

Newsletter of the Australian Bird Study Association

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## NEWSLETTER 131



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ISSN 2202-297X

March 2018

### C o n t e n t s

- [2018 Conference and Annual General Meeting](#)
- [Migratory Animals and Disease - a Talk](#)
- [At Last, Some Good News for Shorebirds](#)
- [Bird in the Hand Uploads](#)
- [Ecology Camp in Sturt National Park](#)
- ["Wisdom" Breeds Again](#)
- [Wing-tags Project in Sydney](#)
- [Going to Capertee?](#)
- [How Many Birds Are Killed by Cats in Australia](#)
- [Trip Report - Scheyville National Park 14/1/18](#)



## **E d i t o r i a l**

We hope to see as many as possible at the Conference on 17 March.

We are still looking for someone to put up their hand to be the Treasurer of ABSA, and take care of the accounts. Plenty of support and training will be given to the new person, so consider giving it a go.

With the resignation of three long-standing committee members, ABSA is going through a generational change, with more and more of the 'old guard' giving way to new, younger committee members. We hope that that change will continue in the coming election of a new committee.

New blood and younger ideas come with familiarity with social media, and a modern outlook on publishing, on research, on running a scientific organisation. So ABSA will continue to evolve over the next few years - as it has in the 25 years I have been involved. The technology, publishing styles, the legal framework - all these have changed in that time. But a consistent theme runs through the work of the Committee, and the commitment of the members: and that is the love of our unique, fascinating and beautiful avian fauna. May it ever be so.

Stein Boddington  
Newsletter Editor

### **2018 Conference and Annual General Meeting "FAMILIAR BIRDS – NEW INSIGHTS"**

Saturday March 17th 2018

9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Registration from 8:30am

Yarramundi Conference Centre

761 Springwood Rd, Yarramundi NSW 2753

Registration is via a secure on-line portal: [www.trybooking.com/350059](http://www.trybooking.com/350059) Please register beforehand, so we can cater correctly.

The Association's Annual General Meeting will be held after the conference ends, at approximately 4pm.

#### **Migratory Animals and disease - a talk**

*'Why we shouldn't be too quick to blame migratory animals for global disease'.*

Migratory animals are often assumed to spread pathogens around the globe, for example avian influenzas in birds and ebola viruses in bats. However, there is remarkably few demonstrated dispersal events, which has cast doubt on the role of migratory animals in global disease dispersal.

During her PhD, Alice Risely examined some of the mechanisms that are assumed to underpin this relationship, including whether animals can migrate effectively when infected, and how susceptible they are to microorganisms during migration. She worked with red-necked stilt and curlew sandpiper as model organisms to answer some of these questions.

Where: Ground floor, 60 Leicester St, Carlton. Free parking out front.  
When: 7:30 pm Thursday 8th March.

Organised by the BirdLife Victoria Group.

#### **At Last, Some Good News for Shorebirds!**

The new leadership in China has undertaken some substantial changes to environmental laws including moves to protect intertidal mudflats for migratory shorebirds.

On top of the potential World Heritage Listing of key areas of importance for migratory shorebirds, China is introducing tough regulations to combat illegal coastal reclamation and turning the tide on the loss of coastal wetlands in some areas as announced by the Xinhua News Agency (or New China News Agency). Xin Hua is the official press agency of the People's Republic of China. It is the biggest and most influential media organisation in China, as well as the largest news agency in the world in terms of correspondents worldwide

In Australia BirdLife Australia has also committed to assessing sites of National and International importance Australia with announcements due later this year.

See more at: [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-01/18/c\\_136903321.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-01/18/c_136903321.htm)

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#### **Bird in the Hand Uploads**

The following new species profile sheets and revisions have been uploaded to the website:

- Guides & ID Keys
- Guide to Brood Patches
- Guide to Primary Molt

The ID Keys for Quails & Button Quails and for Red-breasted Robins have also been moved here.

