



## **G'day LFWers and GFWers,**

The warmer weather finally seems to be making a bit of a comeback, and we are heading for a record dry spell – who'd have thought after all the rain of the last few years?! There have already been a few big bushfires, so for rural property owners it is a good time to be reviewing your fire plans and checking your firebreaks.

Thank you for all the feedback about the new newsletter format. We'll keep attempting to refine it as we go, but for now it seems that it has been received well across most of our membership.

We have received a minor flood of requests for assistance with rabbit control; it seems the seasons of plenty have been very good to the bunnies.

We're flat out at the Land for Wildlife offices at the moment, but we're getting through all the requests, and if you have sent us a message then we will be in touch shortly to arrange a visit.

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## LAND FOR WILDLIFE NEWS...



The Land for Wildlife program has a new coordinator who has come aboard to help us with the increasing demand for our assistance. New Coordinator Matt Digby writes below;

*Greetings, I'm the newest addition to the Land For Wildlife team! I've been living in Central Australia since 2009, where I have been involved in tourism, community development, communications (Emergency Services) and retail. I'm excited to be professionally using the Natural Resource Management part of my brain, after giving it a break for around 10 years. Previously I worked in Alpine Ecology and Outdoor/Environmental education. So far*

*I've taken part in some rabbit control and the desert SMART ECOFAIR, both of which have provided great opportunities to meet current Land for Wildlife and Garden for Wildlife, and potential members. I'm looking forward to strengthening current relationships and creating new ones.*

## NEWSFLASH – LFW GOES INTERNATIONAL

We've just received word from Alan Fleming at Forest & Bird in Aotearoa, that the trial of Land for Wildlife has begun in New Zealand and has had strong interest right from the outset. See the articles section for the full story from the Forest & Bird blog.

The Alice Springs Show went off without a hitch, and we saw many smiling faces (despite that cold wind). A big "thank you", to the folks at the Australian Plant Society for again hosting the Land for Wildlife/Garden for Wildlife stand within their (award-winning) sheltered garden

## Alice Springs Golf Club Comes Aboard...

An exciting recent addition to the LFW membership map is the Alice Springs Golf Club. The location of this property makes it a significant inclusion in the LFW program and it completes a missing part of the wildlife corridor jigsaw puzzle for Alice Springs. A hearty welcome to all of the general and board members of the club, and we look forward to working with you over the coming years.

## GARDEN FOR WILDLIFE NEWS...



Garden for Wildlife has done well lately as a result of increased interest from the Alice Springs Show and the Ecofair. We have a few of new properties joining up to help strengthen our patchwork

quilt of protected wildlife habitat around town.

On the feral dove front, Chris has just attended the UK Birdfair at Rutland Water in central England, and had an interesting encounter with the Turtle Dove *Recovery* Team. That's right - these blokes are conducting the perfect counterpoint to our eradication program! The European Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*, (closely related to the feral doves here in Alice) is in serious decline due to changes in farming techniques across Britain and hunting in the southern Mediterranean region of their migratory path. You can learn more about how the recovery team is going about their task by Googling the **Keep Britain Messy** campaign.

Closer to home, the feral dove *eradication* project is moving steadily ahead, and we may have another addition to the introduced birds becoming common around town. Reports of Rainbow Lorikeets are steadily becoming more frequent. Jesse and Matt have just completed a feral animal control workshop with students from Batchelor College, covering rabbit, feral predators, and our old adversary the Spotted Dove. The project can always do with more keen trappers, so if you have seen Spotted Doves around your property and you're interested in getting involved, drop us an email for details on how to build your own trap or visit the website factsheet page at: <http://www.lowecol.com.au/lfw/gfwmeminfo.htm>

Welcome to the family for all of the new members that we have met over recent weeks.

