President’s Message

The Society continues after the last AGM with a return of the executive. On a personal note, thanks to the dedicated members who make the journey to attend our bird/aviary meetings scattered around the state. While there is a fair commitment in time and money (fuel, food, accommodation) we have seen and experienced some great collections of birds.

Our last visit to John and Tracey Stafford’s at Taralga was blessed with excellent weather. John and Tracey, as usual, were exceptional hosts. John is progressing very well with his creation of a bird/animal park. Some serious construction happened since our last visit.

I have included information in this newsletter on mirror balls. These are said to deter hawks and ducks from around the cages of smaller birds. While the hawk may not obtain a meal, in most cases they are able to kill aviary birds from time to time.

I first saw these installed on an aviary in south-east Queensland. I haven’t installed any myself, yet.

The notes from John Holman on Facebook pages are most welcome. It is a bit of a debate whether we should persist with our website or create a Facebook page. As yet, no one has offered to manage a Facebook page, and thus, it rests. I am not, at this stage, a Facebook person, but I am increasingly conscious that this is now a mainstream means of communication.

The article about gamebird feeds needs to be absorbed and understood. Nutrition is a vital component of successful bird rearing. For pheasants and quail, a high protein feed as a chick is critical for development, with a reducing protein level as the bird matures.

It is important to differentiate pheasants and quail from waterbirds. Generally, waterbirds require much lower protein levels in their feed, and development problems may occur if they are given high protein feeds.
The other thing to consider is to use fresh feed. The quality of the protein in feeds will deteriorate over time, but more so the vitamin levels will deteriorate with age and heat. The fatty acids in the feed will oxidise and potentially in a ‘worse case’ scenario, become toxic. Thus, consider starting the ‘chick’ season with fresh starter and finisher formulations, rather than use up last year’s left overs. Fresh is best!

This newsletter is being produced just prior to the Associated Birdkeepers of Australia free seminar at Mittagong RSL. Details were in the last newsletter.

Our next meeting in spring has not been finalised, but it has been suggested to hold a gathering on the Far South Coast, in the Bega Valley. We have two active members located there and two wildlife/bird parks that we could visit.

Any birds for sale or wanted, articles to include in the newsletter or suggestions that our Society could be active in, please contact myself (President) or John (Secretary).

NB: Remember, late winter is an ideal time to worm all birds, prior to the egg laying season.

NEXT MEETING:

Far South Coast
Bega Valley
October, 2018

Date to be advised

At John Stafford’s
Minutes of Annual General Meeting & General Meeting 7th April 2018

Meeting held at the property of John Stafford and Tracey Avery, Taralga.
Annual General Meeting opened at 15:10.

Members Present:
Doug and Annette Somerville, John Boshammer, John and Norma Burchell, Bob Elgood, Daryl Swan, John Holman, John Stafford and Tracey Avery.

Apologies:
Maureen Elgood, Jocelyn Holman.

Acceptance of Minutes of Previous AGM:
Minutes of previous AGM tabled for acceptance.
Moved: Daryl Swan
Seconded: John Holman

Election of Office Bearers:
President:
Nominations – Doug Somerville
Moved: John Stafford
Seconded: John Holman

Vice President:
Nominations – Ewan Watkins
Moved: John Holman
Seconded: Daryl Swan

Secretary:
Nomination: John Boshammer
Moved: John Burchell
Seconded: Norma Burchell

Treasurer:
Nominations: John Boshammer
Moved: John Holman
Seconded: Doug Somerville

Publicity Officer:
Nominations – John Holman
Moved: John Burchell
Seconded: Annette Somerville

Executive Members:
Daryl Swan, John Stafford, Bob Elgood, John Burchell, Maureen Elgood
Moved: John Holman
Seconded: John Boshammer

President's Report:
Moved: Norma Burchell
Seconded: John Holman

Treasurer's Report:
Period 18 January 18 to 6 April 18
Opening Balance: $2287.37
Income: $ 75.00
Expenditure: $ 120.00
Closing Balance: $2142.37
Term Deposit #1 $8061.83
Term Deposit #2 $8127.93

The club remains in a sound financial position.
Moved: John Holman
Seconded: Daryl Swan

AGM declared closed at 15:30.

General Meeting opened at 15:31.

Members Present:
As per Annual General Meeting.

Minutes of Previous Meeting:
Minutes tabled and read for acceptance.
Moved: Annette Somerville
Seconded: Daryl Swan

Correspondence In:
- December – January issue of The Duck.
- WPA online copy #104.

Treasurer's Report:
As per AGM.
Invoice from Charles Tate of $902 for construction of display cases.
Moved: John Holman
Seconded: Annette Somerville

General Business:
- WPA membership. The ongoing membership of the WPA was discussed and it was decided that the costs outweighed the benefits at this time. A motion was raised to cease membership.
  Moved: Bob Elgood
  Seconded: Daryl Swan
- Advice from QLD Branch of PWS of A that The Duck is undergoing change.
- Our website has been renewed.
- Secretary has received a number of copies of the poster 'Pheasants of the World’, from Patron Phillip Bloom for club use, sale etc. These are an impressive wall display featuring all the major pheasant species. A motion was
raised to have two (2) laminated for use at club displays.
Moved: Doug Somerville
Seconded: Daryl Swan

- Shoalhaven Bird Society bird sale 21st April 2018.
- It was suggested that carry covers for display cases be obtained. Doug Somerville will investigate and organise.
Moved: Doug Somerville
Seconded: John Boshammer

Next Meeting:
ABA Seminar at Mittagong 16th June 2018.

