



# The Birth of BirdLife Australia

Title BirdLife International's Australian Partner, Birds Australia, has been protecting Australia's birds in various guises (firstly as the AOU, and then RAOU, then Birds Australia) since 1901. A few years later, a splinter group, known as the Bird Observers Club of Australia (BOCA), was formed to cater for the needs of recreational birdwatching rather than scientific ornithological study. Both organisations worked diligently to conserve Australia's birds ? sometimes they worked together in co-operation, sometimes they worked as rivals. However, in recent years the aims and activities of Birds Australia and BOCA had begun to converge to such an extent that occasionally there were suggestions that the two organisations should enter into a merger. Each time, the idea was quickly dismissed, but when it resurfaced in 2010 and was examined critically, it became clear that a merger of the two organisations made sense, both in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. Put simply, a merger would create a stronger voice for Australia's birds without duplication of resources or effort. After well over a century of existing as separate entities, Birds Australia and BOCA put the possibility of a merger into the hands of their respective members. A historic vote was held at the Annual General Meetings of both organisations in May 2011, and the result was overwhelming: over 93% of BOCA members and more than 95% of Birds Australia's members voted in favour of the amalgamation ? an emphatic endorsement! And so a new, stronger bird conservation organisation for Australia was formed? BirdLife Australia, due to come into existence on 1 January 2012. We will transfer our long standing status as a BirdLife International Partner over with an exciting new identity. With most of the logistical hurdles in the administrative, financial and membership systems all but ironed out, staff, members and supporters of BirdLife Australia are eagerly looking forward to continuing to tackle the many challenges that face Australia's birds in a united effort for the first time in over a century. Check out our new website [www.birdlife.org.au](http://www.birdlife.org.au) being launched in February 2012. **Subscribe to The BirdLife Pacific Quarterly E-Newsletter**