## ARTICLES & CONTRIBUTIONS...

*The following is a reproduction of an article by Alan Fleming that appeared on the blog of Forest & Bird in New Zealand.*

### **Australia: A Land for Wildlife**

Central North Island Field Officer, Al Fleming

Australia's Land for Wildlife (LFW) program has grown to include over 15,000 landowners wanting to restore wildlife areas, and I recently got a chance to travel there in the hope of re-creating a similar scheme here.



*The bush falcon maybe coming to properties around the Bay of Plenty if there's good community support for our Land for Wildlife scheme. Photo: Jordan Kappelly*

The program was started in 1981 by two determined birders - Ellen McCulloch and Reg Johnson – who wanted to increase habitat for rare and endangered creatures such as the black cockatoo, the tawny frogmouth and the perentie lizard.

It all began in Victoria and then quickly spread across the country – now 30 years on and 4% of the state's total land area is protected under Land for Wildlife.

The scheme works like this – willing landowners can sign up to the voluntary programme, and they'll receive a visit from an officer to assess the biodiversity values of the land, after which they will write up a property plan which includes conservation actions on the property. Land owners also learn how to

protect and enhance the habitat on their land through workshops, field days and regular newsletters.

Land for Wildlife members trouble-shoot problems and by placing a 'Land for Wildlife' sign on their front gate, the word spreads. This word of mouth advertising has been phenomenally successful and since its inception, the area of wildlife habitat being managed on properties throughout Australia totals more than 560 km<sup>2</sup>.

After travelling to Victoria my walkabout continued in Queensland, where they have a sophisticated database that maps a variety of details – from the land class, soil types and trees planted.

The program not only involves private land-owners but also government agencies like the defence force, allowing large swathes of land to be turned into wildlife friendly areas.

I then travelled over to Alice Springs where Jesse and Chris showed me some of their LFW properties in the Red Centre. We even watched a Euro (medium sized kangaroo) eat damper by the campfire. Fair dinkum!

The Land for Wildlife sister programme for urban restoration 'Garden for Wildlife' is particularly strong in Alice, where they are working to protect habitat for the bowerbirds, bats, rock wallabies and even frogs.

Then it was onto Western Australia where Penny runs a team of 11 officers delivering LFW on a range of properties including "tree changers" (lifestyle properties) and large farms within the West Australia Wheat Belt.

By creating a stretch of ecological corridors that run from wetlands through to grasslands, heaths, woodlands and forests, landowners are able to protect a range of species that live across a variety of habitats.

Suitably energised and enthused, I am back on the ground in NZ, and we've put in a place the first building blocks for starting a similar scheme over here in the hope of bringing back

bush falcon, kaka and fantails into semi-rural and urban areas around the Bay of Plenty.

We are looking for willing landowners who are keen to participate in these two programs. The pilot project area is the Kaimai Connection which includes Aongatete, Omokoroa, Te Puna in the Bay of Plenty and the area between Wairongomai and Matamata in the Waikato .

So if you want to protect wildlife on your property please get in touch!

*Thanks very much for the mention Alan. We'll stay in touch with our friends at Forest & Bird and keep you up to date with the progress of the Land for Wildlife program across the Tasman. You can also stay abreast with everything that Forest & Bird are up to by following them on Facebook; <http://www.facebook.com/ForestandBird>*

### **Feeding Wildlife: a chance to participate in important wildlife research**

*What follows is an article that has been reproduced with kind permission from a recent edition of Wildlife Australia Magazine ([www.wildlife-australia.org](http://www.wildlife-australia.org)). It presents an interesting opportunity for participation in wildlife research. The subject of feeding wild animals has many emotional attachments, and a new research project by Darryl Jones (Griffith University) and Renee Chapman hopes to elucidate some of the motivations of people who feed wild birds and learn more about what it means to them.*



## THE MEANING OF FEEDING

A key concept, perhaps the central tenet, of ecology is the intricate, complex, never-ending interconnectivity between all the bits that make up an ecosystem. The hawk eats the pigeon who ate the worm which ingested the pesticide, the whole chain of events unexpectedly occurring through the gardener trying to protect her roses from the aphids. These are lessons we are continually relearning as we slowly start to appreciate that the single, global biosphere is a web of connections most of which we have only the vaguest understanding of.