Meeting closed at 16:30.

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**RON RISK - Vale**

It is with great sadness that I learnt of the passing of Ron Risk of Uralla. Ron was a keen and active ‘bird man’ and kept many water birds and pheasants behind his motel.

Ron attended a number of the National Biennial gatherings when the Australian Pheasant and Waterfowl Society was active.

He was a very interesting and entertaining character. He is remembered fondly and our thoughts are with his family.
Battery versus free-range chickens

Subject: Problem solved

Another eccentric option is to give the virtual reality experience to the chickens. Created by professor Austin Stewart at the University of Iowa, Second Livestock is a conceptual company that allows chickens to enjoy the free-range experience while remaining contained within the safety of the poultry house. The idea is that chickens are equipped with a virtual headset and see through a screen projection using goggles. In this way, chickens can be raised anywhere, even in urban areas, and feel the freedom of their virtual world, free from predators. While this company may not actually be producing these products, it is important to recognise that the technology is there and is on its way to becoming increasingly more affordable.

Photos from April meeting at John Stafford’s, Taralga
Facebook Pheasant Groups

John Holman

If you want to monitor Facebook for pheasant and waterfowl-related activity, here are some links to Australian Facebook pheasant groups to which I belong.

I also belong to a couple of international specialist groups on the genera Lophura and Chrysolophus, plus several dove, pigeon, softbill and finch groups.

If you plan on joining the groups in order to monitor activity, I suggest you join the first group initially (the only public group) and once accepted, it will help you to convince the moderators of the closed groups of your bona fides.

Groups are closed in order to minimise infiltration by spammers, animal rights activists and the like.

http://www.facebook.com/groups/306279049480939/
http://www.facebook.com/groups/221142691247705/
http://www.facebook.com/groups/1653563988210729/
http://www.facebook.com/groups/684010478443686/
http://www.facebook.com/groups/881410195279216/
http://www.facebook.com/groups/764896916935498/

TRADING

For Sale

John Holman -
Silver pheasant pair (free!)
Bega Valley, NSW
0466 005 785

Tony - ph: 03 5635 2257

Egyptian geese - $400 pr
Canadian geese - $600 pair

Mountain ducks and Black swans
Hill End - Gippsland, VIC

Doug Somerville - 0427 311 410

Amherst pheasants - hens
Kalij pheasant - hen
Golden pheasant - cock

Goulburn, NSW
Bob Elgood - 0413 046 701

California quail cock

Photo from April meeting at John Stafford’s, Taralga
**Gamebird Feeds**

**Extract from Laucke Mills Poultry Feeds**

**Gamebird Starter** is a highly nutritious feed formulated to be fed to young game birds such as quail, pheasants, peacocks, guinea fowl, partridge and turkeys. Feed Gamebird Starter crumbles *ad lib.* from day old to 3 to 8 weeks of age. From 3 to 8 weeks of age feed Gamebird Finisher MP *ad lib.*

Analysis (as fed) - Gamebird Starter
- Protein: 28.0 % min.
- Fat: 3.0 % min.
- Fibre: 6.0 % max.
- Salt (added): 0.35 % max.

Analysis (as fed) - Gamebird Finisher
- Protein: 22.0 % min.
- Fat: 3.0 % min.
- Fibre: 6.0 % max.
- Salt (added): 0.35 % max

Feed **Gamebird Maintenance MP** *ad lib.* or restrict feed as required.

Analysis (as fed)
- Protein: 15.0 % min.
- Fat: 2.0 % min.
- Fibre: 10.0 % max.
- Salt (added): 0.35 % max.

Feed **Duck & Goose Starter** crumbles *ad lib.* to 6 weeks of age. From 6 weeks of age feed Duck & Goose Finisher pellets *ad lib.* until kill.

Analysis (as fed)
- Protein: 20.0 % min.
- Fat: 3.0 % min.
- Fibre: 6.0 % max.
- Salt (added): 0.35 % max.
Deterrence of wild waterfowl from poultry production areas

A critical review of current techniques and literature
By: Michael Atzeni, Darren Fielder and Bruce Thomas - AgriFutures Chicken Meat
January 2016

What the report is about
The recent trend of increasing incidence of avian influenza (AI) outbreaks in Australia’s commercial poultry industry is of considerable concern. Low pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI) viruses cycle naturally in wild birds, particularly in waterfowl (especially ducks and geese) and shorebirds. All commercial poultry in Australia are susceptible to AI infection as they are not vaccinated against AI and have no immunity.

Many Australian poultry farms have open water storages that attract waterfowl.

