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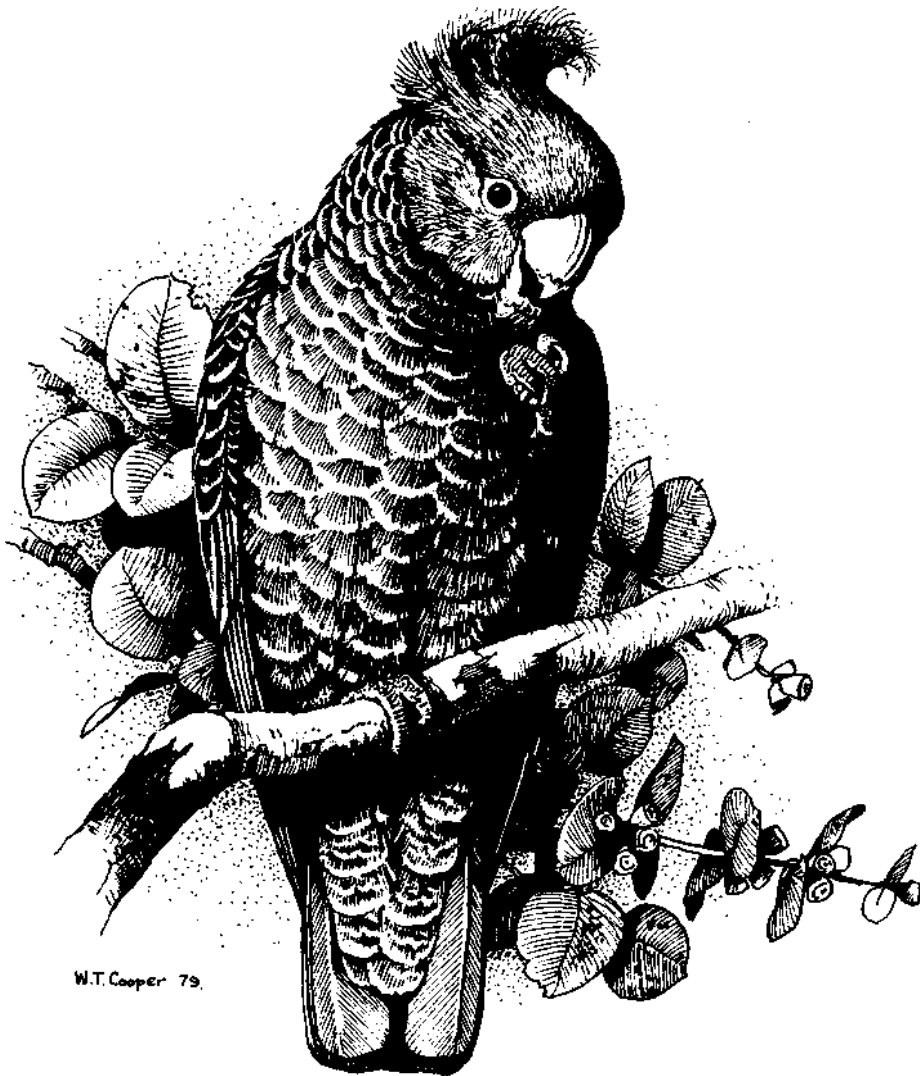
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Doug Ross has been observing birds at Jerrabomberra wetlands and Lake Burley Griffin for the past decade. His data have been used in the Annual Bird Reports published in CEN.

The Annual Bird Report is now boosted by data from both the waterbird survey and the garden bird survey and we are pleased to publish his observations separately to complement the Annual Report and provide greater detail on the birds of this important and sensitive part of Lake Burley Griffin.

OBSERVATIONS OF BIRDS AT JERRABOMBERRA WETLANDS AND EASTERN LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN: JULY 1982 - JUNE 1983

Doug Ross

INTRODUCTION

This report should be read in conjunction with the Annual Bird Report for 1982-1983 (in press). It also needs to be remembered that the Lake extends beyond Commonwealth Avenue bridge and that within easy flying distance (say, 60 km), there are other areas of water and wetland.

Some of those areas lie within the ACT but, even so, the Jerrabomberra wetlands proper within the east Lake area, and the western reaches of the Lake, are the only major such habitat anywhere in the ACT apart from the Tidbinbilla ponds. Without these areas, many individual birds and, in some cases, actual species would not be found in the ACT - as was the case before the filling of the Lake in the early months of 1964. There is virtually no natural swampland in the ACT.

