

Education

Annette Cook



Bush Stone-curlew. Photo: J. Rogers

BOCA's educational DVD, *Our Winged Neighbours* (described in the previous issue of *The Bird Observer*), focused on birds that are familiar to most people. They can be seen in schools, parks, gardens and farms. The second DVD in the set will be released on Threatened Species Day on 7 September 2008, an appropriate day for an educational kit that explores the lives, threats and possible actions to help 10 threatened Australian birds. Threatened birds are less likely to be seen than those in *Our Winged Neighbours* so the activities and concepts in *Threatened Australian Birds* are aimed at Grades 5 & 6.

Most threatened Australian birds suffer because of changes in their habitat. Loss, fragmentation or a combination of both reduces the amount and quality of habitat. Introduced plants and animals also add to habitat degradation. Woodland habitats are among the most threatened and several woodland birds are covered in the kit. Hooded Robin, Barking Owl, Regent Honeyeater, Swift Parrot and Bush Stone-curlew can be seen and heard on the DVD along with images of habitat and discussion of threats. Two mallee-dwellers, Malleefowl and Mallee Emu-wren, represent drier mallee communities. The Brolga, threatened in Victoria but plentiful in northern Australia, provides a perfect example of why habitat and climate are so important to survival. The audio-visual program begins on the southern Australian coast with the Hooded Plover – images of vulnerable eggs and chicks help to tell its story. The group of ten birds is completed with one of the world's most threatened birds – the Orange-bellied Parrot.

The birds included in this kit are generally threatened in south-eastern Australia and this was a conscious decision when the grant was first received from the Danks Foundation. It would be exciting, if we were able to secure future funding, to produce a second kit that featured other threatened Australian birds.

Capture a Raptor Bird Week Photography Challenge

Photographing raptors can be a challenge for even the most experienced photographer. Raptors are usually seen flying overhead, or heard calling at night. But when seen close up, perched on a fence post, roosting in a tree or taking food at a flight display, our Australian raptors are exciting and rewarding photographic subjects.

During October, BOCA is encouraging everyone with a camera to *Capture a Raptor*. The challenge is to take an identifiable photo of as many raptor species as you can during the month and tell us via the website what birds you 'captured' along with location, date and your comments. To share the joy of raptors, everyone will be able to upload their two best photos to the Bird Week web pages. Those without a digital camera can send prints to BOCA for scanning.

So, whether you are a camera enthusiast or just take a few photos when out bird watching, why not plan some outings during October with seeing raptors as the goal?

Further details about reporting raptor species photographed and uploading of images will be available on the BOCA website from 1 October until 9 November www.birdobservers.org.au

Jill Wilson
BOCA Photography Group

Introducing Roger and Rohan Bilney

Father and son team Roger and Rohan Bilney live locally in East Gippsland and they will be sharing their expertise about local birds and ecology with participants at *Between the Mountains and the Sea*.

Roger Bilney started his career at the Arthur Rylah Institute before becoming a Fisheries and Wildlife Officer in Bairnsdale for 16 years.

He was Chief Ranger in the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service for several years and is currently a sessional teacher at Forestech East Gippsland TAFE, and an avocado farmer. Roger has been involved with research of waterfowl, Peregrine Falcons, White-bellied Sea-Eagles and numerous parrots and cockatoos to assist with wildlife enforcement matters.

Rohan Bilney has lived most of his life in East Gippsland and has always had a keen interest in birds and mammals. After completing a Science degree at Monash University in 2003, Rohan transferred to Deakin University and returned to East Gippsland for his Honours degree and PhD research into the ecology of Sooty Owls, Masked Owls and Powerful Owls and small mammal decline since European settlement.



Powerful Owl.
Photo: A. Maisey

BETWEEN THE MOUNTAINS AND THE SEA

Explore East Gippsland through birds and photography

Based at

Forestech, Kalimna West
Fri 10 – Sun 12 October 2008

- Spotlighting with Rohan and Roger Bilney
- Special guest speaker – David Hollands
- Rainforest birds
- Tricks for getting the most from your digital camera – experts from BOCA's Photography Group
- Impacts of bushfire on birds

Cost including some meals:
\$80.00 (BOCA Members) \$110.00 (non-members)
Saturday night dinner with David Hollands \$15.00

Book now on 03 9877 5342
email: information@birdobservers.org.au

Bookings close 1 September

Australian Birdfair 14-16 November 2008

The Australian Birdfair will be held in Leeton, South-eastern Australia from 14 to 16 November 2008.

Theme: "Climate Change: What are the birds telling us?"

The Australian Birdfair showcases our native wild birds, and the ecosystems of which they are part and dependent upon.

Key activities include

- Flights of Fivebough – The very popular meet and greet BBQ held at Fivebough Wetlands. While networking with other Birdfair enthusiasts, from around Australia and overseas, and enjoy the spectacle of 1000's of Glossy Ibis and Whiskered Terns come to roost together with the many 1000's of other waterbirds.
- Organised birdwatching trips by Temp Tours to find iconic species in the region, such as the Plains-wanderer
- Seminars and lectures on topics relating to birds, nature, photography and educational seminars for school students.
- Music, art and photograph exhibition, optics, tourism and industry exhibitors.

Exhibitors

An Invitation is extended to potential exhibitors wishing to be part of the Australian Birdfair.

For more information contact Tracey Valenzisi, Australian Birdfair Coordinator.

Venue

Yanco Agricultural Institute, Leeton-Narrandera Road Trunk Road 80, Yanco (8 km south of Leeton)

Shady, full equipped facilities including air-conditioned conference and seminar rooms, catering and accommodation

Fivebough and Tuckerbil Wetlands are located a short distance from Leeton, in the Lower Murrumbidgee region. The Lower Murrumbidgee region has recorded over 270 species of birds in varied habitats, from Riverine Forests to Grasslands, to Mallee and various Woodland communities.

For more information, please contact:

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Painted Snipe



Plains-wanderer

Photographs courtesy of Michael Todd
www.wildlifling.com

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