The Australian poultry industry has been fortunate to have contained the seven outbreaks of HPAI to date, all since 1976 and all due to Australian endemic H7 strains. The Asian H5N1 strain associated with human deaths overseas has not yet been detected in Australia but its introduction via migratory birds is always a possibility.

In order to meet increasing consumer demand and to further develop a sustainable free-range sector, the Australian poultry industry needs to address the increased AI risk.

Published information about deterring waterfowl in the context of disease risk management on poultry farms is lacking. Consequently, the review draws on the extensive evidence and findings for waterfowl management for other industry applications (for example, airports and mining sites).

Netting range areas and covering water storages is generally cost prohibitive and for that reason, habitat modifications and passive and active deterrence measures would be necessary on most poultry farms to reduce the AI risk posed by wild birds.

A combination of appropriate visual and acoustic deterrents which are activated only when waterfowl attempt to land in ‘no-go’ zones is suggested as the ideal strategy, as this targets the unwanted behaviour, minimises use of the deterrents, and helps to prevent habituation.

Another practical and effective strategy in free-range areas and around water storages may be the use of patrol dogs such as a Maremma or other trained breeds (cattle dogs, sheep dogs) to chase waterfowl away.

Note: This is a different way of thinking compared to most ‘bird’ people, who often encourage the visits of wild birds.

Biosecurity is something we ALL must be conscious and aware of.

Maybe encouraging wild birds to mix with your birds is not the wisest of activities.
Mirror Balls - a hawk deterrent

While attending the last Finch Convention in Brisbane, we visited an aviary that had mirror balls placed on top of the aviary. The question from the visitors was along the lines of ‘what’s with the weird art?’ The response: to keep hawks away!

Ahaaa, now they have become functional art! From experience, two mirror balls placed at different ends of an aviary apparently, (according to the theory) give the impression to visiting hawks that there is already another two birds (that’s why you need two mirror balls on the top of the aviary) in residence. The illusion is that this is already an existing territory for a pair of hawks and thus the encouragement for the hawk to move on.

The company making and selling these mirror balls are Jalex. Their web site is jalex.com.au, ph: 07 3356 4898. They sell different sized mirror balls, half-mirror balls and a range of other stainless steel fittings. The size that suits the hawk deterrent category is the 300mm ball. This retails for $95 each (you need 2 balls to work as a deterrent). The mirror ball needs to be attached to something. Jalex can also incorporate a 6mm thread to each ball. Total cost of a 300mm mirror ball with 6mm thread is $99.

Multiply by two (two balls required), add $15 postage and it totals $213 for your hawk deterrent. Alternatively, you can pick up the mirror balls from 17A Stone Street Stafford, Brisbane, if you live, or visit this part of the world and save on freight.

You will have to attach them to poles and erect them at the ends of the aviary, this may be a further cost.

On the Jalex website they have a testimonial of the mirror balls, or in some cases half-mirror balls being used to deter ducks from loitering around backyard swimming pools. Apparently this is a big problem in the Northern Territory and the use of mirror balls has been successful in keeping the ducks out of the pool.
Feathers for science -
Genetic Diversity in Australian Domesticated Gouldian Finches

Peri Bolton and Simon Griffiths
Macquarie University
Source: Finches 2017 Convention, July 2017, Brisbane

This paper reveals the first insights from the Feathers for Science project, which explored the genetic diversity of Gouldian finches in aviculture collections across Australia. Using two types of genetic information, these results show that genetic diversity is lower in the domesticated birds than in the wild. There is evidence for genetic differences between breeders, towns and states, which exceed those differences found between distant sampling sites in the wild.

The main aims of the Feathers for Science project were to use genetic techniques to describe a) genetic diversity and differentiation across Gouldian finch avicultural collections in Australia, b) The genetic changes that have occurred since domestication and will provide a primer on the genetic consequences of captivity, domestication, and small population size.

This is important because these genetic variants (alleles hereafter), may code for important traits such as different thermal tolerances, behavioural patterns, and disease strain resistance. When a population size remains small, the alleles present in the population are subject to further random processes, known as ‘genetic drift’. This is a simple probabilistic process, and can be thought of in the context in the number of coin-tosses required to have equal numbers of heads and tails: if a coin is tossed only 5 times, then there is a reasonable chance that it may be mostly (or all) tails. Similarly, if the small population is only producing a small number of offspring, then it is likely that allele frequencies will change dramatically or be lost entirely. The final consequence of small population size is that there is a greater chance that related individuals will breed together. All populations carry genetic variants that are ‘deleterious recessive’, meaning that if there is a functional gene copy this trait will not be expressed (heterozygous), but will be expressed if there are two copies of that deleterious allele (homozygous). Relatives share a larger proportion of their genome than the rest of the population, and when they interbreed there is an increased chance that genes will be homozygous. When many of these deleterious recessive alleles are exposed by inbreeding, they can negatively influence development, fertility, and behaviour (‘inbreeding depression’). Inbreeding depression can then have flow on effects to the birth and death rates of a population.