There have been earlier separate listings of the Dairy Flat avifauna. These are referred to in the bibliography, as is a useful short description (with map) of the area by Mark Clayton. I think it worth expanding Clayton's observations on Kelly's Swamp which is the jewel in the crown.

In some ways, the Swamp is like Lake George: very shallow, so that in hot weather it can dry out rapidly without replenishment, and with a catchment area that contributes little to that replenishment. The Swamp is principally kept in being by inflow from Jerrabomberra Creek, about 50 m away, along a shallow, narrow depression which opens into the Creek through a gap where art has improved on nature. When the

water level in the Creek/Lake system is up, water runs into the Swamp. when the level falls below a critical level, the Swamp is isolated from its prime source. In hot weather, when the level is high, a constant one-way flow into the Swamp can be seen, making good the evaporation loss. It has been suggested that the Swamp is also fed by underground flows from the sewage farm ponds across Dairy Flat Road but the variable state of health of the Swamp in recent years, and particularly during the 1982-83 dry period, argues that underground flows, if they exist, are not capable of keeping the Swamp in being. When the Jerrabomberra water level was high, the Swamp was healthy, and vice versa.

The swamplands generally were used for rough grazing, not necessarily a bad thing in terms of keeping vegetation down and attracting species, but very damaging in dry weather when cattle resorted to the Swamp (and Avocet Pond on Jerrabomberra Creek) for water and green feed (cumbungi). Such intrusions also disturbed the birds, while cattle trampling on the margins cannot have encouraged would-be marginal breeders. The Swamp/Avocet Pond area is now under a preservation program. Artificial hills, to be grassed and treed, have been created for observation purposes; some hides have been set up; rabbits and feral cats have been eliminated (to protect the new plantations) at the cost of elimination of the box thorns overlying warrens, that previously afforded much cover and habitat for smaller birds. There may be shoreline modifications to provide a variety of habitats.

The needs to balance avifauna habitat with aircraft safety and to accommodate a new road impose constraints on what further might be done.

The rest of the wetlands are still used for rough grazing. There is irrigated pasture on the sewage farm side. About 120 species were seen in 1982-83, none very exotic or extraordinary, but such a count, achieved so close to Civic as the crow flies, indicates the importance of the area as habitat. It also points up the importance of preserving the wetlands area, as far as practicable, for pure habitat purposes. Even sensitive, sympathetic and restrained use of the area for other purposes

- as a multi-purpose leisure facility, say, or a source of raw materials - could serve to degrade its habitat qualities. It would be one thing to have cyclists moving along defined paths well away from the main wetlands areas and quite another thing to have the same persons implicitly encouraged to go further and turn the place into a picnic spot.

In that regard, the reshaping of the Kelly's Swamp area can be regarded as at least a partial commitment to

preservation, even though the work imparted a shock to the area through the no doubt, inevitable destruction of cover. Another shock was the effects of the drought (and its subsequent breaking) on the Swamp itself, which, after a dry winter, spring and summer, first dried out completely and then, in late autumn, filled to such a degree that no mud was left exposed.

METHODS AND RESULTS

The preparation of the data for publication has been highly instructive, if only in revealing gaps and deficiencies in both technique and data. There could have been so much more on activity, location, sex ratios, age, weather conditions, and so on.

Time has been the main enemy in that regard, and lack of time also accounts for the fact that most observing was done on the move. The area covered is relatively large and varied (see Clayton, 1981) and even a superficial coverage precludes lengthy use of hides or cover. It also precludes more than the briefest searches for nests.

There are other limitations. The observing pattern was not uniform week by week or even month by month. Most week days, I called in at Jerrabomberra mouth, Mundaring Drive and below the National Library: this gave a coverage (distant in some directions) of East Basin. Mid-week, I tried at least once to cover lower Jerrabomberra and the Kelly's Swamp/siltation pond area from the west of Jerrabomberra. At weekends, there was full coverage of the Swamp, Avocet Pond, the sewage farm and (depending on the weather, the presence or absence of bulls, and stamina - the dog's as well as my own) either a long walk down the Molonglo south bank and along the Lake edge to Jerrabomberra, or a short walk down the north bank to the point. Occasionally, a two-bridge walk brought in the additional territory of Commonwealth Gardens.