#### **Crakes & Rails**

Red-necked Crake	<i>Rallina tricolor</i>
Red-legged Crake	<i>Rallina fasciata</i>
Buff-banded Rail	<i>Gallirallus philippensis</i>
Woodhen	<i>Gallirallus sylvestris</i>
Lewin's Rail	<i>Lewinia pectoralis</i>
Bush-hen	<i>Amorornis olivaceus</i>
Baillon's Crake	<i>Porzana pusilla</i>
Australian Crake	<i>Porzana fluminea</i>
Spotless Crake	<i>Porzana tabuensis</i>
White-browed Crake	<i>Amaurornis cinerea</i>
Chestnut Rail	<i>Eulabeornis castaneoventris</i>
Purple Swamphen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>
Dusky Moorhen	<i>Gallinula tenebrosa</i>
Black-tailed Native-hen	<i>Tribonyx ventralis</i>
Tasmanian Native-hen	<i>Tribonyx mortierii</i>
Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>

#### **Honeyeaters & Chats**

Red Wattlebird	<i>Anthochaera carunculata</i> (Revised)
Little Wattlebird	<i>Anthochaera chrysoptera</i> (Revised)
Helmeted Friarbird	<i>Philemon buceroides</i> (Revised)
Silver-crowned Friarbird	<i>Philemon argenticeps</i> (Revised)
Noisy Friarbird	<i>Philemon corniculatus</i> (Revised)
Little Friarbird	<i>Philemon citreularis</i> (Revised)

Crimson Chat	Epthianura tricolor (Revised)
Orange Chat	Epthianura aurifrons (Revised)
Yellow Chat	Epthianura crocea (Revised)
White-fronted Chat	Epthianura albifrons (Revised)
Gibberbird	Ashbyia lovensis (Revised)

### **Flycatchers & Monarchs**

Restless Flycatcher	Myiagra inquieta (Revised)
Paperbark Flycatcher	Myiagra nana
Friilled Monarch	Arses telescopthalmus (Revised)
Frill-necked Monarch	Arses lorealis

### **Robins**

Pink Robin	Petroica rodinogaster (Revised)
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In February, I revised 33 honeyeater sheets which are listed below. There are now 474 species profile sheets published in BIH2 on the ABSA website. Many of those species sheets include morphometrics and descriptions of subspecies so the actual number of profiles is in the vicinity of 550. There are also two ID keys (red-breasted robins, button-quails and quails), a guide to primary moult and a guide to brood patches.

I have also included in the latest batch of updates a new common name alphabetical index and the usual list of recent additions.

### **Honeyeaters**

Blue-faced Honeyeater	Entomyzon cyanotis (Revised)
Bell Miner	Manorina melanophrys (Revised)
Noisy Miner	Manorina melanocephala (Revised)
Yellow-throated Miner	Manorina flacigula (Revised)
Black-eared Miner	Manorina melanotis (Revised)
Lewin's Honeyeater	Meliphaga lewinii (Revised)
White-lined Honeyeater	Meliphaga albilineata (Revised)
Bridled Honeyeater	Lichenostomus frenatus (Revised)
Eungella Honeyeater	Lichenostomus hindwoodi (Revised)
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Lichenostomus chrysops (Revised)
Singing Honeyeater	Lichenostomus virescens (Revised)
Varied Honeyeater	Lichenostomus versicolor (Revised)
White-gaped Honeyeater	Lichenostomus unicolor (Revised)
Yellow Honeyeater	Lichenostomus flavus (Revised)
White-eared Honeyeater	Lichenostomus leucotis (Revised)
Yellow-throated Honeyeater	Lichenostomus flavicollis (Revised)
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	Lichenostomus melanops (Revised)
Purple-gaped Honeyeater	Lichenostomus cratitius (Revised)
Grey-headed Honeyeater	Lichenostomus keartlandi (Revised)
Yellow-plumed Honeyeater	Lichenostomus ornatus (Revised)
Grey-fronted Honeyeater	Lichenostomus plumulus (Revised)
Fuscous Honeyeater	Lichenostomus fuscus (Revised)
Yellow-tinted Honeyeater	Lichenostomus flavescens (Revised)
White-plumed Honeyeater	Lichenostomus penicillatus (Revised)
New Holland Honeyeater	Phylidonyris novaehollandiae (Revised)
White-cheeked Honeyeater	Phylidonyris nigra (Revised)
White-fronted Honeyeater	Phylidonyris albifrons (Revised)
Rufous-banded Honeyeater	Conopophila albogularis (Revised)
Rufous-throated Honeyeater	Conopophila rufogularis (Revised)
Eastern Spinebill	Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris (Revised)
Western Spinebill	Acanthorhynchus superciliosus (Revised)
Pied Honeyeater	Certhionyx variegatus (Revised)
Dusky Honeyeater	Myzomela obscura (Revised)

*Jeff Hardy*

I have heard the call of the wild inland and have decided to again hold this year's camp at Sturt National Park. I have tentatively booked the shearer's quarters and dining area. Rooms in the homestead will also be available but at a greater cost. The camp will run from 5 PM Tuesday October 2 departing on the morning of Thursday October 11.

