

Media Release:

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Desert Bird Week at Alice Springs Desert Park

The Alice Springs Desert Park is 'flapping' with excitement as it prepares to celebrate 'Desert Bird Week' with a series of tours and workshops being held at the Park from Saturday, 19 September to Sunday, 4 October 2009.

Alice Springs Desert Park Specialist Guide Meg Quarmby said one of the highlights of Desert Bird Week will be *The Big Twitch*, where visitors will be given a checklist of birds at the Park to enjoy a self paced challenge of bird spotting.

"Another highlight will be *Eagle Watch LIVE!* held at 8.30am and 4.10pm daily where visitors can view some wild Wedge-tailed Eagles on the West MacDonnell ranges, and a young eagle chick in its nest through a special telescope set up in the Park," Ms Quarmby said.

"The daily program will also feature a zookeeper feeding the birds at 8.30am, free-flying birds of prey displays at 10.00am and 3.30pm, discovering nocturnal birds housed in the Nocturnal House at 10.40am and 1pm and meeting wild bird residents as they gather round the waterhole at 2pm.

"The Desert Park is home to a magnificent range of birds including Splendid Fairy-wrens and Western Bowerbirds in aviaries, Tawny Frogmouths and Bush Stone Curlews in the Nocturnal House and Black Kites and Whistling Kites in the Nature Theatre."

Ms Quarmby said in addition to the special daily activity program the Desert Park will run a number of special tours and workshops. Places are limited so bookings are essential.

"During *Bird Walkabout*, a unique dawn bird watching tour led by one of our expert guides, we'll be hoping to see wild Bush Stone Curlews on their nest before enjoying a light breakfast against the glorious natural setting," Ms Quarmby said.

"Visitors can learn about the process of studying birds during the *Bird Banding Workshop*, which is when wild birds are captured, leg-banded and released."

Desert Bird Week at the Alice Springs Desert Park is part of the inaugural *Red Centre Bird Week*, being held throughout Alice Springs from 19 – 27 September 2009.

"*Red Centre Bird Week* is the first desert birdwatching festival in the southern hemisphere and includes birdwatching tours, a twitchathon (bird count) and workshops," Ms Quarmby said.

"Central Australia is a haven for birdlife with our unique landscape of spinifex, rocky ranges and waterholes and is a popular tourist destination for both avid birdwatchers and novices alike."

For more information about the Desert Park go to www.alicespringsdesertpark.com.au or phone 8951 8788. Places are limited on the tours and workshops so bookings are essential.

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**Media Note – for more information contact Meg Quarmby on 8951 8788
Image – Bush Stone Curlew at Alice Springs Desert Park**

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