

Education

Annette Cook



Square-tailed Kite. Photo: Ákos Gábor Lumnitzer

BOCA Education initiatives continue to grow and develop across the country. Bird Week 2008 has helped to provide the impetus for many branches to take up the challenge. Displays and activities have been held during October, especially during the last week which was Bird Week 2008. The aim of Bird Week is to raise public awareness of native birds and to create interest in BOCA. Bird Week helps birders and non-birders alike to learn which birds are doing well, which need help, and what we can do to make a difference. The theme for this year was *Revealing Raptors*. Education resources were made available on the BOCA website and will remain after Bird Week, as did the *Parrots on Parade* information from 2007. Discussions for 2009 have already begun - further information will be available early next year.

Bird Week Online

Some interest was shown to the "Who is who/What is what" page with people attempting to identify the raptors described by words alone. The correct responses to the birds described in this competition were:

- Nankeen Kestrel
- Barking Owl
- White-bellied Sea-Eagle
- Black-breasted Buzzard
- Pacific Baza
- Southern Boobook
- Spotted Harrier

The "Capture a Raptor" activity has provided us with some great images of raptors. The photo of the nesting Square-tailed Kite and young featured on this page was sent by Ákos Gábor Lumnitzer from Penrith, NSW.

The photograph was taken in the Lower Blue Mountains using a Canon EOS 1D MkIII, 500mm lens and 2x converter, well away from the nest itself. Ákos said, "We have been watching the pair build the nest in August and finally the eggs hatched three weeks ago."

The online raptor education resources will be developed further in the future, with the inclusion of downloadable information panels for Wedge-tailed Eagle, Swamp Harrier, Black-shouldered Kite and Nankeen Kestrel. These have been

developed by Stuart Cousland and his team at Penboc. They are also working on a poster with general raptor information. Fact sheets for Barn Owl and Peregrine Falcon will also be loaded early in 2009.

Branch Bird Week Activities

Branches from Townsville to south-western and eastern Victoria put up displays in their local libraries. In some cases the supply of membership forms and *The Bird Observer* disappeared very quickly.

MELBOCA was very busy during October with their regular Banyule Breakfast with the Birds and also Eltham Breakfast with the Birds. An Australian Native Plant Society exhibition provided an ideal location for a BOCA display with information provided about birds in gardens.

Blackburn Lake Sanctuary, Melbourne, held a "Stickybeaks" day where children, and their parents, learnt more about raptors. Raptor skins helped to illustrate the diversity of raptors in Australia - people were fascinated by the size range of Nankeen Kestrel to Wedge-tailed Eagle. Children coloured pictures of raptors and took home a life-size kite of a Nankeen Kestrel.

Ballarat Branch regularly holds an outing at Lake Wendouree during Bird Week. This year 25 people attended. Members and non-members alike enthusiastically explored the park around the lake recording the birds seen.

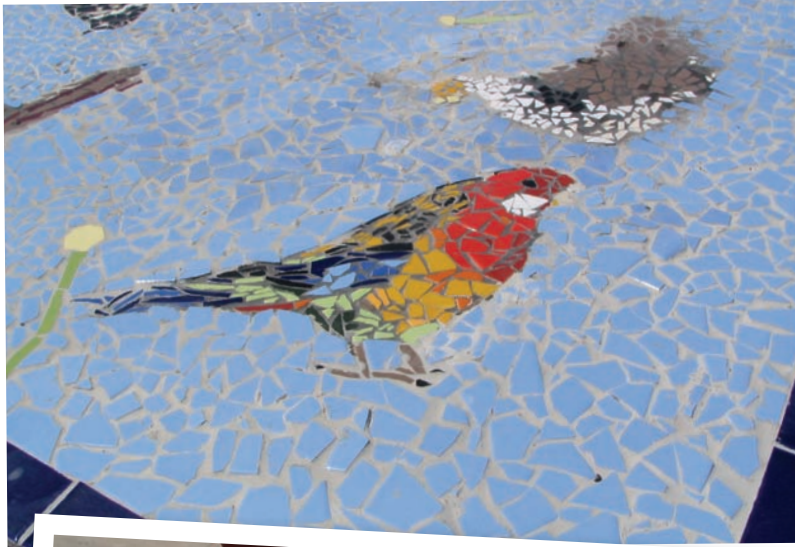
Bundyloc from Bundaberg in Queensland held a camp at Bulburin National Park, Granite Creek. The fine warm weather proved to be great for bird watching. Ninety-two species were seen in sub-tropical and rainforest habitats. The group started birding at first light and saw lots of rainforest favourites including the Regent Bowerbird pictured right. During the night a Marbled Frogmouth called but could not be seen.



Regent Bowerbird.
Photo: Trevor Quedstedt

Bird Mosaic Tables at the Catholic Regional College Sydenham, Vic

In the last issue of *The Bird Observer* I described the work I and some BOCA volunteers had done with Year 11 students at CRC Sydenham. I recently returned to the college for a special barbeque to celebrate the completion of the bird mosaic tables constructed by the students. Two examples are shown below.



Broken Boosey Biodiversity Celebration Day

In September, I spoke about BOCA's education and conservation work at the annual Broken Boosey Biodiversity celebration day held at Numurkah, Victoria. The day was organised by the Broken Boosey Conservation Management Network and funded by the Shepparton Region Community Education and Awareness Grants Scheme. Speakers included BOCA member and Conservation Officer with Moira Shire, Gary Deayton, who spoke of his work at Kinnairds Wetlands – the site of the afternoon field trip for the day. Andy McDougall, Parks Victoria, described the challenges and successes in managing multiple land uses along the Murray River. Keith Ward, Goulburn-Broken CMA, outlined the decision-making process for the release of environmental water to specific wetlands, including Barmah, and of monitoring the return of wildlife to these areas. Jo Deretic, DPI, told us of the interesting work she is doing audio-monitoring in wetlands after release of environmental water. Both Keith and Jo have been asked to contribute articles to the February issue of *The Bird Observer* – a special wetlands issue for World Wetlands Day.

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