grants in any year is limited to the interest earned on the FAR account over the preceding year. The total value of annual grants will not normally exceed \$2,000 and is intended to provide researchers with assistance in the acquisition of research equipment and/or travel within Australia.

In awarding grants, the management Committee of the Australian Bird Study Association will assess:

- a) the quality of the project
- b) the applicant's ability to carry it out
- c) a realistic costing and timetable
- d) the likelihood that successful completion of the research will lead to publication of the results.

Applicants should be members of the Association. All other things being equal, preference in grant applications will be given to members. Individual grants will not normally exceed \$2,000 for members and \$1,000 for non-members.

Grantees are required to make a report to the ABSA no later than January of the year following the bestowing of the grant. This report should outline the results achieved in the project and the acquittal of grant funds. Any funds not utilised in meeting the expenditure proposed in the FAR

Grant Application should be repaid by the grantee at the time of making the above report.

Any publication arising from work supported by the ABSA FAR should include an acknowledgement to that effect. Applications must be typed in the format of the FAR Grant Application form which is available on the ABSA website. Applicants should email their signed applications to: info@absa.asn.au

Note: Due to the early AGM in 2016, the deadline for lodgement of applications will be 31st December, 2015.

All applications will be considered and assessed at a meeting of the Committee in February. Applications may be granted in-full, in-part, or be rejected. Applicants will be notified in writing of the success or otherwise of their application. The Committee's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

Threatened Species Changes

The Minister for the Environment has now decided to amend the EPBC Act list of threatened species in relation to the following the species:

Species to be included **vulnerable** category:

- Palm cockatoo (*Australian*) (*Probosciger aterrimus macgillivrayi*)
- Green Rosella (*King Island*) (*Platycercus caledonicus brownie*)
- Black Currawong (*King Island*) (*Strepera fuliginosa colei*)

Species to be transferred from the **vulnerable** category to the **endangered** category:

- Purple-crowned Fairy-wren (western) (*Malurus coronatus coronatus*)

Furthermore, the Minister considered the Threatened Species' Scientific Committee's advice and decided not to change the listing status of three species that were re-assessed as there was not convincing evidence that the species had shown signs of recovery sufficient to justify their removal. These species were:

- black-breasted button-quail (*Turnix melanogaster*)
- red goshawk (*Erythrotriorchis radiatus*)
- squatter pigeon (southern) (*Geophaps scripta scripta*)

In making these decisions, the Minister considered advice provided by the Committee. The Committee's conservation advices for these species are available on the Department's website at:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/sprat/public/sprat.pl>

Bird in the Hand Uploads

The following species profile sheets for Bird in the Hand (Second Edition) have been completed and uploaded to the Association's website <www.absa.asn.au> with an amended Index as follows:

Honeyeaters

Pied Honeyeater *Certhionix variegatus* (updated)
Orange Chat *Epthianura aurifrons* (updated)

Flycatchers & Monarchs

Broad-billed Flycatcher *Myiagra ruficollis*
Shining Flycatcher *Myiagra alecto*
Lemon-bellied Flycatcher *Microeca flavigaster*
Yellow-legged Flycatcher *Microeca griseiceps*

Robins

Dusky Robin *Melanodryas vittata*
White-breasted Robin *Eopsaltria georgiana*
Mangrove Robin *Peneonthe pulverulenta*

Cisticolas

Golden-headed Cisticola *Cisticola exili*

Reed-warbler

Australian Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus australis*

Grassbirds & Songlarks

Tawny Grassbird *Megalurus timoriensis*
Little Grassbird *Megalurus gramineus*

And another lot:

