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## In Brief



## ON THIS WEEK'S COVER

Tawny frogmouth, red-browed finch (© Shutterstock.com/ Stuart Reid/Jukka Jantunen). Stories pages 12, 16 >>

## BEVERLEY CONTACT

PLEASE note the correct contact number for Beverley Bird Society is 01430 470 701 and not as previously published.

## NELCC CHANGES

THE North East Lizard CC's membership structure has changed: full annual membership is now £10 and includes all cage entries to its annual show, with no limit on entries. Social membership £5 – for members who live out of the area and who are not able to show. The club has changed its members' show date from December 1 to November 24.

## GOODBYE GUMBOOTS

THE Kakapo Recovery is saddened to report the death of Gumboots, a "founder" of the kakapo population. He was discovered dead on Whenua Hou, a small island to the west of Stewart Island in southern New Zealand. He had been found as an adult on Stewart Island in 1988 but had no offspring. The current population is now 144.

## PEREGRINE AHoy!

A NEW peregrine viewpoint has opened at the base of Malham Cove, North Yorkshire, to mark the 17th year of the Malham Peregrine Project, a partnership between the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and the RSPB. It's free to access from 10.30am-4.30pm five days a week (closed Tuesday and Wednesday), until August 5. Follow the project at: [www.twitter.com/malhamperegrine](http://www.twitter.com/malhamperegrine)

## DOVE CHICK SIGHTED

A BLUE-EYED ground-dove (*Columbina cyanopsis*) chick has been seen close to fledging in Brazil. The Critically Endangered bird was spotted perching on a branch and is the first chick in more than 75 years. We reported in the April 24 issue that recent sightings had raised hopes for the survival chances of this species.

# Famous bird vet impresses fanciers on his second visit to England

By Laura Welch

## BUDGERIGARS

A RENOWNED AUSTRALIAN bird vet and author gave only his second-ever UK club talk last month, this time to a budgerigar society in the South.

On April 30, more than 30 members and friends of the London & Southern Counties Budgerigar Society (L&SCBS) met to listen to Dr Rob Marshall and his more than 30 years' experience in treating birds.

Author of *The Budgerigar* (currently out of print) – an

impressive 415-page definitive guide to budgerigars with more than 2,000 colour photographs and illustrations – Dr Marshall, from New South Wales, is much admired in the hobby and regularly pre-

“With his wealth of knowledge about budgies, this was an opportunity not to be missed

– Ghalib Al-Nasser, chairman

sents scientific papers at national and international veterinary conferences.

“Stomach Dysfunction in

Exhibition Budgerigars” was the focus of his presentation to the L&SCBS, which also touched on stress as the main trigger for mega-bacteria, going light, pH levels of drinking water, vitamin D usage, strengthening the birds' gizzards and why brewer's yeast is an excellent source of B vitamins.

The presentation was recorded and a DVD will be available from the club in due course.

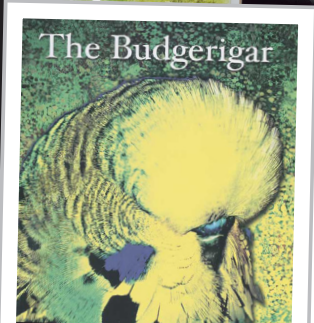
Those in attendance included the well-respected retired British avian vet, Alan Jones – a regular contributor to this paper. Speaking to *Cage & Aviary Birds*, he said: “I had never before met Dr Marshall, but was aware of his name within the aviary veterinary field, and his many writings on the subject of avian medicine and nutrition.

“Rob seemed genuinely pleased that I was present and involved me in his presentation, by asking my opinion and seeking back-up on various comments.”

The following day, Dr



Dr Rob Marshall (centre) gave his first talk in England in 2013 at Northdowns BS. The talk at the L&SCBS marked only his second bird club talk in this country, and on the day the club's president David Harmer (left) and chairman Ghalib Al-Nasser (right) presented Dr Marshall with a Roy Aplin painting of Australian birds



*The Budgerigar*: described by former C&AB editor Kim Forrester as 'by far the most impressive avicultural book I've had the pleasure of reviewing'

Marshall gave a presentation to a veterinary congress in London before flying back to Sydney.

