

Inside BOCA



John Barkla
President



Photo: John Barkla

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Since my last report to members in the May issue of *The Bird Observer*, we have been steadily making progress. Importantly, as we have seen the global financial crisis recede, members have begun to increase their support for BOCA to the point where our income and expenses are now almost back to break-even. Hopefully, this means that the trading losses we endured last year may now be behind us. Our trading position has been helped by our CEO, Richard Hunter, agreeing to work on an honorary basis (as I reported in May), but the Board recognises that this cannot continue indefinitely. We are grateful to Richard for his ongoing commitment.

With generous support from our member Geoff Jones from Barra Imaging, we have made wonderful progress upgrading our website. I would encourage all members to access our site and give feedback. We are using the site to help build a digital image library, with the goal of having images of all plumages of every Australian bird, for BOCA use in our publications and conservation and education programs. PhotoBOCA will continue to play a vital role in achieving this.

In relation to our goal of building a stronger and more representative organisation that will be a stronger voice for birds, I am pleased to report that the merger discussions with Birds Australia (BA) continue to be harmonious and constructive, building upon the goodwill and trust which clearly exists between our two Boards and executive teams.

Based on the principles outlined in the second letter to members, the Merger Working Group agreed in July to recommend to the two Boards that:

- A merger proposal should be put to the May 2011 Annual General Meetings of both BOCA and BA.
- Subject to the support of members, the new company to be formed should be called BirdLife Australia (this truly national company would assume BA's current role as the Australian partner of the international bird organisation BirdLife International).
- The interim Board of the new company should comprise five representatives from the BOCA Board and five representatives from the BA Council, with an independent Chair agreed by both Boards.

- Graeme Hamilton, the current CEO of BA, should be appointed CEO of the new merged organisation. His initial appointment would be to the end of 2013.
- A new logo should be designed for the new organisation which the Working Group suggested should consist of a stylized image of a recognisably Australian bird found throughout the country (such as a Wedge-tailed Eagle or a Black Swan).
- The Working Group suggested that if the members supported the new name being BirdLife Australia, the name of the magazine to be published by the merged organisation should also be "BirdLife Australia".

Our expectation is that a new organisation, with a larger membership, will be able to open many more Branches across Australia and there will be better resources available at National Office to support Branches. This should provide:

- members with a much greater range of activities to join when they are travelling and more contacts for local information; and
- a better ability to gather information and to take action to protect our birds.

I am continuing to receive positive feedback from members, both at Branch meetings and in the field, to the proposed merger. With our CEO, Richard Hunter, I will endeavour to meet with as many Branches as possible in the coming months. In addition to these meetings and to give all Branches and Affiliate Groups an opportunity to hear the views of others and to give us further feedback, we will hold another Forum in September at the Murrumbidgee Rural Studies Centre, Yanco, NSW immediately following the Birdfair. Whilst we recognise that there is a cost involved in holding this meeting, we consider it important to provide as many opportunities as possible to canvas members' opinions.

By the time you read this report, I hope that you will have received the third joint letter to members from the BA President, Alison Russell-French and me. Please continue to give us your feedback so that the proposals which we put before members in May 2011 take account of all your views.

John Barkla
President



Richard Hunter
Chief Executive Officer

CEO'S REPORT

AGM

Since our last issue the BOCA Annual General Meeting has been held with a good roll up of Members. A full report of the meeting can be found on pages 27 to 30. We had a particularly interesting and relevant talk from Kelvin Thomson MP, a long time member of BOCA, the text of this talk can be found on page 28.

WELCOME COFFS COAST BIRDPWATCHERS

The Board has agreed to Coffs Coast Birdwatchers becoming an affiliated group and we welcome them to the BOCA birding family. The group is very active and their outings will now appear in the Calendar.

With this addition we have a very comprehensive cover of the NSW northern rivers area. Members travelling there are encouraged to make contact with the local group and join their outings.

BOB ANDERSON OAM

Long time BOCA Member and President of the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater, Bob Anderson was awarded an Order of Australia Medal in the Queen's Birthday Honours list. The Award is very much deserved and many Members will be aware of the major contribution Bob has made over many years.

The Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater, under Bob's leadership, have completed over twenty years of very hard work in the conservation of the Honeyeater. Congratulations Bob on very well deserved recognition.



Bob Anderson at release of Helmeted Honeyeaters at Yelllingbo Nature Conservation Reserve.
Photo: Arthur Carew



Dunlin (possible third record for Australia and its Territories, subject to BARC review) reported in BNS 197, Tuross Lake Estuary, 25 km north of Narooma, NSW, 5 January 2010. Note the black streaking on the belly. A full black belly is diagnostic for a breeding Dunlin.
Photo: Pattie Parker. For more interesting sightings, see Bird Notes page 24.

CAN YOU IDENTIFY THE GREY FALCON? – AFO

If you are off to the outback, it would be exciting to see the rare Grey Falcon. But can you be sure of identifying it correctly? For tips on field identification, be sure to read the June issue of *Australian Field Ornithology*.

Other interesting articles in this issue concern predation of shearwater eggs on one of the Tasmanian islands; mortality of the Black-necked Stork, especially from collision with powerlines; and the diet of the Powerful Owl in Melbourne's city parks. There are shorter papers on seabirds stealing fish (a Crested Tern attempting to steal from a Pied Cormorant and a Silver Gull successfully stealing from a dolphin), and a note on range extension of the Blue-winged Parrot in western Queensland. Two book reviews complete this issue.

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Julia Hurley



Silver Gull. Photo: John Barkla