

The birds of Faure Island, Shark Bay, Western Australia

John Dell¹ and Simon Cherriman²

¹ Department of Environment and Conservation, Locked Bag 104,
Bentley DC, WA 6842 Australia; E-mail: john.dell@dec.wa.gov.au

² Australian Wildlife Conservancy, Lot 201 Lilydale Road, Chidlow, WA 6556, Australia

Abstract – Ninety-seven species of birds are known from Faure Island based on surveys conducted in May 2000, July 2005 and October 2005 together with other recent occasional opportunistic records and data from a previously unpublished visit in November 1989. This list comprises 69 species of non-passerines and 28 species of passerines. Forty-four species depend almost entirely on the ocean including beaches, mangroves and associated mudflats and tidal samphires for food resources. The landbird fauna is relatively depauperate. Faure Island has significant areas of mud flats for trans-equatorial migrant wading birds that are protected by agreements between the government of Australia and the governments of Japan, China and South Korea. Breeding data for 23 species are presented.

Key words: Shark Bay, survey, migrants, mangroves

INTRODUCTION

The bird fauna of the Shark Bay area is generally well known in regional terms but there have been few detailed area studies. Storr (1985, 1990) gave a general summary of the avifauna of the region. More recently, Burbidge *et al.* (2000) examined contemporary patterns of occurrence within the Carnarvon Basin by analysing site specific data from 63 quadrats including some from Peron Peninsula. At the same time, Johnstone *et al.* (2000) summarised bird distribution, status and historical changes within the Carnarvon Basin.

The avifauna of Faure Island, which is approximately 10 km east of Peron Peninsula in Disappointment Reach, is poorly known and there have been no published surveys. In an assessment of the breeding seabirds of Shark Bay (i.e. the 16 species that depend on the ocean for food), Burbidge and Fuller (2000) only listed 2 species of seabirds, Pied Cormorant and Caspian Tern, as breeding on Faure Island. There are no published reports of the landbirds of Faure Island.

The main aim of this paper is to summarise all available information on each of the species of birds reliably recorded for Faure Island.

METHODS

John Dell visited Faure Island for six days during 23–28 May 2000 in conjunction with the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC). Four of the five vegetation types identified by Keighery and Muir (2008) as i) *Acacia* shrublands on sandplains, ii) beaches and dunes, iii) mangroves and iv) birridas

and saline flats were visited several times (usually daily) and numbers of all birds seen or heard were recorded together with data on behaviour or breeding. The large area of mangroves on the western side of the island was visited once by boat, and the mangroves at the northern end of the island were visited once from the land. The area of v) mallee eucalypts was visited once. Other members of the team, especially Patrick Berry and Andre Schmitz, provided additional sightings of some species.

Simon Cherriman visited Faure Island from 12–24 July and 12–26 October 2005 as part of mammal monitoring work with AWC. Opportunistic records of numbers, behaviour and breeding data of all birds seen or heard were made each day during fieldwork involving mammals. To gain information on which species were breeding on the island, more detailed surveys were made of mangroves and coastal cliffs on the east coast, mangroves at and inland vegetation near Crescent Moon Bay, and mangroves and saltmarsh/birridas of Tadpole Lagoon (Figure 1).

Since May 2000 staff and volunteers of AWC visited Faure Island on a number of occasions especially January 2002, 26–30 July 2002, January 2003, and July 2006 mainly as part of other work associated with mammal translocation programmes. Opportunistic bird data recorded by Leigh Whisson, Andre Schmitz, Trish Gardner, Jo Williams, Jim Underwood and Patrick Berry have been incorporated into this report.

Previous to the current surveys, Greg Harold visited Faure Island between 22 and 27 November

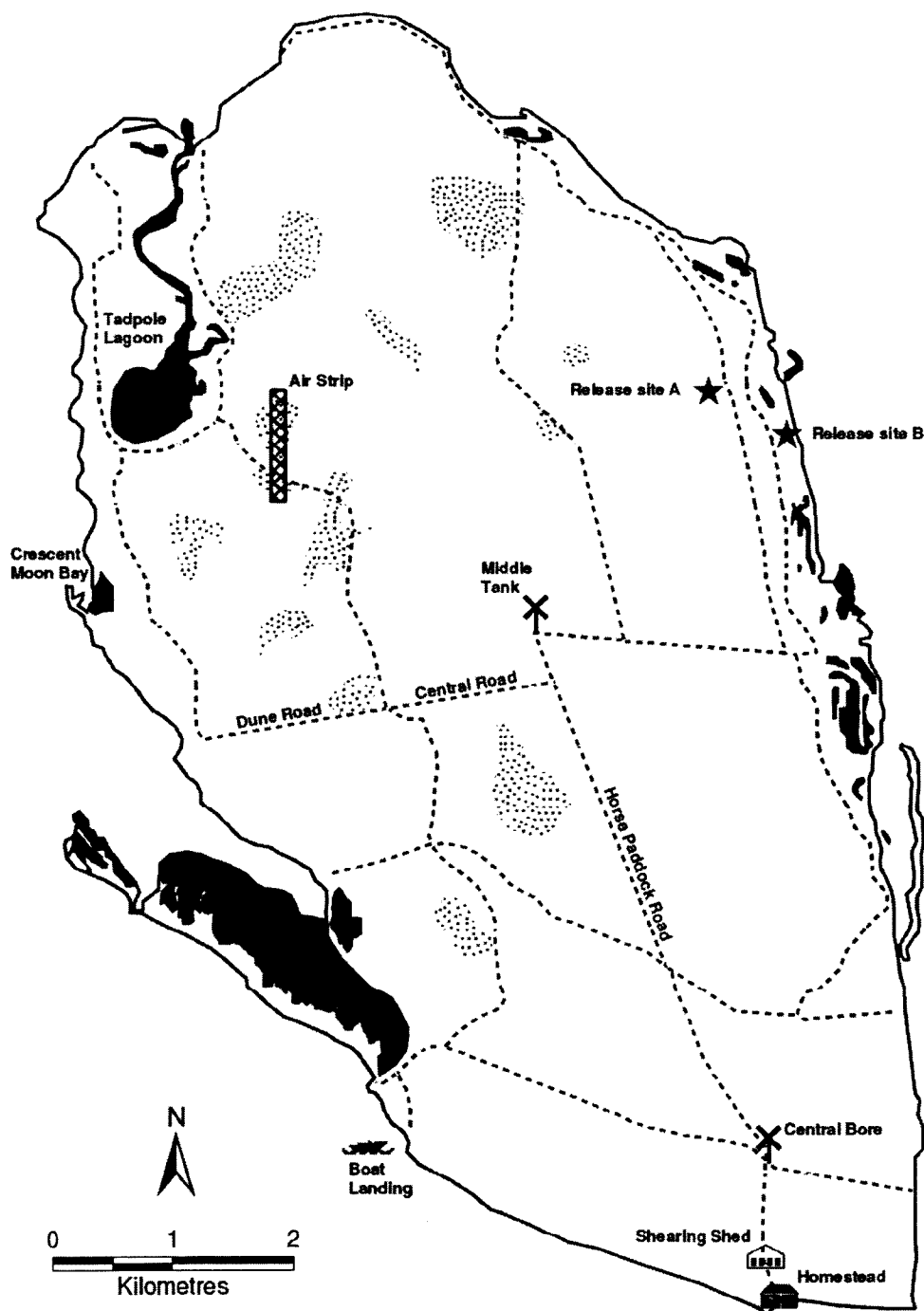


Figure 1 Map of Faure Island showing locations described in the text. Areas shaded black are mangroves, dotted areas are major birridas.