Weather was another limiting factor. Fog often blanketed the Lake and early morning *sun* glare frequently turned the eastern end of the Lake into a visual desert. Viewing was also cut down by absences from Canberra: I was overseas for much of July 1983.

The data given can only rarely be treated as a count, in the strict sense of the word; often, they are not even samples, again in the strict sense of the word. They show simply the numbers seen (or heard), by species, on a monthly maximum basis. Numbers based on male calls (Golden-headed

Cisticola exilis, White-winged Triller *Lalage sueurii*, for example) under-represent actual populations. The monthly maxima shown can represent either a one-day wonder or the day-by-day count, more or less, throughout the relevant month. The full daily data are with Michael Lenz. I did not attempt counts of some species, either because of time or because from calls it was impossible to arrive even at indicative figures: House Sparrows *Passer domesticus* in box thorn or European Goldfinches *Carduelis carduelis* on thistles.

This report concentrates on those species which come within the COG waterbird survey. Other species are given less detailed treatment.

For most species that were counted, maximum numbers are shown month by month, from July 1982 to June 1983. I have not thought it worthwhile showing monthly minima as they generally came from another observing point. Broad population indications are given for species not counted.

Some monthly numbers are qualified by +, indicating that more birds were present but how many more could not be ascertained; numbers qualified by c are approximate or block counts.

As regards breeding, wherever possible, I kept note of individual broods but the data do not lend themselves to any sort of assessment of total breeding activity by species: with Pacific Black Duck, for example, even within the confines of the sewage farm, it is impossible to distinguish one brood from another, or track the same brood, from week to week.

Locations are noted where they seem of interest or could serve as a guide to other observers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I gratefully acknowledge the help and co-operation of Isabel Crawford, Rosemary Metcalf and Steve Wilson with surveys. Rangers of the Lake Ecological Laboratory provided useful information on breeding and locales.

ANNOTATED LIST OF BIRDS OBSERVED - with maximum numbers by month: July 1982 to June 1983.

Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
0	0	4	3	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	0

Numbers seen much as for 1981-82, see CBN 8(1):5-52, but sightings are, I suspect, very much a matter of luck in being at

the right spot at the right time. It appears that the bird rarely stays in one area for any length of time, at least on East Basin where all the 1982-83 sightings were made.

Hoary-headed Grebe *Poliiocephalus poliocephalus*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
29102	142	175	165	190	230	310	275	250	175	27	

Numbers seen rather larger than for 1981-82 but with the same general seasonal pattern, peaking in late spring. Birds seen throughout, except the main Lake body, the main concentration being on the Sewage Farm. No breeding records.

Australasian Grebe *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
35	9	3	4	6	12	10	12	14	10	17	3

A more continuous presence than in 1981-82, in larger numbers for the first half of the year. Locations as for the Hoary-headed Grebe.

Australian Pelican *Pelecanus conspicillatus*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
8	c20	20+	47	c70	63	53	28	16	c30	15	12

Numbers seen, and pattern of presence, were much the same as for 1982-82. Main area of concentration on the east shore of the Lake and the drainage ponds behind, or Avocet Pool on days of strong north winds.

Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
0	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	4	5+	1	0

Numbers seen were rather down on 1981-82. Main location, the Molonglo between Dairy Flat Road bridge and the Lake. A pair was reported breeding in October 1982, in the willows in the SE corner of Duntroon Reach.

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
3	40+	53	100+	80+	c55	46	66	50+	20	12	5

Numbers seen were rather larger than in 1981-82, with the same seasonal dip in the winter months. Birds were seen throughout.

Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax varius*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0

Less consistent than in 1981-82, but again a single bird only was seen. A more assiduous (or fortunate) observer might have come up with a constant presence. Most 1982-83 sightings were on the Molonglo or on the Lake shore between Molonglo and Jerrabomberra.

Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
13	5	5	9	3	8	12	17	40	70	45+	14

Numbers seen were somewhat up on 1981-82. Note the April 1983 peak. Birds were seen throughout. There was breeding activity in March and April 1983 in the Duntroon Reach willows.

Little Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
16	5	8	10	3	6	11	7	7	16	32	13

1982-83 numbers were about the same as for 1981-82. Note the May 1983 (post-breeding?) peak. Birds were seen throughout.

Pacific Heron *Ardea pacifica*

Single bird, March 1983, Kelly's Swamp.