Some such connections and influences are being unraveled by urban ecologists investigating the unexpected ways that even simple human activities can affect the lives of animals. Our lights are leading to strange new roosting behaviours in urban lorikeets, traffic noise is leading some birds to change the pitch of their songs and even the pattern of footpaths dictates the places that some birds reside within city parks. And one of the latest studies I have read has discovered that birds which are fed by humans start their dawn chorus much later in the day than those which aren't feed.

We are starting to realize that one of the most profound of all human influences associated with urban living is also one of the least understood. It is also one of the most widespread and popular pastimes and quite probably the commonest form of interaction with wild animals: wildlife feeding. As described numerous times in this column, the practice is also extremely controversial in Australia (though, remarkably, not in most other countries), because of the many potential impacts that the provision of large amounts of non-natural foods can have on the birds – and other species – that use these resources. Thankfully, a considerable

international effort is now underway to investigate some of these influences with a view to providing sound guidelines to the huge numbers of people engaged in feeding wildlife.

Because the reality is that for many of the people involving in wildlife feeding this activity is extremely important and rewarding. Indeed, for increasing numbers of city dwellers, being able to interact with wild animals in their own backyards and balconies is an opportunity of real and powerful significance. This is especially so for older people who may be less active; being visited at home by truly wild creatures may be seen as a privilege.

Some years ago, Peter Howard and I decided to explore some of these issues, in what we now realize was something of a pioneering study into why people fed birds. We really just wanted to hear directly from people engaged in the practice as to why they spent their own money and invested large amounts of time in trying to attract wildlife to their homes with food. Although we were initially a little worried about finding enough people willing to talk about what was a fraught topic, we soon discovered that most feeders were overjoyed to finally have someone to talk to about their passionate pastime.

This work was the first to uncover the really quite profound depth of meaning give to the simple process of providing a bit of food to the birds. Powerfully, a dominant theme among many of these people was perception of atonement for past human destruction of the environment. "I feel that feeding the birds is a way of giving something back" was a common sentiment.

I am now returning to this area of study, and with Renee Chapman, we are hoping to learn a lot more about what feeding wild birds

means for people. Renee has had a long interest in this topic and having spent untold hours watching people feeding ducks (see WAM 47(2) 2010), she has realized that understanding wildlife feeding is about the people as much as it is the animals. One of the many things she will be attempting to discern is whether being a wildlife feeder means people feel differently about a wide range of aspects of their lives. If you feed wildlife at your place and would like to be involved in this research please email us at [feedingwildlife@gmail.com](mailto:feedingwildlife@gmail.com)

## COMMUNITY NOTICES...

### Alice Water Smart



### Playing our part to make Alice water smart

Alice Water Smart Homes and Businesses encourage you all to take advantage of our great service.

#### FREE Home Water Efficiency Consultations

Register now for your free Home Water Efficiency Consultation for:

- A \$50 water smart rebate voucher
- Tailored advice to reduce your water use
- Help identifying the best rebates available for you
- There are up to \$2700 worth of rebates

per household

- A consultation can provide access to a free Garden Watering Consultation with professional gardeners and up to \$800 of irrigation rebates

To arrange a time, call 8953 1030 and speak with Jethro or Richard or email your interest and contact details

to [homes@alicewatersmart.com.au](mailto:homes@alicewatersmart.com.au)

## BIODIVERSITY MATTERS – An ALEC Initiative

### Biodiversity Matters

Biodiversity refers to the diversity of living organisms living in an environment. This includes plants and animals, vegetation, microscopic organisms and the landscape-scale ecosystems that protect and nourish them.

Biodiversity in the arid lands of Central Australia is declining at alarming rates as a result of weeds, uncontrolled burning, feral species and over-grazing.