1989 as part of a trapping programme to determine whether the Shark Bay Mouse, *Pseudomys fieldi*, was present on the island. Field notes on the 45 birds recorded by Greg Harold and previously unpublished have been incorporated into the current paper.

ANNOTATED LIST OF BIRDS OF FAURE ISLAND

Presented here is a list of the 97 species of birds currently recorded from Faure Island. For each species we summarise its likely status based on the

data available not only from Faure Island but also from the wider region as summarised by Storr (1985, 1990), Johnstone *et al.* (2000), Burbidge and Fuller (2000) and Burbidge *et al.* (2000). Data from Greg Harold's visit in November 1989, the May 2000 survey, subsequent opportunistic data compiled by AWC staff and volunteers, and data from the July and October 2005 surveys are then presented. Locations mentioned are shown in Figure 1 and vegetation refers to that described and mapped in Keighery and Muir (2008). Nomenclature used in this paper follows Johnstone (2001).

FAMILY CASUARIIDAE**Emu *Dromaius novaehollandiae***

Previously probably only an occasional visitor to the island, now breeding resident but its future status uncertain.

There are anecdotal reports of one occurring on the island previous to our surveys and P. Berry (*pers. comm.*) saw one wading in mangroves at north end of island in April 2002. Dick Hoult (*pers. comm.*) recounted 13 swimming to the island from the mainland. Johnstone *et al.* (2000) list its presence on Faure Island.

Not recorded on the island in November 1989 or in May 2000 but 3 were recorded near central bore about 800 m north of the shearing shed in January 2003.

July 2005: 7 near bore, perhaps searching for water, and 6 on another occasion. An adult with 4 medium sized chicks and footprints (probably of this group) were observed in many locations in the southern part of the island. Other footprints of a group of adult birds were noted in the mud among mangroves at Crescent Moon Bay, and along the beach on the western side of the island.

October 2005: several records of a group of 9 (2 adults, 4 large immature and 3 small juvenile/immature birds) usually in the southern half of the island. This indicates that at least two breeding events occurred in 2005. Footprints of adults and small immatures were recorded on numerous occasions in the southern part of the island. Also recorded several times drinking at the bore.

FAMILY PHASIANIDAE**Stubble Quail *Coturnix novaezelandiae***

Possibly only a visitor to the island in good seasons.

One near old shearing shed on south east side of homestead on 8 April 2002 (P. Berry *pers. comm.*).

FAMILY ANATIDAE**Australian Shelduck *Tadorna tadornoides***

Possibly only a visitor to the island in good seasons.

Recorded in tidal salt flats in samphire on southern section of Tadpole Lagoon in July 2002 and a pair on eastern side of island in tidal flats in January 2003.

Grey Teal *Anas gracilis*

Possibly only a visitor to the island in good seasons.

About 10–15 in tidal salt flats in samphire on southern section of Tadpole Lagoon in January 2003.

FAMILY PODICIPEDIDAE**Hoary-headed Grebe *Poliiocephalus poliocephalus***

Possibly only a visitor to the island in good seasons.

Fresh dead bird on beach on north-west side of island on 9 April 2002 (P. Berry *pers. comm.*).

FAMILY PELECANIDAE**Australian Pelican *Pelecanus conspicillatus***

Probably a regular feeding and resting visitor to the island. Pelican Island ca. 10 km east of Faure Island is a major breeding site (Burbidge and Fuller 2000).

November 1989: 6 at mangroves at north end of island.

May 2000: widespread in groups of 1–7 birds on shallow water usually close to mangroves: 2 in mangrove lagoon on the south-west side of island; 2 at boat landing; 1 on sea on north-west side of island; 3 on shallow bay on east side of island; 1 flying over west side of island; 7 on coastal marsh; groups of 5, 2 and 6 in Tadpole Lagoon; and 1 in mangroves at north end of island.

July 2005: two records: 3 roosting on sandbar with large flock of Pied Cormorants on north-east coast, another group of 10 swimming offshore near Tadpole Lagoon.

October 2005: one record: 2 swimming near large mangrove spit on west coast.

FAMILY PHALACROCORACIDAE**Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax varius***

Common breeding resident, possibly absent some months, e.g. October 2005.

Reported breeding (but no data given) on Faure Island by Serventy *et al.* (1971).

November 1989: an estimated 3000 were recorded in the northern mangroves and one on east coast.

May 2000: at least 1000 birds in mangroves at northern end of island (which seemed to be the main rookery area with hundreds of nests in mangroves visible from the shore) and regularly seen flying to or from this area in groups of 1–100 over the sea away from this area in the early morning and returning in the late afternoon. Single birds or groups of up to 40 were also on all beaches and sandy spits during daytime, and 18 empty nests were in mangroves at the southwest side of the island.

July 2002: a colony of approximately 1000 birds plus eggs and young chicks were in mangroves at the entrance to Tadpole Lagoon.

July 2005: a large colony was breeding in the mangroves at the entrance to Tadpole Lagoon, with thousands of birds active throughout the day. Many were flying back and forth between the nesting rookery and the ocean, probably catching food for incubating birds and young chicks. Nests were made from mangrove branches, lined with mangrove leaves, and built at very high density

(about 1/m²). On 16 July most had well developed eggs or newly hatched chicks; of five nests examined, one had 3 nestlings, one had 1 nestling and 1 egg, two had 3 eggs, and one had 2 eggs. At least six other old nest colonies were observed in mangroves across the northern end of the island. Large flocks of adults were also seen roosting on a sandbar in Tadpole Lagoon, and on smaller sandbars up to a kilometre off shore.

None recorded in October 2005.

Little Black Cormorant *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*

Possibly only a visitor to the island.

October 2005: 2 individuals flying low above mangroves on west coast.

Little Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*

Possibly a breeding visitor to the island.

July 2005: 1 at the landing, perched on a rocky point drying its wings.

October 2005: a small breeding colony was found in mangroves on west coast with 9 nests, one having 2 abandoned infertile eggs and a dead nestling; 30–40 birds, many of which were juvenile, were roosting in mangroves near the breeding site.

FAMILY ARDEIDAE

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Possibly only a visitor to the island to tidal samphires.

May 2000: 20 on tidal samphires in Tadpole Lagoon near north end of island.

July 2005: small groups feeding on birrida flats at the edge of Tadpole Lagoon.

Little Egret *Ardea garzetta*

Possibly a breeding resident.

November 1989: 2 on mudflats near homestead and 1 in east coast mangroves.

May 2000: 2 in mangroves at north end of island.

July 2005: frequently observed along the coast, usually individually or in small groups and 5 were seen flying from Tadpole Lagoon to the coast, all in non-breeding plumage. Up to 10 wading on the east coast, some feeding on the edge of the deep channel between the mangroves and the island. One on the beach near the homestead was in breeding plumage.

October 2005: recorded almost every day wading among coastal mangroves or on tidal flats at most locations on the island, usually singly or in pairs, and two observations of small groups (of 1–3) flying along coast and 3 in breeding plumage wading at Tadpole Lagoon.

White-faced Heron *Ardea novaehollandiae*

Probably resident. Mainly in coastal tidal samphires, mudflats and seasonally damp grasslands.

November 1989: 1 on mudflats on east side of island.

May 2000: 9 on tidal samphires on south-west side of island, 20 on tidal samphire in Tadpole Lagoon, and 1 in mangroves at north end of island.

July 2005: 1 on the beach near the homestead, and 2 feeding in long buffel grass (*Cenchrus ciliatus*) in southern part of island.

October 2005: several records, usually of individuals walking in tall buffel grass or on edge of birridas, and group of 7 actively chasing each other among samphires of Tadpole Lagoon.

White-necked Heron *Ardea pacifica*

Possibly only a visitor to the island in good seasons.