White-faced Heron *Ardea novaehollandiae*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
1	1	1	3	1	2	2	4	2	2	2	1

Numbers seen were well down on 1981-82. Birds seen throughout.

Cattle Egret *Ardeola ibis*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
0	2	0	2	4	0	0	0	4	6	c10	7

There was a less continuous presence than in 1981-82 and numbers were down. Most sightings were of birds feeding among cattle on the irrigated flats east of Dairy Road or camped around Kelly's Swamp. While some birds obviously stayed in the area for weeks at a stretch, one suspects that the wetlands area is something of a staging camp. Birds seen in October/November were in breeding plumage but no courtship/ breeding activity was noted.

Great Egret *Egretta alba*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
0	0	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	1

Numbers and constancy were at the same levels as in 1981-82. In November 1982 and February 1983, birds were seen in breeding plumage. Birds seen throughout.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

A single bird was seen on Avocet Pond on several occasions between 27 February and 18 March 1983.

Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia*

Single birds were seen twice in October 1982 and in March 1983.

Rufous Night Heron *Nycticorax caledonicus*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1

Sightings were less consistent than in 1981-82. All were of an adult bird in willows on the north bank of the Molonglo, towards its entry into the Lake. One suspects the continuous presence of the same bird.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
0	0	0	2	c25	22	4	3	3	0	0	0

Single birds only had been seen in 1981-82 (December to February). In both years, sightings were on Kelly's Swamp.

Sacred Ibis *Threskiornis aethiopica*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
4	2	6	4	5	3	4	8	7	7	35	4

Again, there was a consistent presence. The relatively large count in May 1983 had no parallel in 1981-82. Birds seen throughout.

Straw-necked Ibis *Threskiornis spinicollis*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
32	10	5	10	11	1	40	17	20	18	35	0

A more consistent presence than in 1981-82 with generally higher numbers. There was no conspicuous low in the warmer

months and the late autumn/early winter flocks were somewhat smaller. Birds seen throughout.

Royal Spoonbill *Platalea regia*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
0	0	0	1 3/4	2	4	6	3	1	1	0	

Numbers in the warmer and autumn months were down on 1981-82. Most sightings were on Kelly's Swamp and the Jerrabomberra area. Between November 1982 and February 1983, some birds were in breeding plumage but no courtship/breeding activity was noted.

Yellow-billed Spoonbill *Platalea flavipes*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	1	2 2/3	0	

A more extended presence than in 1981-82. Sighting locations as for the Royal Spoonbill. No birds seen in breeding plumage.

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
3	5	5	6	3	3	5	5	16	13	9	6

Sightings much as for 1981-82. Birds seen throughout, the larger autumn counts being from the Sewage Farm. There were at least three broods seen: August 1982 (5 cygnets); September 1982 (5 cygnets); and June 1983 (5 cygnets).

Freckled Duck *Stictonetta naevosa*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
0	0	2	7	4	5	10+	4	0	0	0	0

A single bird had been seen in 1981-82. The 1982-83 sightings were initially on Kelly's Swamp and subsequently on the Sewage Farm.

Australian Shelduck *Tadorna tadornoides*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
2	3	3	2	30	36	5	18	10	6	8	4

Presence and numbers were much as for 1981-82. The midsummer (post-breeding?) influx came a month earlier. Counts by sex will be done in future. All sightings were of birds camping on Avocet Pond or on the Lake shore close to Jerrabomberra mouth.

Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	
163	126		80	150	55	35	60	85	250+	77	115	45

Numbers seen were generally rather larger than in 1981-82. The seasonal pattern appears to show a month's lag on that of 1981-82. Birds were seen throughout. The large March 1983 count was made immediately after Kelly's Swamp filled on the breaking of the drought. Broods were seen on the Lake, Jerrabomberra and the Sewage Farm in October, November and December 1982 and February and March 1983.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos*

Single birds seen in July and August 1982 and shortly afterwards disappeared.

Grey Teal *Anas gibberifrons*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
20	122	106	215	150	225+	210	230	145	105	25	5

Numbers generally were larger than in 1981-82, with a sharp rise from the mid-winter low rather than the prolonged low of 1981-82. Most birds were counted on Kelly's Swamp and the Sewage Farm. No broods were seen.

Chestnut Teal *Anas castanea*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	
1		2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	0	4	0

The same single male was present on the Sewage Farm from July 1982 'co March 1983. It was joined by another male in August and October. Two males and two females were seen in May 1983 on Jerrabomberra.

