



DENMARK BIRD GROUP

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 26 AUGUST 2021

CONVENOR'S REPORT FY 2020/2021

This year has again been a busy one for the Denmark Bird Group, now into its sixth year since foundation in 2016. Our progress has included more talk events, excursions, bird surveys, a constitution, incorporation and at last, the approval of the bird sanctuary at Prawn Rock Channel. None of this could happen without the enthusiasm and commitment of our amazing committee and the support of our growing number of members. We are driven by our passion for the conservation and welfare of our birds.

Who Are We?

It is important to remind ourselves often about who we are and why we do what we do. We are an Associated Group of Birdlife Western Australia (BWA) and strongly aligned to the aims and policies of BWA and our national leader, Birdlife Australia (BA), focused on activities and advocacy that lead to positive outcomes for the conservation of birds and their habitats. It follows that we are very much stronger and relevant to our mission by being actively connected to BWA and to BA.

We strive to maintain credibility for our purpose and knowledge and for our relevance to authorities, peer organisations and especially to the community in all our actions.

We collaborate with like-minded groups with similar interests such as the Denmark Environment Centre (DEC), Fire and Biodiversity WA and WICC where we have many common aims and aspirations for the environment. Importantly we have sought to establish and maintain a solid working relationship with the Denmark Shire who have shown strong support for DBG activities.

Administration

The management committee has overseen the important development, led by our Treasurer Nick Whishaw, of a constitution and of incorporation to guide future administration of the Group.

Our finances are heavily reliant upon donations from the generosity of our members upon joining the Group and at events we hold. During the year a proposal was put forward for an annual membership subscription to ensure a better source of income but was not approved by the committee. At the same time our expenses have grown and we therefore remain reliant upon donations and upon grant funds for specific projects.

A re-structure of the committee was undertaken to allocate its member resources to specific project areas resulting in better defined duties over a spread of sub committees.

Our insurance for members whilst attending the Group's activities or events has ceased due to our incorporation and an alternative insurance arrangement is under investigation.

Membership

Our membership continues to grow and now exceeds 90, reflecting we believe the support for birds in Denmark and for the Bird Group. New members are always welcome and will further improve our strength and capacity to deliver positive outcomes for birds. While we have a strong committee, we

are asking for more members to join the committee in working for our birdlife; experience is unnecessary, just a passion for birds and their conservation needs.

Activities

The PRC Bird Sanctuary was approved unanimously by Shire Councillors in May this year, seven years after the start of the campaign and three years after the initial proposal submission. A summary (The Sanctuary Story) has been produced for the record and is available on request. Formalisation of the sanctuary is being progressed by the Shire along with negotiations with DBG to develop the infrastructure on PRC island.

Events Held These included Bird Talks 3 and 4 (November and June) and a Shorebird Workshop (February). All were well attended with excellent speakers.

Submissions Made To The review of the EPBC Act in conjunction with DEC; the Shire's Prawn Rock Channel (PRC) Concept Plans jointly with DEC; the Shire review of the Parrys Beach Reserve; PRC Bird Sanctuary Proposal (Revised) with a presentation to Shire Councillors plus Shire meetings to progress PRC Sanctuary; the WQIP Working Group for Wilson Inlet.

Social Communications A website for the Group has become necessary and after considerable investigation by committee into a professional website development proving too expensive, it has very ably been produced by committee members John and Kirsty Anderson for vastly reduced costs. The website will be an excellent means of better communicating with our members and the public generally.

John Anderson has continued to produce high quality bird articles for the Bulletin on a regular basis which have proved very popular with the community whilst raising the Group's profile.

Excursions Monthly bird watching (sometimes more like bird *finding*) excursions for members continued to various sites around Denmark and the region, often with new members being introduced to Denmark birds.

Citizen Science Bird Surveys These are a core activity for DBG. Shorebird/Waterbird surveys are undertaken by Group members around nominated sites in Wilson Inlet in summer and winter as part of Birdlife's national monitoring program. More intensive surveys are done at PRC at least twice weekly to monitor bird presence and numbers.

To help monitor the impacts of prescribed burning the Group has completed one pre-burn survey and has committed to undertake more pre and post burn surveys over selected sites to assist the research being undertaken by the Fire and Biodiversity WA group.

The discovery last year of breeding Endangered Australasian Bitterns in the L. Saide area has involved listening surveys by Group members which are intended to be ongoing.

What's Ahead

The year ahead promises multiple activities with a number of projects and events already in the pipeline including the PRC Sanctuary, the Overwintering (migratory shorebird) Project, the Festival of Birds and Biodiversity (GreenSkills), the Six Seasons project (DEC) plus our ongoing bird surveys and other activities.

We will also be electing a new Convenor today. After five years as Convenor since inception of the Group I am stepping aside to make way for fresh energies and approaches to the future. However, I

am nominating to remain on the committee. The mission we (Jill and I) started has now well and truly launched into a myriad of ventures and opportunities. This could only have been achieved with the enthusiasm and the support of our amazing and talented committee.

To our committee, thank you does not say nearly enough for where you have all taken the Group from its beginnings. A huge and sincere thank you to all the committee and the members at large for the strength and support you have given to the Group.

I am absolutely confident the Group will continue to flourish in meeting its vision for birds, their habitats and the community. Long may it do so.

Finally, I would like to leave you with three fundamental actions to take forward for DBG in its ongoing vision to benefit our birdlife :

- Citizen Science data collection from bird surveys are crucial to acquire knowledge for the conservation of our birds and their habitat.
- Engagement of Members and Community to foster education and awareness.
- Support of, and Collaboration with, BWA, BA and Affiliate organisations.

Brad Kneebone,
Retiring Convenor