July 2002: a flock of 12 at northwest end of island and 4–5 at central bore overflow.

Eastern Reef Heron *Ardea sacra*

Occasional (probably resident) on rocky parts of coastline and mangroves.

May 2000: 2 on rocks at boat landing, 3 perched on dead mangrove in mangroves at south-west end of island.

January 2003: 5–6 on exposed mudflats east of homestead and one on rocks near boat landing.

July 2005: observed occasionally along the coast. A white-morph bird was seen north of Crescent Moon Bay wading among mangroves, 3 grey-morph herons were sighted 2 km east of the homestead wading and fishing in tidal flats, 1 grey-morph bird was also noted wading near rocks on the western side of the island, and another feeding in tidal flats behind the homestead.

October 2005: 1 grey morph on beach near homestead.

Striated Heron *Butorides striatus*

Probably resident. This species is probably more abundant than the few records indicate.

May 2000: 1 in mangroves at south-west end of island, 1 in mangroves at mouth of Tadpole Lagoon

July 2005: 2 single birds walking along water edge, and 2 adults walking among the mangroves close to the Pied Cormorant breeding colony at Tadpole Lagoon. The birds were only visible for short periods, and most of the time they were hidden in the mangroves and made loud calls.

October 2005: 1 in mangroves at Tadpole Lagoon feeding and calling, 1 and 2 birds in mangroves on west side of island feeding in shallows along beach, 1 on east coast wading then flying along beach calling loudly.

FAMILY ACCIPITRIDAE

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Status uncertain.

January 2003: recorded several times on and around radio tower by homestead.

July 2005: 1 flying low over sand dunes on south end of island.

Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus*

Possibly only a visitor to the island in good seasons.

January 2003: several in buffel grass plains between homestead and boat landing.

July 2005: several sightings of probably the same individual within a short range of the homestead and bore overflow. It was noted hovering over open grassland near the shearing shed; roosting on two occasions in the large palm and a small eucalypt during spotlighting, and seen one morning perched on the tower by the homestead. One flying over birrida flats near Tadpole Lagoon, and another perched on a Sandalwood tree *Santalum spicatum* near the boat landing.

Collared Sparrowhawk *Accipiter cirrocephalus*

Probably a passage migrant or occasional visitor to the island.

May 2000: a male was seen at the bore.

Brown Goshawk *Accipiter fasciatus*

Probably a passage migrant or occasional visitor to the island.

November 1989: 1 at homestead.

Little Eagle *Aquila morphnoides*

Probably only an occasional visitor to the island.

July 2000: 2 on ground in *Acacia tetragonophylla* shrubland on eastern side of island.

July 2002: two hawking over shrubland on east side of island on four consecutive days.

July 2005: 1 (pale-morph bird) was circling low over shrubland and rising on thermal near centre of island.

These records are in a region where Johnstone and Storr (1998) considered it to be absent although Johnstone *et al.* (2000) consider it to be casual in this part of the region.

Wedge-tailed Eagle *Aquila audax*

Status uncertain, probably a breeding resident and/or visitor, formerly presumably attracted to sheep and goat carcasses. However it has probably reduced in numbers since control of feral animals.

November 1989: 1 over island.

May 2000: single birds on cliffs, over coastal dunes, at the bore, and two visited a cage trap set for cats.

July 2002: 1 over the island.

July 2005: birds of various ages were observed on most days: 1 immature on *Acacia* shrub near mammal release site A; a 2nd or 3rd year bird circling over paddock near bore; immature circling high on thermal near Tadpole Lagoon, a 4th or 5th year bird and 2 adults flying low near west coast; 2 adults in possible courtship pursuit, clawing and rolling in flight over centre of island; an immature 4th or 5th

year bird roosting on dead tree in centre of island during spotlighting; 1 adult flying low over dunes on west coast. Five nests were located, four were in the south-west area bordered by Dune/Central Road and Horse Paddock Road, and one north of the central bore. All nests seemed old, the newest probably not used for at least two years. Each nest was built in a live or dead leaning tree (*Acacia* or Sandalwood) located below the highest point on a hill with a commanding view over the landscape. Eagles may have bred when goats and other introduced mammals were readily available. The nests were located in the same area where feral goats were highly concentrated. One nest was in a Sandalwood tree overlooking birrida flats, a common grazing place for feral goats (J. Williams *pers. comm.*).

October 2005: observed on several occasions, ones and twos flying low or at some height over the island. Two immature birds sighted several times, including roosting on a low sand dune east of the homestead at sunset. A pellet collected from this roost contained feathers, a small amount of scales and 40 claws from 2 individual *Varanus gouldii*. Single birds and pairs were also noted interacting with White-bellied Sea Eagles, diving at them and rolling over with outstretched talons.

Wedge-tailed Eagles may begin to breed again on the island when reintroduced mammals become well established, as even though these mammals (especially Boodies *Bettongia lesueur*) are nocturnal. Richards and Short (1998) suggested Wedge-tailed Eagles may be crepuscular feeders in this region.

White-bellied Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*

Breeding resident.

May 2000: 2 in mangroves on east side of island, 1 in mangroves in tidal creek on north-west end of island, 1 at bore, 1 near boat landing, 2 juveniles perched on radio aerial at homestead, and a juvenile eating a Pied Cormorant in mangroves at the north-western end of the island.

July 2002: 2 adults and a juvenile were recorded.

October 2003: a nest with chicks on the ground on a steep slope on west side of the island overlooking mangroves.

July 2005: commonly sighted over and perched on the island, totalling 17 observations of 1–3 individuals including: 3 immature birds. A fairly new nest had been built on the top of the cliff overlooking the mangroves and the ocean on the west side of the island. Another older nest was near this nest, and it is in this older nest that chicks were observed in October 2003. On 18 July the newer nest was being lined with fresh green leaves, sprigs of saltbush and spinifex in preparation for egg laying. Several roost sites were located in the vicinity of the nest, each having a large number of

scats and several regurgitated pellets which contained many feathers and small bone fragments. An old nest on the east coast previously recorded in May 2000 may belong to this species.

October 2005: Eight sightings of 1–3 birds, often sitting on the bore. The nest on the west side of the island previously located in July had an adult female incubating a single egg. This is rather late in the season to be still incubating considering that nest preparation was recorded in July, laying was expected in early August and incubation should have finished in mid to late September. A week later the egg had been abandoned and inspection revealed it to be infertile. Many fish bones were at the nest, including the skull of a 'long tom', as well as regurgitated pellets containing mainly feathers. Another very old nest was located in a large mangrove on the west coast.

Spotted Harrier *Circus assimilis*

Probably only an occasional visitor to the island.

May 2000: 1 hunting over flats between low scarp and shoreline adjacent to cormorant rookery at the northern end of the island.

July 2002: recorded flying over mammal release site B.

Swamp Harrier *Circus approximans*

Probably only an occasional visitor to the island in good seasons.

July 2002: 1 over grassland near bore.

July 2005: an immature bird was seen perched in a dead tree near the bore.

FAMILY FALCONIDAE

Brown Falcon *Falco berigora*

Status uncertain. Possibly breeding when food is abundant, perhaps using old corvid nests, which are readily available on the island.

May 2000: single birds were seen in *Acacia* shrubland on three occasions.

July 2002: recorded.

July 2005: 1 sitting on an old crow's nest near bore.

October 2005: 1 flying above dunes near landing.

Australian Kestrel *Falco cenchroides*

Resident and/or a regular autumn/winter visitor.

November 1989: 2 on east coast of island and 2 near homestead.

May 2000: widespread on the island in ones and twos in all habitats. Fourteen sightings of single birds and seven sightings of 2 together. A pair perched on an old Pied Cormorant nest in mangroves at the northern end of the island may have been selecting a nesting site.

