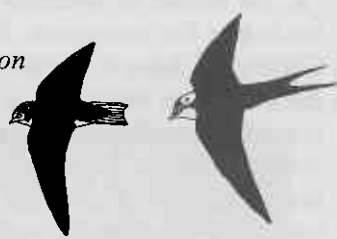
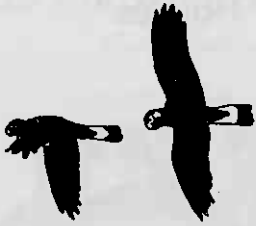


Bird Report – Eastern Wheatbelt

By Heather Adamson



DURING Easter the Birds Australia WA Group stayed in Merredin, visiting a number of reserves around the district. A convoy headed east to the 529ha Tank Hill Nature Reserve. Before arriving, all ‘little grey dots’ sitting on fence wires or telegraph lines were identified. First stop was an active malleefowl mound – fresh tracks and mound activity revealed that the owners weren’t far away. Next, a loud carrying whistle was instantly recognised by all (except me!) as a southern scrub-robin. The call was heard frequently but only one bird was sighted. A white-eared honeyeater posed perfectly for everyone from a high vantage point.

Amidst white gum woodland we separated into smaller groups arranging to meet back at the vehicles and compare notes. Here we sighted some elegant parrots, weebills, pardalotes, a crested bellbird, grey shrike-thrush, white-browed babblers and many others. Travelling on to Westonia, the town was alive with bird noises and the antics of grey currawongs, pied butcherbirds and red-tailed black cockatoos.

Sandford Rocks NR, north of Westonia, seemed to be a heaven for small birds, much to my delight, with three different types of thornbills flitting around, grey fantails, purple-gaped honeyeaters, golden whistlers – I nearly forgot to eat my lunch! There were also red-throats further around the south side of the rock, over all a wonderful habitat area.

The next day we visited Totadgin NR 12 kms south of Merredin where, among others, we saw several brown

quails, red-capped robins and a rufous whistler. Other areas visited included Chiddarcooping NR, Lake Champion NR, Lake Brown NR, Merredin tree plantation (see last issue of Western Wildlife) and Billycatting Reserve.

Back at camp each night all observations were collated and confirmed. Over the five day period, 83 different species of birds were recorded (this is, of course, without any wet-weather birds). A great result to confirm that such a lot of bird diversity remains. An amazing, fascinating weekend in truly wonderful company! I can recommend “Bird Atlassing” to everyone!

Heather Adamson is LFW Officer at Merredin. Phone: 9041 2488.



Did you know ... ?

Parasitic plants such as quandong, sandalwood and the WA Christmas tree actually leak nutrients from their leaves, providing a very rich soil immediately under their canopies. Perhaps this explains the amount of weeds which grow there!

(From Lyn Atkins of CSIRO Wildlife and Ecology)