Ghalib Al-Nasser, L&SCBS chairman and secretary, commented: “With Dr Marshall's wealth of knowledge about birds and budgerigars in particular, this was an opportunity not to be missed.

“I was extremely pleased to see our own avian vet Alan Jones in the audience and that impressed Dr Marshall as

well as our members.”

● For more information about Dr Marshall, visit: [www.birdhealth.com.au](http://www.birdhealth.com.au) The full club report will appear in Club News in a forthcoming issue.

## First peacock-pheasant chicks in two years

## AVIARIES

A RECORD FOUR Rothschild's peacock-pheasants (*Polyplectron inopinatum*) have hatched this spring at Waddesdon Manor Aviary, Buckinghamshire.

Also known as the mountain peacock-pheasant, the chicks are the most hatched since Gavin Harrison, assistant curator of birds at Waddesdon Manor Aviary, took on the task of EAZA ESB Studbook keeper for the species in 2014. Since then, keepers have been working to try and increase the population in European zoos.

“It has proven to be a difficult species to breed in captivity,” said Mr Harrison. “We first bred two chicks in



Two chicks hatched from buffy-white eggs. Incubation is roughly 19-21 days by the female alone

2016 and then three chicks in 2017. We did not breed any in 2018 and we have four chicks so far this season.”

Described by Sir Walter Rothschild in 1903, this species is IUCN red-listed as Vulnerable in the wild in Malaysia. In total, the aviary has nine birds of this species in the collection.

Other studbooks under Mr Harrison's management are for the Malayan peacock-pheasant (*P. malacense*) and Fischer's turaco (*Tauraco fischeri*). Mr Harrison and team aim to increase the



The famous aviary: also home to species such as Bali starling, Socorro dove and painted bunting

populations of both aforementioned species – as well as the Rothschild's peacock-pheasants – within EAZA institutions.

● Find out more about conservation at the Aviary via: <https://waddesdon.org.uk/your-visit/grounds/aviary>

## Flufftail caught on camera

## AFRICAN BIRDS

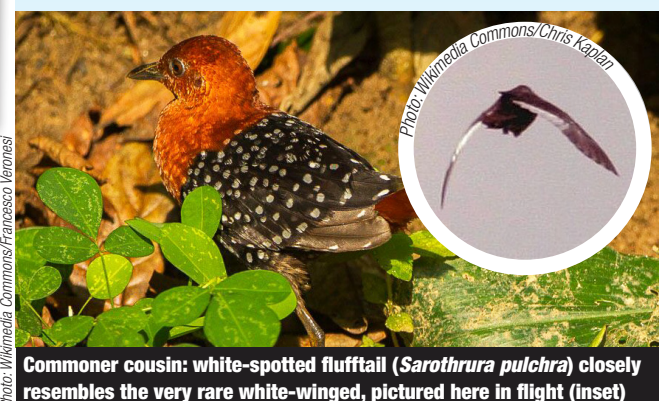
THE CALL OF one of the world's most secretive birds has been recorded, making monitoring the species a little easier.

The white-winged flufftail (*Sarothrura ayresi*) is extremely rare. With fewer than 250 individuals remaining in the wild it is at severe risk of extinction, so surveying it to understand its behaviour and help protect it is vital. Prior to identifying its call, the only way to find it was to survey areas and try to flush it out, although a new system using camera traps did

reveal that the bird, thought only to visit South Africa, actually breeds there too.

A breakthrough last December linked a low-pitched call with an image of a flufftail showing territorial behaviour. The technique used could also provide data on other wetland animals.

“The white-winged flufftail is thereby acting as a critical flagship species promoting the assessment and conservation of high-altitude wetland ecosystems across its range,” said Robin Colyn, a project manager at BirdLife South Africa, which recorded the call.



Commoner cousin: white-spotted flufftail (*Sarothrura pulchra*) closely resembles the very rare white-winged, pictured here in flight (inset)



An adult male peacock-pheasant in the collection displays to a female