July 2002: recorded along cliffs near mammal release site B and two nests with eggs in cliffs on the west side of the island.

July 2005: common, seven sightings of 1–2 birds, mostly individuals flying or hovering over the island, occasionally perched in upper branches of dead tree. There were at least six breeding pairs, each having a roost site under the cliffs at various places around the island. One roost site was on a small rock under a cliff and had large white scat stains, as well as many regurgitated pellets containing mainly beetle elytra.

October 2005: recorded almost every day at numerous locations on the island, usually singly, in pairs or family groups of 2 adults and offspring, flying or hovering above island, or perched on dead trees or cliffs. The six pairs observed in July all appeared to have reared young from nest sites on cliff ledges. Most had 2 or 3 immature birds that seemed to have fledged several weeks before this visit; however one pair had 2 young not quite able to fly, and another had 2 nestlings 7–10 days from fledging. One infertile egg was also noted. On 10 October 2 nestlings were recorded on cliff on west coast.

Australian Hobby *Falco longipennis*

Status uncertain, possibly only a visitor or passage migrant.

May 2000: single birds were seen on three occasions: near the bore; over coastal dunes; and over *Acacia* shrubland in the centre of the island.

July 2002: recorded along cliffs near mammal release site B.

July 2005: 1, presumably the same individual, was seen on three occasions chasing Welcome Swallows near the homestead. It was very persistent and pursued several swallows for minutes at a time, without success. It perched on trees and on the tower for a few minutes between pursuits, probably to rest. It was also observed chasing 2 Little Crows, which had a nest containing 6 hatchlings nearby, very persistently between trees in the vicinity of the homestead. It also plucked insects with its talons from *Tamarix aphylla* trees near the homestead, passing them to its beak to eat during flight, then caught a larger insect by flying at great speed to snatch it from the air and eat it during flight.

October 2005: 1 perched on fence post at south end of island.

FAMILY RALLIDAE

Australian Spotted Crake *Porzana fluminea*

Possibly more abundant than the single record indicates.

May 2000: one in tidal samphire marshland adjacent to mangroves in Tadpole Lagoon.

FAMILY OTIDIDAE

Australian Bustard *Ardeotis australis*

Status uncertain, probably nomadic, possibly a

regular visitor in good seasons and remaining to breed.

May 2000: three sightings of single birds in grassy areas including *Ptilotus obovatus* low shrubland and a pair was seen several times on a grassy birrida.

July 2002: 2 adults with 2 large young on birridas, an adult near airstrip and a juvenile near cliffs.

July 2005: Two sightings of an adult and of 2 large juveniles walking among birrida flats.

October 2005: Two sightings in shrubland, 2 immature birds and 2 adults with 1 juvenile (very small, < 40cm tall), indicating breeding on the island.

FAMILY TURNICIDAE

Little Button-quail *Turnix velox*

Status uncertain, probably nomadic, visiting in good seasons.

January 2003: recorded in *Acacia* shrubland and *Triodia* grassland near northern end of island.

July 2005: 3 individuals were sighted, but perhaps more common in thick buffel grass.

October 2005: 2 unconfirmed records probably of this species. Both were of small brown quails flushed with noisy flight from low vegetation at night time on two separate nights when the moon was very bright.

FAMILY SCOLOPACIDAE

Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*

Common non-breeding visitor to the region from north-eastern Siberia to tidal flats, in all months but mainly October to April.

November 1989: 2 on east coast mudflats.

July 2002: recorded.

July 2005: recorded at Tadpole Lagoon, on east coast, and on north-east coast.

October 2005: occasional, singly or in small groups (up to 5), mainly on east coast, in congregations with other unidentified waders, 1 at Tadpole Lagoon, 2 feeding in shallows on east coast.

Eastern Curlew *Numenius madagascariensis*

Common non-breeding visitor to the region from eastern Siberia and north-eastern China to tidal mudflats, in all months but mainly October to April.

November 1989: 3 on mudflats on east side of island.

July 2002: 3 recorded in intertidal mudflats on eastern side of island.

May 2005: 2, 6 and 1 on mudflats on western side of island and 4 on tidal mangrove creek mudflats at Tadpole Lagoon.

October 2005: several records, usually ones or twos, feeding on tidal flats on east coast among mangroves, often calling loudly when disturbed.

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

Common non-breeding visitor to the region from north-eastern Asia to tidal flats, in August to June.

November 1989: 8 and 70 on east coast mudflats, 6 on north coast mangrove mudflats and 37 on sandbar near homestead.

May 2000: flocks of 52 and 11 on muddy beach at north end of island.

July 2002: 6 on intertidal flats on eastern side of island.

July 2005: observed on two occasions, one large flock of 30+ birds feeding on tidal flats near mangroves along east coast, another group of 6 on west coast near Tadpole Lagoon probing sand on tidal flats.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*

Uncommon non-breeding visitor to the region from central Asia to tidal flats, in August to June.

November 1989: 1 on mudflats at east coast mangroves.

Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Common non-breeding visitor to the region from north Asia to tidal flats, in August to June.

November 1989: 6 on east coast mudflat.

May 2000: groups of 16 and 5 on mudflats on south-west side of island, 40 on mudflat on west side of island, and 4 on muddy beach on north end of island.

July 2002: 6 on intertidal mudflats on eastern side of island.

Common Sandpiper *Tringa hypoleucos*

Uncommon non-breeding visitor to the region from north and central Asia to edges of tidal mangrove creeks and rocky edges of mudflats, in late August to early May.

November 1989: 1 on rocks on east coast and 1 at east coast mangroves.

Grey-tailed Tattler *Tringa brevipes*

Common non-breeding visitor to the region from north Siberia to tidal flats, in September to June.

November 1989: 2 on mudflats on east side of island.

October 2005: 1 feeding in shallow water at Tadpole Lagoon.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*

Common non-breeding visitor to the region from north Asia to tidal flats, in early July to late May.

November 1989: 4 on reef on east side of island.

Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris*

Common non-breeding visitor to the region from northeastern Siberia to tidal flats, in September to March.

November 1989: groups of 4 and 6 on east coast mudflats.

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis*

Common non-breeding visitor to the region from north Asia to tidal flats, mainly in August to June.

November 1989: flock of 88 on east coast mudflats and 6 on mudflats near homestead.

July 2002: hundreds with Red-capped Plover and Curlew Sandpipers in tidal mudflats on east side of island.

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper *Calidris acuminata*

Common non-breeding visitor to the region from north Asia to tidal flats, in September to June.

May 2000: estimated 400 in groups of 10–40 on beach on south-west side of island, groups of 40 and 30 on mudflats on west side of island, groups of 30 and 40 on muddy beach on north end of island, and 4 on mudflat of tidal mangroves at Tadpole Lagoon.

October 2005: 15 on east coast feeding in shallows with other waders, including several Whimbrel.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Uncommon non-breeding visitor to the region from north Asia to tidal flats, mainly in September to May.

November 1989: 8 on mudflats on east side of island and 12 on mudflats near homestead.

May 2000: 1 on muddy beach at north end of island.

July 2002: "dozens" with Red-capped Plover and Red-necked Stints in tidal mudflats on east side of island.

FAMILY HAEMATOPODIDAE**Sooty Oystercatcher** *Haematopus fuliginosus*

Status uncertain.

July 2006: 2 on southern sandy shore and 2 on rocky reef platform on north-west coast (P. Berry pers. comm.).

Pied Oystercatcher *Haematopus longirostris*

Common resident.

November 1989: a total of 13 were recorded on coasts and mudflats.

