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**T**HE 2013 Gouldian finch count in WA's north-west early in September this year will be the last and leading Gouldian researcher Sarah Pryke explains on page 6 of this edition why the annual census has become redundant and how the focus from September will be on utilising technology to keep track of the beautiful little birds.

That turn of events saddened Sarah because she enjoyed the company of many volunteer bird people from Australia and around the world who participated in the counts each year.

Wyndham in the Kimberley is not the flashiest place on earth and everyone who has served as a volunteer Gouldian counter there deserves a huge pat on the back.

■ **NUMBERS DOWN, OPTIMISM UP:** The bird sale season for 2013 is well and truly underway and it seems that the number of birds offered is down in most places and that demand is low, possibly due to financial constraints but that may all change at the relocated Castle Hill bird sale, where a new, larger venue, \$20 a head dinner the night before with a great speaker — Bob Philpot from Perth — and a high level of enthusiasm from the organising group seem likely to make the event a roaring success and one that should definitely not be missed, see advertisement on page 17 and story on page 15 for more information.

## COMMENT

■ **\$400,000 RACER:** Bird people in Australia are often heard complaining about prices asked for species they fancy but compared to a recent sale in Belgium, where a racing pigeon sold to a Chinese man for \$400,000, we really do not have much to whinge about.

The same auction where that bird changed hands saw a high-profile breeder's stud of 530 birds bring a world record price of \$5.58 million.

Europe is in huge trouble financially but obviously some pigeon people from China, who accounted for nine of the top 10 birds at the auction, are unwittingly doing Belgium a favour. Wouldn't it be nice if that sort of thing happened here?

That story is on page 13.

■ **ENJOYMENT FOCUS:** Budgie writer Fred Wright provides food for thought in his piece this month which focuses on the fact that we should enjoy our birds, putting aside club politics, winning competitions and making money.

The main thing according to Fred is to remember what got us into birds in the first place, the wonder of seeing youngsters in a nest, the colours and the enjoyment you experienced way back when.

He makes some very good points and they could probably easily apply to any of us. Read his piece on page 5.

—Lloyd Marshall



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# Victoria non-natives move

THE Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries is looking into the management of non-native birds in Victoria.

A briefing for interested parties held in Melbourne on May 30 this year was attended by David Renshaw, vice president of the Victorian Avicultural Council, who said it was very refreshing to find that representatives from the DEPI were gen-

uinely interested in obtaining feedback from aviculturists as well as from other interested parties.

"It is important that aviculturists take the time to review the proposed information from the DEPI and forward their comments to me by email — [renwood2@bigpond.net.au](mailto:renwood2@bigpond.net.au) — by June 16 so feedback can be collated and sent to the DEPI by June 28," David said.

# Lost bird service booming in Aust.

By LLOYD MARSHALL

AN electronic missing bird service based in the UK that is reuniting lost birds with owners around the world has been doing really well in Australia.

Last month the site had around 70 lost and found reports from Australia including Alexandrines, cockatiels, conures, cockatoos, corellas, eclecticus, Indian ringnecks, kakarikis, lorikeets, lovebirds, macaws, Quakers, galahs, Major Mitchell's, budgies and rosellas.

Englishman Neil Rutherford is the man behind ParrotAlert — [www.parrotalert.com](http://www.parrotalert.com) — a free worldwide service where information about missing birds is instantly emailed to subscribers in the area where the bird went missing.

He has been funding ParrotAlert out of his own pocket for the past few years and is now approaching the point where donations are covering costs.

The site is free to use and due to the huge number of emails sent daily a dedicated email server had to be leased.

"Shared hosting companies impose a daily limit of between 250 to 500, which in my case is less than one Brisbane lost or found report," Mr Rutherford said.

"ParrotAlert was built from the ground up, it's not built using any other product out there, I do use the google developers edition of google maps as a means of visually obtaining and displaying the geographic positions of reports."

Last month the site had 36,045 visitors worldwide, the highest on record.

"With still four days to go we've already broken last month's total," Mr Rutherford said.

He said ParrotAlert was designed to work much like a satellite navigation device, with geographical positioning and targeting.

"It breaks with the mentality of state, county and town as internally it's all geo-point driven, for accuracy to within metres," he said.

"It works on the concept of the direction the crow flies. The site targets

## Chooks get nappies

**THERE'S free range and then there's free rein — around your house.**

When American Julie Baker's backyard fowls began spending more time inside it was tough to keep them clean so she got innovative.

She made a cloth nappy, added a few buttons and strapped it onto her little lady. One thing led to another and a business was born.

Pampered Poultry sells 50-100 nappies a week to urban farmers around the United States and the online store also sells saddles.

Wait a minute. Saddles? Who's riding

members by their distance from a reported position which will be ideal for when we bring our GPS-enabled phone app out."

Mr Rutherford said ParrotAlert was built on the socialising lost and found model.

"You give us a location of a bird lost or found, we'll email alert all registered members within a given radius, we auto cross post on facebook and twitter, and bird forums around the world pull our feed alerts into their lost and found sections," he said.

"No matter how it's shared via facebook etc, it all comes back to the one report on our site.

"We send between 3000-10,000 email alerts worldwide a day and 10 reports for the Brisbane area can generate over 5000 email alerts."

He said the site has had a lot of reunites via people getting a found report in their email inbox and identifying the bird as theirs.

"If you go to our facebook page we publish the good reunites there, it's not all of them," Mr Rutherford said.

"Brisbane Bird Vets have used our site since the launch, even when we had little on there — in January this year alone they reunited more birds handed in via ParrotAlert than they did during the whole of last year.

"We've noticed lots of vets and animal hospitals using the service to list. Even the RSPCA in Queensland has listed birds on ParrotAlert.

"We provide our service to Australia, UK, US, Canada, Ireland and few other countries.

"Currently we're only operating in the English language, we do plan to extend this to other countries and languages.

"Australia is really the busiest country of the lot at the moment.

"As it's warming up in the UK, Canada and the US we're starting to see more daily reports submitted — we get between 10 to 40 a day."

## ODD SPOT

chickens? "The roosters," Baker said. "They're busy boys. Saddles are almost more useful than the diaper, quite frankly. A rooster isn't particularly kind to a hen when they mate. He grabs her by the back and pulls her feathers out."

So she started selling saddles to protect the hens' tail feathers and she's not the only one.

Husband and wife team Derek Sasaki and Traci Torres turned their fowl accessories business into a multi-million dollar venture called [MyPetChicken.com](http://MyPetChicken.com) where nappies are some of the offerings.

COVER: HAND-RAISED ALEXANDRINE PARAKEETS TAKING FOOD FROM BOB PHILPOT. PHOTO: BOB PHILPOT. SEE: HAND REARING... — PAGES 10-11.