Broome Bird Observatory 30th Anniversary
by Nigel Jackett

Photo Courtesy Nigel Jackett – Pied Stilt

Broome Bird Obsveratory 30 years anniversary In 1981, Roebuck Bay and its vast numbers of migratory shorebirds were discovered by researchers. Annual expeditions by the Australasian Wader Study Group were launched in order to learn more about these birds. Through most of the 1980s, these expeditions involved camping along the foredunes in testing conditions, as no facilities were available along Roebuck Bay's Northern shores.

In 1988, the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union (now BirdLife Australia) after extensive consultation with the Department of Conservation and Land Management, established a bird observatory close to Crab Creek, providing a much needed facility for researchers in Roebuck Bay.

Brice Wells and Gail Hooper were the BBOs first Wardens, and tasked with turning two buildings generously donated by Lord McAlpine/Cable Beach Club into a functional Observatory, without electricity or water available to them at the time! A volunteer management committee was established to assist the Wardens with the daily operations of the BBO. With the help of the committee, further donations came the BBO's way, with all of those involved adding their piece to the Observatory's history.

The BBO is renowned around the world as a key location to study migratory shorebirds and the benthic invertebrates that they feed on. Roebuck Bay is now one of the best studied tropical intertidal mudflats on Earth, and continued research in the bay has proven it to be the most benthic rich of the world's mudflats!

In 2018 the BBO celebrated its 30th anniversary, with a joint BBO and Shorebirds Birthday Party took place at the BBO, with close to 100 guests in attendance. Clive Minton (BBO founder and long-term management committee member), and Brice and Gail (first Wardens) gave birthday speeches, as well as a wonderful overview of the BBOs fascinating history.

For further information visit
www.broomebirdobservatory.com