I know that it is hard to commit so early in the year but I need to get an indication of your INTENTION to be at the camp for planning purposes.

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#### **"Wisdom" breeds again**

Wisdom, known the world around as the oldest wild bird still producing offspring, returned to Midway Atoll in early 2018 and has now successfully hatched another chick.

At 67, Wisdom, the world's oldest known breeding bird in the wild, is a mother once more! On February 6th, approximately two months after Wisdom began incubating her egg, Wisdom and her mate Akeakamai welcomed their newest chick to Midway Atoll.

Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge and Battle of Midway National Memorial within Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument is a special place for over three million seabirds – they return to Midway Atoll each year to rest, mate, lay eggs, and raise their chicks.

For full story, go to: <https://www.islandconservation.org/wisdom-worlds-oldest-known-wild-bird-hatches-another-chick/>

#### **Wing-tags Project in Sydney**

Royal Botanical Gardens, Sydney

Research is currently under way that involves wing-tagging birds within the Sydney region, Australia. Our aim is to learn about the Cockies', Ibis' and Turkeys' behaviour: site-loyalty, population size and foraging, roosting and breeding habitat preferences.

Anyone who sees a cockatoo, Ibis or Brush Turkey with a wing tag should report it through the website below (there are Facebook and Twitter sites too).

See the details, and report sighted birds at:

<https://www.rbg Syd.nsw.gov.au/science/the-wingtags-project>

#### **Going to Capertee?**

There is a map of the Capertee Bird Routes on the following website: <https://tourism.lithgow.com/bird-watching/>

#### **How many birds are killed by cats in Australia?**

Abstract

From analysis of results from 93 studies on the frequency of occurrence of birds in cat dietary samples, and a recently published assessment of the population size of feral cats in largely natural landscapes, we estimate and map the number of birds killed annually in Australia by feral cats. We show that average rates of predation on birds by cats on islands are ca. 10 times higher than for comparable mainland areas. Predation rates on birds are also relatively high in hot, arid regions. Across Australia's natural landscapes, feral cats typically consume 272 million birds yr<sup>-1</sup> (95% confidence interval [CI]: 169–508 million). However, there is substantial inter-annual variation, depending on changes in the cat population that are driven by rainfall conditions: ranging between 161 million birds yr<sup>-1</sup> (95% CI: 114–284 million) following dry periods and 757 million birds yr<sup>-1</sup> (95% CI: 334–1580 million) following wet periods. On average, feral cats kill 35.6 birds km<sup>-2</sup> yr<sup>-1</sup> (95% CI: 22.2–66.6). About 99% of these mortalities are native bird species. With a much sparser evidence base, we also estimate that a further 44 million birds are killed annually by feral cats in highly modified landscapes, and 61 million birds are killed annually by pet cats, summing to 377 million birds killed yr<sup>-1</sup> (i.e., just over 1 million birds per day) by all cats. Feral cats include a significantly higher proportion of birds in their diet than do other main mammalian predators. The national tally of birds killed by cats in Australia is broadly comparable to recent assessments for Canada, but less than that reported for the United States (because the cat population is much higher there). However, it remains challenging to interpret this mortality tally in terms of population viability or conservation concern for Australian birds.

To obtain the full paper, go to:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0006320717302719>

**Trip Report: Scheyville NP 14/01/2018**

A blustery morning with showers threatening greeted the team of six banders at Scheyville National park in western Sydney. The dawn chorus was unusually quiet, but we put up ten nets anyway and waited to see what was about. A trickle of birds followed throughout the morning.

Numbers were low but the variety was interesting, including Superb Fairy Wrens, a White-browed Scrubwren, a Bell Miner, a Rufous Whistler and several Red-browed Finches. A Sacred Kingfisher provided some glamour, while a trio of Crested Shrike-tits provided an opportunity for the trainees to practice handling these well-armed birds. Happily they did very well and no blood was spilt.

A small tree falling onto Vincent & Marieke's car caused some alarm but luckily the damage was limited to a minute dent and a couple of tiny scratches. It seems Toyota's claims about the toughness of their 4WD's really are true!

Thanks to Vincent Mourik for the pictures.



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