Australasian Shoveller *Anas rhynchos*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	
13		36	60	77	24	22	67	11	33	32	18	1

Numbers seen in the first six months were generally much higher than for 1981-82; those in the second six months, much lower. Most sightings were on the Sewage Farm. Where males could be clearly distinguished (eclipse plumage was prevalent from October to December 1982), they were counted separately as follows:

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
4	29	32	-	-	-	22+	5	23	21	?	1

Whether the sex ratios derivable from these data have any significance, I cannot say.

Pink-eared Duck *Malacorhynchus membranaceus*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
70	45	35+	36	23	8	0	0	0	0	0	0

The species had been present (on Kelly's Swamp and the Sewage Farm) for most of 1981-82, the June 1982 maximum being 32. Numbers rose sharply the following month and held at a somewhat lower level for four months. Thinning out began in early December 1982 and by mid-December the birds had gone.

Hardhead *Aythya australis*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
51	107	95	102	150	150	135	155	85	56	16	15

Numbers seen were generally higher than those for 1981-82 which showed a sharp peak in December/January compared with the plateau/peak of 1982/83. With this species, also, sub- counts by sex could be interesting. Most sightings were on the Sewage Farm.

Maned Duck *Chenonetta jubata*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
29	110	70	50+	70	200+	75	c170	70	3	0	2

Numbers during the first half of the year were well above the comparable 1981-82 counts. From late March 1983, when the drought broke, numbers fell away sharply as birds dispersed to farm dams. Birds were seen throughout, more often grazing than on the water.

Musk Duck *Biziura lobata*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
2	2	2	2	3	2	1	1	1	4	3	2

Numbers and consistency of presence were very much as for 1981-82. The species was represented (in terms of sightings) by a single male bird on the Sewage Farm, January-March 1983. Only one positively identifiable female was seen during the whole year. Of the 120 or so other sightings (including several of 'Old Faithful' of the Sewage Farm), all but one were of positively identifiable males. The apparent absence of

females no doubt explains why only four male displays were seen in the period. One is led to wonder whether the species practices segregation by sex, other than during courtship and copulation, and, if so, where the local 'henery' is located. The sightings occurred throughout.

Other Anatidae

Large white goose-like birds were seen occasionally, whether deliberately released or strayed there is no telling.

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
0	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0

They were reported to the rangers.

Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus notatus* Single birds or pairs seen in most months.

Whistling Kite *Haliastur sphenurus*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
0	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	2/3	1	1

Brown Goshawk *Accipiter fasciatus*
Single birds, September and December 1982.

Collared Sparrowhawk *Accipiter cirrhocephalus* Single birds, May and June 1983,

Little Eagle *Hieraaetus morphnoides*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* Single birds, August-October 1982.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* Possible single bird, September 1982.

Australian Hobby *Falco longipennis* Single birds, November 1982 and February, March and June 1983.

Brown Falcon *Falco berigora*
Single birds, August and October (immature) 1982.

Australian Kestrel *Falco cenchroides*

Single birds, October 1982 and March, May and June 1983: less consistent than in 1981-82.

Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla*

Single bird, December 1982, Kelly's Swamp.

Australian Crake *Porzana fluminea*

Two birds, December 1982, Kelly's Swamp.

Spotless Crake *Porzana tabuensis*

Single bird, February 1983, Kelly's Swamp. (The drying up of the Swamp towards the end of the drought did not assist the crake spotter's task in 1981-82; the submergence of all mud when the drought broke did not assist, either.)

Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	
21		26	22	24	16	12	34	14	16	15	26	15

Except for the last three months, when numbers seen were noticeably down, sightings were much as in 1981-82. Birds were seen throughout. Broods were seen in November and December 1982.

Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	
54	c40		36	36	33	20	24	36	24	36	43	17

Except for the cold months, when numbers were down, counts were much as for 1981-82. Birds were seen throughout. Broods were seen in October-December 1982. In August 1982 and March 1983 birds were seen copulating (or going through the motions).

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
c300	400	485	755	590	385	580	575	420	365	590	680

Numbers were down, sometimes well down, in all months except for September-November 1982 when they were well up, and June 1983 when they were 10% up. Birds were seen throughout, main concentrations being on the Sewage Farm. Again, there were no signs of courtship or breeding activity.