Eastern Bristlebird *Dasyornis brachypterus*
Satin Bowerbird *Ptilonorhynchus violaceus*
Varied Honeyeater *Lichenostomus versicolour*
Mangrove Honeyeater *Lichenostomus fasciocularis*
Large-billed Gerygone *Gerygone magnirostris*
Green-backed Gerygone *Gerygone chloronota*
Golden Whistler *Pachycephala pectoralis* (Update)
Mangrove Golden Whistler *Pachycephala melanoma*
Grey Whistler *Pachycephala simplex*
White-breasted Whistler *Pachycephala lanioides*
Black Butcherbird *Cracticus quoyi*
Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus bracteatus*
Ground Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina maxima*
Barred Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina linearta*
White-winged Triller *Lavage sueurii*
Varied Triller *Lavage leucomela*

House Sparrows

Associate Professor Simon Griffith leads a team of researchers in the Avian Behavioural Ecology Group in the Department of Biological Sciences at Macquarie University. His team has been conducting long-term research on Sex and Speciation in Australian grass finches, studying Gouldian, Long-tailed, Black-throated and Zebra Finches.

Simon and his team at Macquarie University are also now trying to recreate the recent history of the House Sparrow in Australia to develop a clear picture of where this urban species has been in the past, where it remains today, and the areas in which it has declined.

The House Sparrow is one of the most widespread urban birds in the world and this research is focused on how and why it has been such a successful species in an increasingly urban world.

The team would be grateful if you can complete a simple online survey about your observations and recollections of the sparrow. They would also appreciate if you can forward the link to as many people as you can. Participants need not be birders - most people are familiar with the sparrow, and the more people who respond, the better the data will be.

Here is the link for the survey

https://mqedu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9QPDPwm2FGetVmB

If you are interested in exploring more about the research the following link provides more general information about this project:

<http://research.science.mq.edu.au/sparrownet/>

Yandina Wetlands Saved.

We previously reported that the Yandina Wetlands in S-E Queensland were under threat of being drained and reverting to agricultural use by local farmers.

On September 18 the Sunshine Coast Daily reported that one of the sluice gates had been re-opened, and migratory birds were already using the wetlands for foraging. A staged opening of all gates is planned. This is part of a negotiated settlement of the dispute over its use, and a long-term plan for use of the site is anticipated, that will take account of all the claims on its usage.

Queensland Government is still deciding if charges will be laid over the closing of the gates which lead to the wetlands drying out.

See Greg Robert's blog:

<http://sunshinecoastbirds.blogspot.com.au/2015/09/yandina-creek-wetlands-unp>

ABSA Facebook Page

Feel free to visit the Association's FaceBook page. Even better, 'like' us!!! 214 people have so far - up until 27 November.

You will find previews of some of the lectures at our conference next year; lots of photos; and links to all sorts of stuff.

Mist Net Service

As a consequence in the dramatic fall in the value of the Australian dollar against overseas currencies, over the past few years, the prices of all items sold by the Mist Net Service will increase by 20% to 30% from 1st January 2016. Prices will be held at current prices until then, so if you want a "bargain" get your order in now.

Jeff Hardy

Mist Net Service Manager

Moustached Kingfisher

Members may be aware of the imbroglio of a few weeks ago concerning the 'collecting' of a Moustached Kingfisher by a scientist - the first male of the species to be recorded.

After copping a hiding from the 'twitterati', the collector, Dr. Christopher Filardi, has written a thoughtful justification for his actions which is on the Audubon website, accessed at:

<https://www.audubon.org/news/why-i-collected-moustached-kingfisher>

Bird Quiz

Want some fun? Test yourself against the rest of the world. See if you can get yourself onto the leader board. Here's an Australasian bird identification quiz:

<http://www.aviceda.org/aus/>

Clive Minton Film

Many of our members will know, or know of Clive Minton. To celebrate Clive's 80th birthday late last year, stories from people around the world who have joined with him at various places and times were compiled into a book.

Appropriately called "The Father of Wader Studies", the book was presented to Clive in front of a small gathering of 'cohorts' on behalf of the Victorian Wader Study Group (VWSG). Everyone can share these tales by accessing a pdf of the book from the VWSG website.: <http://www.vwsg.org.au/Mintontales.pdf>

Thanks to Roger Standen for bring us this entertaining and memorable compilation. You can read it on your computer or get a copy printed at your local stationery store if preferred.