*Biodiversity Matters* is an ALEC initiative to increase community participation in land management and biodiversity conservation activities.

A number of workshops will be held in the second half of 2012 in partnership with Land For Wildlife, Parks and Wildlife and funded through the Northern Territory Eco-link.

Participants will learn about local wildlife and in subsequent workshops go out on country and assist in the implementation of biodiversity conservation activities. These include flora and fauna research, weed removal, fencing and other activities as needed. It is through these partnerships we can begin to take on the challenge of biodiversity decline and extinctions in the arid rangelands.

## **Biodiversity Matters**

### **WORKSHOP PROGRAM 2012**

#### **Monitoring biodiversity in the arid lands (Pt 2)**

**@ Finke Gorge National Park,**

**Saturday and Sunday Sept 22-23**

#### **Landscape conservation on private land**

**@Conlon's Lagoon (TBC)**

**1-4pm October 6 or 13**

**Bookings and enquiries - Arid Lands Environment Centre (ALEC) 8952 2497 [info@alec.org.au](mailto:info@alec.org.au)**

#### **Feral Spotted Dove Monitoring and Trapping** Results/commentary from the workshop,

The bad news continues with the feral Spotted Dove population; they're now well-established south of the range. Spotted Doves are daily attendees at birdbaths and garden feeders south of the range along Ross Highway and Ragonesi Road. This range expansion has, no doubt, been assisted by the recent good seasons, but is unlikely to attenuate naturally as The Centre heads into another dry period.

Please continue to notify us of your catch rates and if you still need a dove trap for your back yard.

#### **Rabbit Control Project Progress**

It's full steam ahead at the moment with 6 LFW members monitoring their rabbit

populations with motion-sensitive cameras (see below!).

The official period of this project is shortly to wrap-up, but that will not mean the end of rabbit control for Land for Wildlife properties. Persistence is the key here. Coordinators are always available by email to answer your feral control questions and we may even have some Pindone bait left to distribute among members at the end of the current project.



**1. Confirmed... Rabbit activity beneath a wood pile.**



**2. Caught in the act, a rabbit (far left) gets stuck into the roots of a newly established Acacia seedling.**



**3. Our cameras have been catching more than just rabbits. This feral cat was photographed lurking around a rabbit warren on one property.**

## WEBWATCH...

### FOREST & BIRD BLOG

<http://blog.forestandbird.org.nz/>

This is the blog site for all the news from our friends across the Tasman. Now that Forest & Bird have started running their own Land for Wildlife program you can expect plenty of more interesting news on this front.

### ZOONIVERSE AND SEAFLOOR EXPLORER

<https://www.zooniverse.org/>

<http://www.seafloorexplorer.org/>

Citizen science writ large! Anyone who has participated in the SETI@home project (the processing of radio-telescope signals to search for intelligent patterns) will be familiar with the concept here, but these sites have taken the idea and run with it.

The Zooniverse site enables participants to involve themselves in a variety of science projects from around the world. Essentially, most of them fall into the category of harnessing the vast number of people available on the internet to process images and text related to scientific research. There are ancient lives to be investigated, galaxies and planets to be explored, and much more.