May 2000: a total of 67 mainly in pairs on all beaches and groups of 17 and 16 on muddy beach on north end of island.

January 2003: a group of about 50 near the entrance to Tadpole Lagoon and located an old egg on the beach on the eastern side of the island.

July 2005: recorded at many locations, especially on beaches on east coast, usually sighted in pairs feeding on beaches and tidal flats; a group of 21 on west coast sitting on sandbar, some chasing each other in flight along beach.

October 2005: common in pairs on beaches at most locations. Adult pairs often seemed very distressed as observer walked along the beach. A pair with 2 very small chicks was far out on tidal

mudflats; when approached the adults led the chicks to hide under low samphire vegetation, before flying at observer and calling loudly while attempting to lead observer away from the young.

FAMILY RECURVIROSTRIDAE**Black-winged Stilt** *Himantopus himantopus*

Uncommon visitor probably only in good seasons.

August 2001, July 2002 and April 2004: recorded at Tadpole Lagoon.

July 2005: several records, mostly at northern birrida flats and mangroves at Tadpole Lagoon: 2 adults flying over inlet and landing on beach near inlet mouth; 1 walking on birrida; 2 feeding in tidal samphires.

October 2005: a large flock of at least 35 congregated in tidal shallows of Tadpole Lagoon. Individuals and pairs flew from many places among birridas near the inlet to land in the shallow water, calling noisily. Their behaviour indicated a possible breeding colony. Despite extensive searching no signs of nests or eggs were recorded but there was an immature bird among the group.

FAMILY CHARADRIIDAE**Banded Lapwing** *Vanellus tricolor*

Moderately common resident, nomad or migrant, probably increasing in numbers in good seasons.

November 1989: 34 on mudflats on east side of island and 2 near homestead.

May 2000: a total of 21 mainly in ones and twos (but one group of 5 on birrida) in grassy areas, samphires, and grass covered birridas.

July 2002: breeding recorded (eggs hatched in mid-July).

October 2005: 4 at airstrip on open birrida flats.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Uncommon non-breeding visitor to the region from north Asia to beaches and tidal flats, in August to May.

November 1989: 5 on mudflats on east side of island and 1 on mudflats at north coast mangroves.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*

Uncommon non-breeding visitor to the region from north Asia to coastal marshes and mudflats, mainly in October to February.

November 1989: 6 on mudflats on east side of island.

Red-capped Plover *Charadrius ruficapillus*

Moderately common resident on beaches and mudflats.

November 1989: 1 on mudflats near homestead.

May 2000: groups of 2, 4 and 10 on mudflats on west side of island and 9 on mudflats in Tadpole Lagoon.

July 2002 and January 2003: abundant all around island.

July 2005: common along coastal flats and near mangrove inlets, mostly in groups of 3–10.

October 2005: singly or in pairs including immature birds on beaches at most locations on the island.

Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultii*

Moderately common non-breeding visitor to the region from central Asia to tidal beaches and mudflats, in all months but mainly August to April.

November 1989: 2 on mudflats on east side of island and 3 on mudflats near east coast mangroves.

May 2000: 1 on beach on south-west side of island.

Black-fronted Dotterel *Charadrius melanops*

Possibly only an occasional visitor.

January 2003: recorded in mangroves near Tadpole Lagoon.

FAMILY LARIDAE

Silver Gull *Larus novaehollandiae*

Moderately common coastal resident.

November 1989: 3 and 9 on east coast beach, and 100 on north coast.

May 2000: a total of 23 singly or in groups of up to 8 together along all beaches and a group of 25 on east coast. One group of 3 on west coast included a begging young.

July 2005: moderately common along coast, usually sighted in pairs or small groups (up to 10). Large groups of 30–40 near Pied Cormorant breeding area, possibly attracted by eggs and young of cormorants, and perhaps Little Crow eggs (see Little Crow).

October 2005: recorded occasionally, four sightings of pairs or groups (up to 11). A pair on the beach near the homestead appeared very protective of the area, calling loudly when observer walked along the beach, and were seen chasing away a Pied Oystercatcher.

Pacific Gull *Larus pacificus*

Status uncertain, possibly a casual visitor from breeding areas on other islands around Shark Bay (see Johnstone and Storr (1998) for a list of known breeding islands).

November 1989: 4 on beach on east side of island.

May 2000: 1 on cliff on east coast.

July 2002: recorded.

July 2005: 1 on the north-west coast roosting on a sandbar, then walking along beach calling.

October 2005: pair flying above Tadpole Lagoon.

Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*

Uncommon coastal resident. Reported breeding (but no data given) on Faure Island by Serventy *et al.* (1971) and quoted in Burbidge and Fuller (2000).

November 1989: single birds seen twice over east coast.

May 2000: a total of 15, singly or in groups (up to four) along all beaches.

July 2002: recorded near landing and near Tadpole Lagoon.

July 2005: moderately common along coast, often chasing other individuals with raucous calls and swooping flight patterns; 3–5 flying near coast over Tadpole Lagoon making dives into water; 2 chasing White-bellied Sea Eagle near south-east corner of island.

October 2005: occasional along coast, usually in pairs, calling loudly and flying at some height over water or samphires at Tadpole Lagoon, sometimes making dives into water.

Crested Tern *Sterna bergii*

Casual visitor from breeding islands elsewhere (see Johnstone and Storr (1998) for a list of known breeding islands).

November 1989: 1 on sandbar near homestead.

May 2000: 1 on beach on north end of island.

July 2002: recorded regularly flying over island in an east/west and west/east direction.

Fairy Tern *Sterna nereis*

Rare or a casual visitor.

January 2003: recorded over mangroves at Tadpole Lagoon.

Whiskered Tern *Sterna hybrida*

Rare or a casual visitor.

January 2003: recorded over mangroves at Tadpole Lagoon.

FAMILY COLUMBIDAE

Crested Pigeon *Ocyphaps lophotes*

Status uncertain, currently probably resident. Almost certainly only colonised the island from the mainland after the installation of watering troughs following the establishment of the pastoral lease.

November 1989: 2 in *Acacia* shrubland.

May 2000: Four sightings of between 1 and 6 totalling 11 birds in *Acacia* shrubland and at the bore.

July 2002: Recorded near shearing shed.

July 2005: many groups of 3–8 were noted flying away from roads as vehicle disturbed them in various parts of the island. Two nests probably of this species in mangroves along the east coast, and unless they belonged to the Common Bronzewing (which is unlikely), they indicated previous breeding on the island.

October 2005: commonly sighted along roads, near bore and in shrublands in pairs or small groups of up to 7 individuals. Breeding confirmed on the island, with 2 nests containing clutches of 2 eggs: 1 on west coast in shrubland, 1 on east coast in mangrove.

Common Bronzewing *Phaps chalcoptera*

Probably only an occasional visitor.

July 2002: recorded.

July 2005: 2 and 3 birds seen in shrubland.

FAMILY PSITTACIDAE**Galah *Cacatua roseicapilla***

Status uncertain but probably only an occasional visitor. Not recorded in November 1989, May 2000, July 2005 or October 2005.

July 2002: a flock of about 10 birds near a water trough near shearing sheds. Dick Hoult (*pers. comm.*) reports Galahs visiting the island during the day and returning to the Wooramel River on the mainland at night during periods of drought inland.

Rock Parrot *Neophema petrophila*

Status uncertain but probably only an occasional visitor from the coasts of Peron Peninsula.

July 2002: recorded in samphire on northern coast.

Cockatiel *Nymphicus hollandicus*

Probably only an occasional visitor to the island.

July 2002: a flock of 20–30 birds landed in Sandalwood tree near homestead.

FAMILY CUCULIDAE**Black-eared Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx osculans***

Probably an uncommon migrant.