Who Needs an Excuse to go to Italy??

World Owl Conference 2016

Dear friends studying owls all around the World, it is our great pleasure to announce that after eight years of waiting, we have fixed a date for the new World Owl Conference.

We are happy to tell you that between 19th and 23rd October 2016 the fifth edition of World Owl Conference will take place in Italy, where it was held in 2007 the last time.

We are now inviting you to save the date and start thinking about what kind of research you would like to present during the most rich and interesting convention about owls ever. Apart from the plenary convention session, the 5th World Owl Conference will take place in a location, Venaus, that will give you the chance to attend many side events and owl-and-nature-themed initiatives.

It will be an event not to be missed! Soon we will give you all the technical information about travelling and overnight stay, and all the practical information about the scientific reports.

We would like to invite you to follow us on our official website <<http://www.woc2016.it/>> and on our official facebook page. The papers of the conference will be published as a supplement to an important Italian ornithology magazine.

During the whole conference, special guided tours will be arranged to visit stunning Italian locations, thanks to the help of tour guides and interpreters. World owl conference for everyone!

An owl conference in Italy is also a unique chance to visit the (second - *Ed!*) most beautiful country in the World!

For information you can write to info@woc2016.it

Cassowary

Phil Gregory reports on Birding-Aus:

Many thousands of people over the years have seen the Cassowaries at Cassowary House at Kuranda, one of the best places to see them. Sadly, all is far from well locally as we have now lost two big female birds in the past 18 months, both ostensibly from peritonitis:

Last week Sept 14 our beautiful big adult female Cassowary Missy was found dead in a neighbour's garden. Missy was in the prime of life and should have been with us for years yet, she was also such a sweet tempered bird

and so good with people without being tame, it is like losing one of the family as we'd known her for 15 years. Our Kuranda vet did an autopsy and apparently it was caused by peritonitis, a chronic inflammation of the gut, but why?

This is the second adult female to die of this in the past 18 months here and we do not know what is the cause, it is very worrying, we are wondering if someone is poisoning rats or something and the birds are taking the carrion as they do. Our property is a long-established haven for them and they know they are safe here, away from dogs, cars and logging trucks.

All very distressing, we still have the male with one 6 week old chick coming daily, but just hope nothing untoward happens to them.

Mexican Banding Figures

If you think you had a busy day banding, spare a thought for Manuel Grosselet, of Tierra De Aves in Mexico, who wrote to the American banders forum <birdband@listserv.ksu.edu> on his banding figures for the summer just passed:

“Hi Banders, Ringers

First sorry for my poor english. Almost at the end of the banding season (year). It was a more or less year regards to number of captures, today we finish at 26,739 birds captured this year, from which 1,167 are local recoveries. That mean 177 bird species captured and around 753 kg of birds. The most common species were: Swainson's Thrush: 3123, Gray Catbird: 5497, Common Yellowthroat: 1401, Yellow-breasted Chat: 2801, Yellow Warbler: 1952 (very low). The effort was of 13,754 hours mistnet. This year, we saw (so far) 304 species on our site. We found 9 new species and put our list at 339 bird species reported for this site.. Now, I need to analyse a bit the data. We broke record of low mortality in our nets with 0.001% for all year round, and only 0.0002% for the fall (n: 17716 birds captured). We will always try to reduce these results. We caught from the tiny Common Tody Flycatcher to the enormous Neotropical Cormorant or more fun still Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture. We handle Passerines, shorebirds, ducks (we got over 630 aquatic birds, heron, ducks, shorebirds, Kingfishers, rails) raptors, here it's a great school to learn, the ones who spend time with us are ready to work in any other banding station in the world.”

All the best and enjoy winter

Manuel <birdinnet@gmail.com>

www.tierradeaves.com