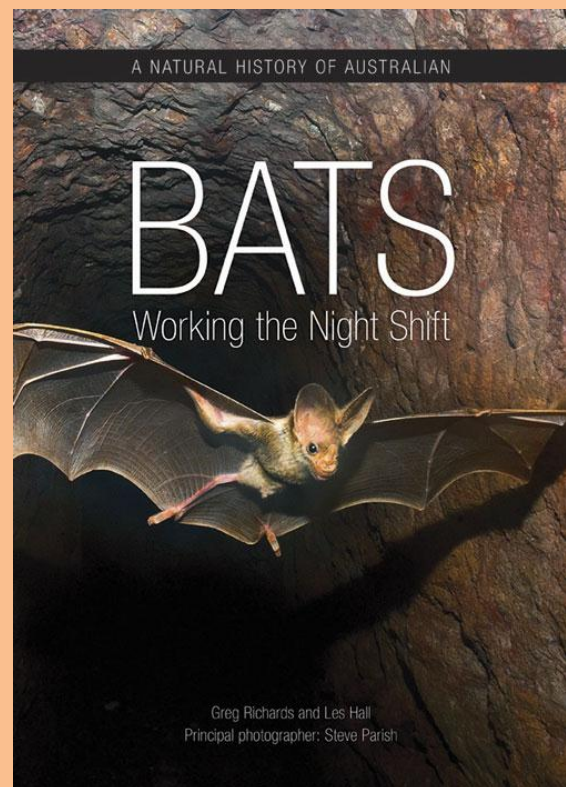
The Seafloor Explorer project is an excellent example. You can log on, and you will be fed a stream of images from the Seafloor Explorer. This robotic camera device, sweeps along about 2m above the seafloor, providing millions of images which all need to be processed to build an

image of the biodiversity and composition of the seafloor. It's a bit like bird atlassing for the bottom of the ocean.

After completing a brief tutorial, you will be asked to identify the substrate and the main organisms in each picture, and this information is then attached to the image and passed through to the database.

Fascinating stuff and a great way to get kids involved in scientific investigation.

## ON THE BOOK SHELF...



### A NATURAL HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN BATS: Working the Night Shift

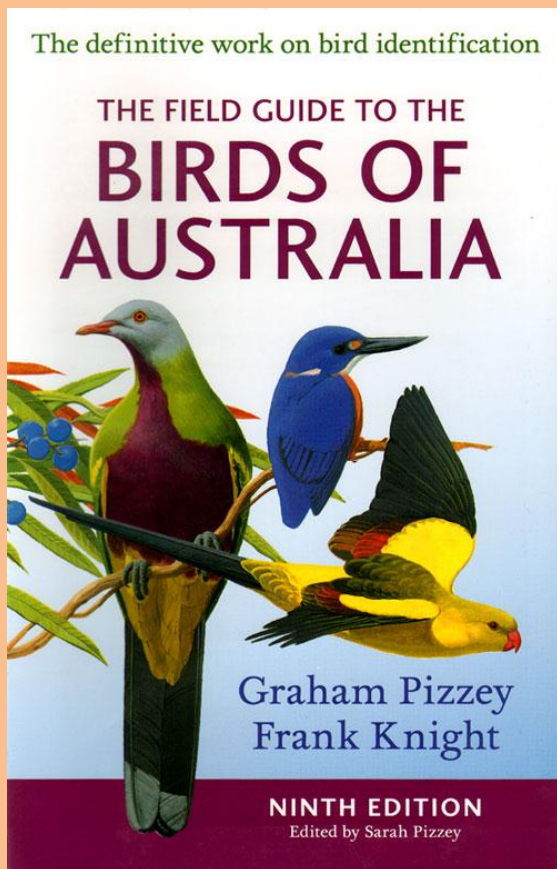
By Greg Richards and Les Hall with  
photography by Steve Parish

This book is a little bit on the expensive side (rrp about \$80), but even at this price, it is offering value for money.



It's a large book, so certainly not a field guide, and well-illustrated throughout. The text is scholarly but always readable, engaging, and bursting with the passion of its authors for their subjects.

This has received rave reviews across the "batting" (yes, it's a thing) community since its launch. If you have a general interest in wildlife but have not yet cultivated a great interest in bats, then this book will have you hooked.