November 1989: 1 in *Acacia* shrubland near homestead.

May 2000: 1 calling in *Acacia* shrubland.

July 2005: 1 recorded near northern tip of island calling loudly from dead tree.

Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx basalix*

Rare migrant.

May 2000: 1 calling in mangroves on east coast.

Pallid Cuckoo *Cuculus pallidus*

Probably an uncommon migrant.

July 2002: calling in many locations.

July 2005: recorded calling in four different locations. 1 individual was seen, perched in a dead tree.

FAMILY STRIGIDAE**Boobook Owl *Ninox novaeseelandiae***

Probably a casual breeding visitor or winter passage migrant to the island from south-western Australia.

July 2002: 2 adults feeding 2 young near mammal release site B on east side of the island.

July 2005: single birds recorded twice during spotlight transects in *Acacia* shrublands.

FAMILY TYTONIDAE**Barn Owl *Tyto alba***

Probably an uncommon visitor to the island when the introduced House Mouse *Mus musculus* is abundant.

May 2000: 1 seen at night at the shearing shed.

July 2005: an individual was flushed three times from roosting in *Tamarix aphylla* trees near homestead and old shearing shed. Three very old regurgitated pellets, which probably belonged to this species, were recovered from a roost site on a small ledge under cliffs on east coast; each contained a more-or-less whole House Mouse skeleton and fur.

FAMILY CAPRIMULGIDAE**Spotted Nightjar *Eurostopodus argus***

Status uncertain but likely to be an autumn/winter visitor.

May 2005: a single bird was seen in *Acacia* shrubland in the centre of the island while spotlighting.

July 2002: recorded on four occasions including 3 birds on one night.

FAMILY HALCYONIDAE**Sacred Kingfisher *Todiramphus sanctus***

Probably a winter visitor from southwestern Australia and a passage migrant in autumn and spring.

May 2000: 1 in mangroves on east side of island.

July 2002: recorded.

July 2005: 1 flying out of mangroves and over birrida flats and 1 seizing prey from water after diving from perch in mangroves.

FAMILY PARDALOTIDAE**Striated Pardalote *Pardalotus striatus***

Probably an occasional winter migrant from southwestern Australia. This species is migratory in southern Western Australia with a strong radiation north and north-east out of the south-west in winter, and returning southwards in spring (Dell 1984).

November 1989: 1 in *Tamarix aphylla* trees near homestead.

FAMILY ACANTHIZIDAE**Redthroat *Pyrholaemus brunneus***

Uncommon to common resident.

November 1989: 6 in *Acacia* shrubland 2 km northwest of homestead.

May 2000: in ones and twos totalling 8 individuals in *Acacia/Ptilotus obovatus* shrubland, in *Acacia tetragonophylla* shrubland and in *Acacia* shrubland.

July 2005: recorded on several occasions, particularly in early morning when individuals were more active, singing very loudly from *Acacia* shrubs, 1 was perched on old fence near homestead.

October 2005: moderately common usually singly or in pairs, rarely seen but heard frequently calling from shrubs including mixed *Ptilotus* and *Acacia* thickets, at most times of the day, more commonly during early morning. An unidentified nest possibly belonging to this species was also found in a low saltbush.

FAMILY MELIPHAGIDAE

Singing Honeyeater *Lichenostomus virescens*

Moderately common resident.

November 1989: two in *Acacia* shrubland near homestead.

May 2000: twenty-eight sightings of single birds or two together totalling 42 individuals in all habitats on the island, and one aggregation of 8 in *Acacia tetragonophylla* shrubland.

July 2002: recorded.

July 2005: moderately common, observed in a variety of habitats including coastal mangroves and inland shrubland.

October 2005: recorded in a variety of habitats including shrubs and *Acacia* trees, birrida flats, planted eucalypts near shearing shed, *Tamarix aphylla* trees at homestead and coastal mangroves. Usually seen in pairs or small groups of up to 12 individuals, commonly recorded in dawn chorus. Nest in mangroves on east coast, contained 2 half-grown nestlings. Two small fledglings were seen perched in mangrove begging adults for food on west coast.

Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater *Acanthagenys rufogularis*

Possibly resident, but augmented by breeding or non-breeding visitors to the island in good seasons.

May 2000: five sightings of ones and twos totalling 8 individuals in *Acacia* shrublands and in *Acacia/Ptilotus obovatus* shrubland.

July 2002: recorded.

July 2005: observed mostly in coastal mangroves. Several sightings of up to 3 birds flying between mangroves on east coast; 2 noted on two consecutive mornings calling from *Tamarix aphylla* trees near homestead; 5 perched in *T. aphylla* near old shearing shed, flying and calling.

October 2005: commonly recorded, mostly in coastal mangroves and often heard calling near homestead during the day. Usually sighted singly, but other observations include: adult feeding fledgling in mangroves on east coast; large group of 19 flying from *T. aphylla* near homestead and congregating in flock, calling loudly.

Pied Honeyeater *Certhionyx variegatus*

Possibly only a breeding or non-breeding visitor to the island in good seasons.

July 2002: numerous individuals on eastern side of island.

July 2005: very common, possibly due to the very high rainfall received this year. Males were recorded singing from the top of shrubs all over the island at most times of the day; occasionally they flew directly up into the air and dived back to their perch. This courtship behaviour suggested beginning of breeding. Two females were noted being chased by males, 1 near the bore and 1 near shearing shed.

Crimson Chat *Epthianura tricolor*

Possibly only a visitor to the island in good seasons.

November 1989: 50 on samphire 1 km north of homestead.

May 2000: one on grassy birrida flat.

July 2002: a male in *Triodia* grassland at north end of island.

White-fronted Chat *Epthianura albifrons*

Possibly only a visitor to the island in good seasons.

November 1989: 56 on mudflats on east side of island.

May 2000: five sightings of 1 to 5 birds totalling 12 individuals on grassy birridas, at the bore, on mudflats, on margins of mangroves, and in samphires.

July 2002: 2 on east side of island.

July 2005: a pair flying and perching among birrida flats near Tadpole Lagoon.

FAMILY PETROICIDAE

Red-capped Robin *Petroica goodenovii*

A visitor to the island in good seasons.

July 2002: a male at homestead.

FAMILY CINCLOSOMATIDAE

Chiming Wedgebill *Psophodes occidentalis*

Status uncertain.

July 2006: 1 calling on north-east end of island (P. Berry pers. comm.).

FAMILY PACHYCEPHALIDAE

Grey Shrike-thrush *Colluricincla harmonica*

Status uncertain.

July 2006: 1 on ground in shrubland between west side of Tadpole Lagoon and big blowout on north-west coast (P. Berry pers. comm.).

FAMILY DICRURIDAE

Grey Fantail *Rhipidura fuliginosa*

Mainly an autumn-winter visitor.

May 2000: five sightings of single birds and one sighting of 2 together in *Tamarix aphylla* trees at the homestead and at the bore, in *Acacia tetragonophylla* shrubland, and in mangroves on the west side of the island.

July 2005: two single birds in *Tamarix aphylla* near homestead.

Mangrove Grey Fantail *Rhipidura phasiana*

Probably an uncommon resident in mangroves.

May 2000: two sightings of single birds in mangroves; on the west side and in the tidal creek on the north-west end of the island.

July 2005: commonly heard in mangroves along Tadpole Lagoon and several sightings of 1–2 birds in mangroves on west coast.

October 2005: commonly seen and heard calling from coastal mangroves all around the island. Usually singly or in pairs, often seen hawking insects from just above the mangrove canopy.

Willie Wagtail *Rhipidura leucophrys*

Possibly only a visitor to the island.