Masked Lapwing *Vanellus miles*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
48	35	20	c30	c40	40+	40+	35	50+	40	25	20+

Consistently higher numbers were seen throughout, than in 1981-82, apart from June 1983; in the same month the year before the maximum seen was c100. Brood(s) seen in September 1982.

Redkneed Dotterel *Erythrogonys cinctus*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
0	0	2	2	0	14	14	8	5	0	0	0

Birds were seen three months earlier than in 1981-82 but cut out three months earlier. Numbers never approached the February 1982 peak of 35. All sightings were at Kelly's Swamp or Avocet Pool.

Black-fronted Plover *Charadrius melanops*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
3	5	5	6		8 6/8	c10	14	c15	0	0	3

Numbers generally were about the same as for 1981-82, apart from the maximum 35 of March 1982. Most sightings were at Kelly's Swamp but there were surprisingly numerous sightings of singles, pairs or small flocks on dry or gravelly ground not too far removed from water. The 6/8 recorded for December 1982 excludes some juveniles.

Blackwinged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
2	3	c15	3	4	5	6	5	4	2	2	2

The pair which was almost constantly at Kelly's Swamp and the Sewage Farm in 1981-82 continued on throughout 1982-83. It was joined from time to time by other birds. The 15 recorded for September 1982 were seen as a flock alighting on the Swamp.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Single bird, October 1982, Kelly's Swamp.

Latham's Snipe *Gallinago hardwickii*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
0	6	c15	13+	11+	10+	1	0	0	0	0	0

Numbers and length of stay were much as for 1981-82; the year's first sighting was 9 September 1982. In earlier years, Kelly's Swamp had been the best place for finding the species; often, groups of 3 or 4 could be seen camped on the same reed island. From 1981-82, the bird's main camp site has been the tangle of reeds and scrub where Jerrabomberra Creek (north bank) enters the Lake. Birds can occasionally be seen there from the south bank but close observation requires a long walk.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN		
		0	5	35+	c20	c10	2	2	0	0	0	0	0

Numbers were well up on 1981-82, and the birds persisted much longer. Main sightings were on Kelly's Swamp and the boggy ground between the Lake and the Jerrabomberra drainage cut.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Birds were seen in the area for the first time in 1982-83: September-1/2; November-c5; January-1; on Kelly's Swamp and the Sewage Farm.

Silver Gull *Larus novaehollandiae*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
250+	340+	2000+	1000+	c400	550+	560+	800	1000	300	400	400

Numbers were much the same as for 1981-82 apart from the October 1982 peak and the sharp end-of-year fall off. The larger counts were made at night of birds camping by Commonwealth Avenue Bridge.

Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrida*

Three sightings in 1982: September-3; October-1; November-1; all of birds feeding on Central Basin.

Feral Pigeon *Columba Livia*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	
	40	37	60	65	40	35	100	120	115	80	110	150

Numbers generally were up on 1981-82, particularly in the last six months. Breeding activity ran from September to February, to judge by the efforts of (successive?) birds to nest inside a cavity in the fountain outside Treasury. (This is the only worthwhile function known to have been performed by the fountain.) There was much robbing of nests in the Treasury building roof gutters by Australian Ravens.

Peaceful Dove *Geopelia placida*

A pair seen May 1983, and then four in June, all by the High Court.

Crested Pigeon *Ocyphaps Zophotes*

Single bird, October 1982, by the work basin, off Mundaring Drive.

Glossy BlackCockatoo *Calyptorhynchus lathami*

Nine birds seen flying south over the old Causeway tip site, June 1983.

Ganggang Cockatoo *Callocephalon fimbriatum*

Pairs or singles seen in the colder months. The bird is peripheral to the area, being seen either on the Duntroon side or adjacent to Telopea Park.

Galah *Cacatua roseicapilla*

Present throughout the year, colder month numbers being much higher than summer numbers: 400+ as against 5. Main concentrations on the lawns adjacent to the National Library and the Treasury.

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *Cacatua galerita*

Present throUghout the year, chiefly on the south side of the Lake. There was no recognisable seasonal pattern. Highest count: 100+, lowest 1.

Australian King-Parrot *Alisterus scapularis*

Another peripheral species, seen adjacent to Telopea Park: September 1982 - 6; March.1983 - 9.

Crimson Rosella *Platycercus elegans*

Up to 3 seen throughout, in 10 months out of 12.