**THE FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF AUSTRALIA (9<sup>th</sup> Edition)**

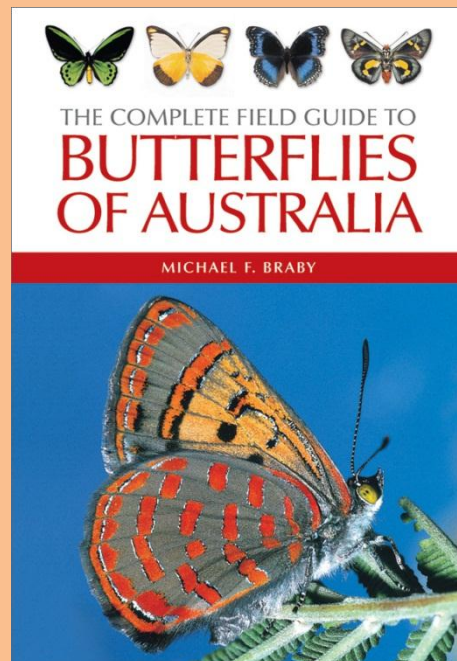
By Graham Pizzey & Frank Knight (edited by Sarah Pizzey)

The latest instalment of one of the best-loved field guides in Australian ornithology. "Pizzey & Knight" as it is known in birding circles is commonly regarded as the best of an excellent range of books covering the bird life

of Australia. The late Graham Pizzey's text is without peer in the description of our birds, and Frank Knight is widely, and rightly, regarded as one of our finest natural history artists.

The recent release makes it the most in step with the constantly shifting landscape of bird taxonomy and has the most modern coverage of vagrant species that have made it to our shores with another 18 plates added since the previous edition.

Rumours have now been confirmed that there is a CSIRO field guide to the birds of Australia in the pipeline, with a number of prominent contributors. There has been no official word on when we can expect this much-anticipated volume, but until its arrival, Pizzey & Knight 9 remains unchallenged at the top of my bird book pile.



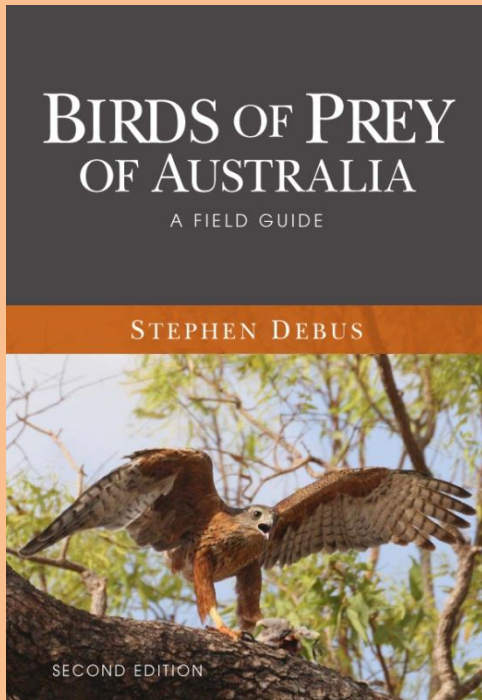
**The Complete Field Guide to Butterflies of Australia**

By Michael F. Braby

This book has been featured among our recommendations in the past, but with the

current abundance of butterflies across The Centre it seems fitting to give it another plug.

“The Braby”, as it has become known among Lepidoptera enthusiasts, is the standard field reference for the subject. It features full colour plates of all species, with just enough text to help you identify your quarry with minimum fuss.



**Birds of Prey of Australia: A Field Guide (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)**

By Stephen Debus

Perhaps the most anticipated bird book release in 15 years. The definitive field reference on the diurnal raptors of Australia.

The first edition of this book debuted to great acclaim and became an instant classic among amateur bird watchers and professional ornithologists alike. The first print run sold out quickly and it has been hard to come by ever since, with used copies selling for as much as \$150 online

This revised second edition, features a further fifteen years-worth of additional data from

the author who is an acknowledged authority on Australian raptors.

With the diverse range of birds of prey that we see in Central Australia this will be a handy book for anyone who is interested in furthering their knowledge of these fascinating species.

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Thanks for all the emails and photographs this month everyone. Please keep them coming for the next edition.

Cheers,

Jesse, Chris, and Bill