May 2000: five sightings of single birds, at the homestead, at the bore, in mangroves on the east side of the island, in *Acacia/Ptilotus obovatus* shrubland, and along cliffs on east side of the island.

July 2002: recorded.

July 2005: 2 individuals in *Tamarix aphylla* near old shearing shed, 2 near rubbish tip 100 m northwest of the homestead, 2 in eucalypt near bore.

Family CAMPEPHAGIDAE

Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina novaehollandiae*

Probably a casual breeding or non-breeding visitor or passage migrant to the island.

May 2000: 3 in *Acacia* shrubland on west side of island.

July 2002: 60–80 flying above mangroves on northern end of the island.

July 2005: 2 flying across north-eastern end of island and 1 perched on dead tree on east coast.

October 2005: recorded occasionally, singly or in pairs flying over island or perched in dead trees. One breeding record on east coast, with a nest containing 2 eggs built on a horizontal fork of a dead mangrove branch, about 2 metres from the ocean. Both adults were vocal in flight, protecting the nest site. The nest tree was about 10 metres from a White-breasted Woodswallow nest.

FAMILY ARTAMIDAE

White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus*

Uncommon resident, in and adjacent to mangroves.

November 1989: 4 over east coast mudflats near mangroves.

May 2000: recorded in groups of 2–6 birds totalling 26 individuals in mangroves and along cliffs on east side of island. None were seen in the extensive mangroves on the west or north sides of the island despite several visits to these areas.

July 2002: recorded.

July 2005: occasionally sighted along coastal areas. A single bird and a group of 5–10 flying above cliffs on east coast, and group of 12 perched in tops of dead mangroves on west coast.

October 2005: commonly sighted along coasts flying above cliffs, perched in trees, or flying near mangrove thickets. Breeding in loose colonies in mangroves. All adults were extremely aggressive near nest sites, chattering loudly and diving observer. Nest records include 2 with 3 small nestlings, 1 with 3 medium nestlings, 1 with 2 large fledglings.

FAMILY CRACTICIDAE

Grey Butcherbird *Cracticus torquatus*

Uncommon resident.

November 1989: 2 in *Acacia* shrubland 2 km north of homestead.

May 2000: seven sightings of single birds and one sighting of two together in *Acacia tetragonophylla* shrubland, in mangroves in Tadpole Lagoon, in *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* at the bore, and in coastal spinifex below calcrete breakaway, *Acacia* shrubland and *Atriplex* shrubland.

July 2005: four sightings of individuals in *Acacia* shrublands in various locations. Old nest in a live Sandalwood tree near south end of island, probably from previous breeding season.

October 2005: heard calling from several locations in shrublands. The fact that this species is so vocal may make it appear more common than it actually is.

FAMILY CORVIDAE

Little Crow *Corvus bennetti*

Common breeding visitor to the island.

May 2000: at least 150 individuals were present on the island when they were visiting all habitats mainly in groups (up to 10) but occasionally larger groups (up to 100). Feeding on carcasses of goats and sheep and drinking at troughs.

July 2005: observations were made of ones, twos and small groups of 5–8 at many locations on island, and one large group of 27 flocking near Tadpole Lagoon. Four active nests were located: one in *Tamarix aphylla* tree near homestead with 7 eggs which later hatched – 5 nestlings and 1 egg were observed; one in *T. aphylla* tree near bore with 5 eggs; one in mangrove on northern coast with 5 eggs; one in mangrove at the edge of Pied

Cormorant breeding colony with at least 3 eggs (this clutch failed and the remains of 3 eggs were noted, probably taken by scavenging Silver Gulls. At least 20 other nests were found, most of which were old and built in mangroves, *T. aphylla* trees or large *Acacias* inland. The adult pair near the homestead was very protective of the nest when approached, flying over and calling loudly in alarm, then perching in nearby trees to watch closely. They were observed taking turns at hunting (probably for small insects) in nearby shrubs, then returning to feed the nestlings, which called loudly when the adult returned to the nest. Feeding continued well into dusk, with one adult brooding the young as it got darker and when gusts of wind became stronger.

October 2005: observed every day at many locations on the island. Mainly flocks of 12–47 birds, calling loudly and circling very high above the island. A pair nested near the homestead again, having a newly built nest in a *T. aphylla* tree containing 2 medium nestlings. Once again the adult birds defended the nest very aggressively, and fed the young continuously throughout the day, often gathering food from shrubs close to the homestead.

FAMILY MOTACILLIDAE

Australian Pipit *Anthus australis*

Moderately common resident.

November 1989: 1 on beach on east side of island, 6 in sand dunes near homestead, and 7 on birrida 2 km northwest of homestead.

May 2000: 19 sightings of single birds or groups of up to 7 totalling 40 individuals in all grassy areas especially birridas and along top of cliffs on east side of island.

July 2002: recorded.

July 2005: recorded in a variety of habitats with low vegetation especially birridas and coastal dunes and disturbed areas such as roads and airstrip. Many sightings of ones and twos.

October 2005: moderately common, mostly along roads, as well as among coastal dune vegetation or saltmarshes. Mostly singly or in small to medium groups, e.g. 14 at airstrip, often running along ground or flying short distances into more dense cover.

FAMILY PASSERIDAE

Zebra Finch *Taeniopygia guttata*

Resident or breeding visitor in good seasons, almost certainly colonised the island from the mainland after the installation of watering troughs following the establishment of the pastoral lease.

November 1989: 14 near homestead.

May 2000: common when groups of 2–46 totalling 252 individuals were recorded in all habitats on the

island and visiting drinking troughs. Three fledglings left nest in *Acacia tetragonophylla* near homestead on 28 May.

July 2002: hundreds at water points and leaks in pipe from bore.

July 2005: probably the most common breeding passerine on the island. Flocks of 10–50 were constantly seen near homestead, shearing shed and bore, and smaller groups of 3–15 were observed commonly along the coast in *Acacia* shrubland and mangroves. Numerous nests were found at various stages of breeding: one old nest in low eucalypt near shearing shed; 25 nests along east coast mostly in mangroves, occasionally in creeper overhanging cliff; three nests in sticks of old crow nest, some very old; adults observed carrying sticks and grasses to old crow nest in *Tamarix aphylla* tree near tip, chirping aggressively at other Zebra Finches. Of ten nests examined, two had abandoned clutches of 3 and 4 eggs, one had 2 eggs, three had 3 eggs, two had 4 eggs, one had 3 new hatchlings, one had 3 young close to fledging. An abandoned nest in mangrove on west coast that was very tattered and torn apart contained 14 eggs (probably a combination of clutches from different individuals), all very cold, some broken in half.

October 2005: not as common as July 2005, however still seen most days in pairs or groups of 40–50. Several breeding records with most nests containing eggs. Along east coast: two nests had 1 egg (probably still laying); two had 3 eggs; three had 6 eggs; one had 2 nestlings. Near landing: 1 abandoned nest had dead immature bird nearby; 1 nest contained 3 eggs.

FAMILY HIRUNDINIDAE

White-backed Swallow *Cheramoeca leucosternus*

Probably an uncommon visitor.

July 2003: 2–3 on south east corner of island.

July 2005: 3 flying above cliffs near the landing and a tunnel in a sandbank nearby. One returned to the tunnel and continued excavating. As this species may construct tunnels in which to shelter, this observation does not necessarily imply a breeding record.

Tree Martin *Hirundo nigricans*

Very common passage migrant, otherwise probably uncommon or absent.

November 1989: 4 along cliffs near homestead and 300 over east coast mudflats.