Eastern Rosella *Platycercus eximius*

Up to 6 seen each month throughout the year.

Red-rumped Parrot *Psephotus haematonotus*

Up to 7 seen each month except March 1983 when the maximum count was 15. Seen throughout but main area the lawns between Parliament House and the Lake.

Pallid Cuckoo *Cuculus pallidus*

All observations based initially on call (often at a distance) sometimes confirmed by sightings, so very much a spring presence: September 1982 3; October-2 (including a pair responding); November-2.

Fan-tailed Cuckoo *Cuculus pyrrhophanus*

Observations again largely call-based: September 1982-1; November-1.

Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx basalis*

Single birds seen Sewage Farm area and Molonglo willows, August, November, December 1982, January 1983.

Shining Bronze-Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx lucidus* Single bird seen, December 1981.

White-throated Needletail *Hirundapus caudacutus*

Single birds seen November 1982, February 1983; 3 birds, March 1983.

Laughing Kookaburra *Dacelo novaeguineae*

Up to 4 birds seen throughout, in most months. Numbers down on 1981-82.

Sacred Kingfisher *Halcyon sancta*

The pair that used to reside (and breed?) each year in the willows on the SE side of Duntroon did not reappear. Single birds seen in scattered locations September, December 1982; February, March 1983.

Dollarbird *Eurystomus orientalis*

Up to 4 birds seen each month, between October 1982 and March 1983. No obvious juveniles. All sightings were made in the open areas traversed by overhead wires along Duntroon Reach.

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

Birds present throughout the year. Counts not made.

Welcome Swallow *Hirundo neoxena*

Birds present throughout the year, most monthly counts ranging from 10 to 50. In February and March 1983, flocks of 450 and 500 were seen feeding over East Basin.

Tree Martin *Cecropis nigricans*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	0	p
25+	40+		0	p	p	200		5	0	0			

p = present. All seen on the Sewage Farm. Fairy Martin *Cecropis ariel*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
0	8+	25+	20	0	p	p	20	0	p	0	0

p = present. All seen on the Sewage Farm. Richard's Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
3	4	4	2	4	1	1	1	0	1	0	2

Birds seen throughout on open spaces, grassed and bare. Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina novaehollandiae*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
0	1	1	10+	1	2	1	5	5	1	0	0

Birds seen throughout, but especially on S side of Lake. The 10+ for October were seen as a flock.

White-winger Triller *Lalage sueurii*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
0	1	0	5	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

Birds seen on the old Causeway site (where there was nesting activity) and outside Treasury.

Blackbird *Turdus merula*

Birds present throughout the year. No count made.

Flame Robin *Petroica phoenicea*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
11	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

Numbers, other than for July 1982, were down on 1981-82. Birds were seen in the open spaces both sides of Duntroon Reach and the Causeway area.

Rufous Whistler *Pachycephala rufiventris*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
0	0	1	6	7	4	2	1	0	0	1	0

Birds heard mostly, in Molonglo and Jerrabomberra willows.

Grey Shrikethrush *Colluricincla harmonica*

Single birds seen, July, September, October 1982. Grey Fantail

Rhipidura fuliginosa

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
1	1	7	9	4	7	2	1	3	2	1	1

Numbers and seasonal pattern much as for 1981-82. Birds seen throughout area.

Willie Wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
3	7	7	5	6	7	6	7	7	6	3	4

Numbers and seasonal pattern much as for 1981-82. Birds seen throughout area.

Clamorous Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus*

The bird is present throughout the year but during the cold months the only sign of its presence is the occasional 'chuk'. The spring and summer population is probably several hundreds by extrapolation from the areas where any sort of (mainly aural) count was made.

Little Grassbird *Megalurus gramineus*

Up to 7 birds were counted each month, in the lower Jerrabomberra, Kelly's Swamp and Sewage Farm areas.

Golden-headed Cisticola *Cisticola exilis*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
0	1	2	7	5	9	3	1	0	2	1	0

There was a noticeable spring peak. Generally, counts were based on males calling so actual numbers could have been about double.

Rufous Songlark *Cinclorhynchus mathewsi*

September 1982-1; October-2; November-2; all in the old Causeway area.

Brown Songlark *CincZorhamphus cruralis*

Single bird, October 1982, on the wire fence between the Sewage Farm and the irrigated flats beyond. In earlier years, the bird was more numerous there and at Kelly's Swamp.