May 2000: groups of 2–50 were feeding over most habitats on the island. During the evenings they congregated into spectacular groups of up to 1500 individuals to roost on the bare ground on red dunes on the north-west side of the island or in samphire flats towards the northern end of the island. The following mornings they remained on the ground until after sunrise before rising as a

swarm and travelling north. These flocks were part of this species' autumn northwards migration from the south-west.

October 2005: observed occasionally, including one record of 20–30 individuals in a large flock with Fairy Martins and Welcome Swallows flying very low over the bore and surrounding grassy areas, probably chasing a swarm of insects, and 7 observed perched on power line at homestead.

Fairy Martin *Hirundo ariel*

Probably an uncommon seasonal visitor.

May 2000: five sightings of 4–15 totalling 35 along cliffs on east side of the island.

July 2005: commonly seen in large flocks of 20–30 flying high over the island, especially near Tadpole Lagoon where flocks were seen and heard each morning.

October 2005: observed occasionally, usually singly or in small groups flying high above the island or coastal areas. One record of a large flock mixed with Tree Martins and Welcome Swallows (see Tree Martin).

Welcome Swallow *Hirundo neoxena*

Moderately common resident.

November 1989: 13 along cliffs near homestead, 1 over north coast mangroves, and 1 over east coast mangroves.

May 2000: mainly in groups of 2–10 totalling 81 individuals especially along the coastline but also flying over all habitats on the island.

July 2005: common and recorded breeding in many locations where coastal cliffs are suitable for nesting. Of seven nests examined on south-east coast, two were half-finished, one was lined with gull feathers but empty, one had 2 eggs, one 3 eggs, and two 4 eggs. Of two nests examined on north-west coast, one had 2 eggs and one had 3 eggs; north of landing there were two nests both with 3 eggs.

October 2005: observed mainly at coastal sites near taller cliffs and breakaways, as well as over coastal mangroves, and several individuals at homestead flying inside and perched on power line, singly or in small flocks up to 20 individuals, sometimes mixed with Tree and/or Fairy Martins. Pairs or groups (up to 5) were commonly observed trying to land on parked vehicles during mammal monitoring trips, often away from the coast. Several breeding records: a new unfinished nest near homestead; of two nests examined on east coast, one had 3 eggs, one had 1 large fledgling; one nest at southern end of island had 2 large fledglings.

FAMILY SYLVIIDAE

Brown Songlark *Cincloramphus cruralis*

Possibly only a visitor to the island in good seasons.

May 2000: four sightings of single birds and 2 together in open grassy areas, grassy samphires, and on grassy birridas.

July 2002: recorded in grassy areas north of homestead.

July 2005: moderately common, mostly recorded at northern parts of the island. One was calling from samphire and birrida flats; 1 flying straight up and fluttering down from perch in shrubland.

October 2005: 1 calling from *Acacia* scrubland near Tadpole Lagoon.

Little Grassbird *Megalurus gramineus*

Status uncertain. Possibly only a breeding visitor to the island in good seasons.

October 2005: observed in dense samphire vegetation surrounding mangroves at the broad inland part of Tadpole Lagoon. Groups of 3 and 7 recorded, as well as breeding records, which included 2 old nests and one nest containing a small nestling.

FAMILY DICAIEIDAE

Mistletoebird *Dicaeum hirundinaceum*

Probably an uncommon passage migrant.

January 2003: heard and seen near homestead.

FAMILY ZOSTEROPIDAE

Grey-breasted Silvereye *Zosterops lateralis*

Uncommon, status uncertain, probably only a visitor.

November 1989: 1 in *Acacia* tree at homestead.

May 2000: 4 flying north along dune at southwest side of island and 6 in *Tamarix aphylla* trees at homestead.

July 2005: only present in thicker inland vegetation, recorded twice in small flocks of 20–30 birds: one flock in *Acacia* bushes near tip, another in planted eucalypt near bore.

October 2005: group of 4 individuals in *Tamarix aphylla* trees near the homestead.

Yellow White-eye *Zosterops luteus*

Moderately common resident mainly in mangroves and nearby vegetation.

May 2000: groups of 2–8 totalling 43 birds in all mangroves visited, groups of 3 and 5 in tidally inundated samphires near mangroves on west side of island, 6 in *Halosarcia indica* samphire at Tadpole Lagoon, and flock of 30 in *Acacia/Ptilotus obovatus* shrubland near Tadpole Lagoon mangroves.

July 2005: occasionally heard among mangroves along Tadpole Lagoon and on east coast; small flock of about 8–10 in mangroves on west coast.

October 2005: commonly seen in coastal mangroves in many locations, usually in groups of about 5–30, one group of 6 with immature. Individuals were often observed gleaning from mangrove leaves and calling softly.

DISCUSSION

Ninety-seven species of birds are currently known from Faure Island. These comprise 69 species of non-passerines in 22 families and 28 species of passerines in 17 families. The list of landbirds is low compared to the general region, e.g. the Faure Island list includes only about one third of the breeding passerines known from the region (Johnstone *et al.* 2000). This is not unexpected from an island with only four major landforms each with only one main vegetation type and relatively few plant species (142 indigenous species recorded for the island by Keighery and Muir, 2008).

Bird groups either absent or poorly represented from Faure compared to the region include those families with predominantly sedentary habitat specialist species, particularly fairy-wrens, thornbills (only one species the Redthroat is present on Faure Island compared to 10 species in the region), robins and whistlers. Similarly the list of honeyeaters for Faure Island is depauperate compared to the region, but it would be premature to make comparisons with this group of birds because many species are likely to be non-specialist nectar nomads which may visit the island only in particularly good flowering seasons.

Forty-four species of birds recorded from Faure Island depend almost entirely on the ocean including beaches and the mangroves and associated mudflats for food resources. This includes all of the species that feed directly from the sea or tidal inlets, including Australian Pelican, 3 species of cormorant, 4 species of herons and egrets, the Osprey and White-bellied Sea Eagle, the 12 species of shorebirds of the family Scolopacidae, the Pied and Sooty Oystercatchers, the 6 species of plovers of the family Charadriidae, and the 8 species of gulls and terns, together with 3 passerine species, the Mangrove Grey Fantail, White-breasted Woodswallow and Yellow White-eye that depend on mangroves. Other species also utilize mangroves for feeding, roosting or breeding but are not entirely dependent on them.

Faure Island has significant areas of mud-flats for trans-equatorial migrant wading birds, in the families Scolopacidae and Charadriidae, that migrate from their breeding areas in the northern hemisphere to their feeding areas in Australia. These species are protected by the governments of Australia, Japan, China and South Korea under international treaties known as the Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of Japan for the Protection of Migratory Birds and Birds in Danger of Extinction and their Environment 1974 (Japan-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement, 1974 – JAMBA), the Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the People's Republic of China for the Protection of Migratory Birds and

their Environment 1986 (China-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement – CAMBA). Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Republic of Korea on the Protection of Migratory Birds 2006 (Republic of Korea-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement, 2006 – ROKAMBA). Currently 15 species protected by these agreements are known from Faure Island but a number of additional species are likely to be recorded if further surveys are conducted particularly in the period from September to April. For example AWC staff recorded 5–6000 waders, many not identified, in January 2003.

This paper includes breeding data for 23 species: Emu, Pied Cormorant, Little Pied Cormorant, Wedge-tailed Eagle, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Australian Kestrel, Australian Bustard, Pied Oystercatcher, Black-winged Stilt (possibly), Banded Lapwing, Caspian Tern (previous breeding record), Crested Pigeon, Boobook Owl, Redthroat, Singing Honeyeater, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, White-breasted Woodswallow, Grey Butcherbird, Little Crow, Zebra Finch, Welcome Swallow, and Little Grassbird. Additional surveys conducted in spring or after favourable rain events would be necessary to record breeding by other species.

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