Superb Fairy-wren *Malurus cyaneus*

Bird present throughout the year. Count not attempted.
White-browed Scrubwren *Sericornis frontalis*

Bird present throughout the year in small numbers - 3 to 4 - in the willows on the south side of Duntroon Reach.

Western Gerygone *Gerygone fusca*

Single birds seen, October, November 1982, Causeway area.

Yellow-rumped Thornbill *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*

Bird present throughout the year, in small flocks. No monthly count exceeded 10.

Red Wattlebird *Anthochaera carunculata*

Birds present throughout the year, monthly numbers being around 5 except in April 1983 when a flock of 20 was seen.

Noisy Friarbird *Philemon cornicuiatus*

Single birds in each month from September 1982 to April 1983.

Yellow-faced Honeyeater *Lichenostomus chrysops*

Single bird, August 1982; e10, October.

Whiteplumed Honeyeater *Lichenostomus penicillatus*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN		
0	p	p	c5		2	p	p	p	c	5	0	p	1

p = present

In September 1982, birds were seen mobbing a Pallid Cuckoo. The large April 1983 count was a migratory flock.

White-naped Honeyeater *Melithreptus Lunatus*

Single bird, August 1982

White fronted Chat *Epthianura albifrons*

A pair was seen on the old causeway tip in July and September 1982. In December , a flock of up to 10 , including juveniles was seen several times in the box thorn hedge bordering Kelly's Swamp, now ripped out.

Spotted Pardalote *Pardalotus punctatus*
Bird present throughout the year. Count not made.

Silvereye *Zosterops lateralis*

Bird present throughout the year, over all of the area. Count not made.

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*

Bird present throughout the year, over all of the area. Count not made but flocks seen in spring and autumn often exceeded 100.

European Greenfinch *Carduelis chloris*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN				
5				2	p	2	1	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	0

Numbers seen were well down on 1981-82. It will be interesting to see how the bird reacts to the ripping out of the Kelly's Swamp box thorn.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Bird present, throughout the year. Count not made but population in the area must run into hundreds.

Common Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Bird present throughout the year. Count not made but spring, autumn and winter flocks of 1000-2000 were frequently seen. Common Mynah

Acridotheres tristis

Pair seen September 1982 to March 1983 on Mundaring Drive.

Whitewinged Chough *Corcorax melanorhamphos*

From 2 to 4 birds seen, September 1982 to January 1983, mainly at the S end of Bowen Drive.

Australian Magpie-lark *Grallina cyanoleuca*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
45	31	44	27	20	22	38	41	44	33	36	33

Numbers seen much as for 1981-82 except for May and June 1983, when they were lower. Breeding activity extended from September to December 1982.

Dusky Woodswallow-*Artamus cyanopterus*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
0	0		c5	2	0	1	0	6		6 5+	0

This was the first year in which I recorded the bird. Sightings were made in the lightly timbered area by the Boat Shed, on Mundaring Drive and, May 1983, in the grassed area opposite the National Library.

Australian Magpie *Gymnorhina tibicen*

Birds present throughout the year. Count not made but area population must exceed 100. Breeding activity, near Treasury, started in August.

Pied Currawong *Strepera graculina*

Birds present throughout the year, generally overflying. Count not made.

Australian Raven *Corvus coronoides*

JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
3	4	3	6	7	4	4	c25	10	8	7	4

Birds seen throughout. Pair nested in willows, SW corner of Duntroon Reach. I cannot account for the large February 1983 count.

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GREY FALCONS AND BEACH WASHED PETRELS

Jeff Campbell

I wish to question the recording by Bob Weston, CBN 8(2):67 of a Grey Falcon *Falco hypoleucos* along the Darling between Wentworth and Pooncarie.

It is not the location that leads me to query this report but the sentence contained in the item, viz 'Suddenly it stopped and hovered.' This sentence brings the observation into doubt as the Grey Falcon does not obtain its prey by hovering, rather by bursts of high speed flight to snatch prey from the ground or in the air.

Also in reference to 'An Unusual Beach Washed Petrel' by Dr L Dennis and Dr P Bolger (CBN 8(2):63), detailed measurements for the identification of the White-chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis* as compared to the Westland Petrel *P. westlandica* can be found in the Emu 64:70-72.

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CORRECTION

The times of observation in Alison Rowell's Odd Ob (CBN 8(4): 101) should have been 1730 and 1713, not 0530 and 0513.

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