Couples and avitourism: a mixed methods study of North American birdwatchers

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Southern Cross University

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COUPLES AND AVITOURISM: A MIXED METHODS STUDY OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDWATCHERS

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the Doctor of Philosophy

Southern Cross University

April 2017
STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

I, Denise Kay Goodfellow, declare that the work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original, except as acknowledged in the text, and that the material has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the University's rules, requirements, procedures and policy relating to my higher degree research award and to my thesis. I certify that I have complied with the rules, requirements, procedures and policy of the University (as they may be from time to time).

Signed

Date 11 April 2017
ABSTRACT

The observation of birds for recreation is popular throughout much of the world. However, most birders reside in the United States of America (USA). Thus they constitute an important leisure and tourism market. Research on birders has concentrated on activities more popular with men, such as the pursuit, identification and listing of species; these pastimes are considered ‘serious leisure’. Yet most US birders are women and they are less likely to be interested in the identification and listing of birds. Female-oriented, bird-related activities are deemed to be ‘casual’, even serious projects such as nest-monitoring, and female participants labelled as ‘birdwatchers’, a term of lower status than ‘birder’. The present study aimed to investigate these under-researched areas by focussing on couples, namely, those in a committed heterosexual relationship, exploring if and how spouses (men and women) reconciled ‘casual’ and ‘serious’ ways of watching birds, both at leisure and while travelling internationally together.

A mixed methods approach was adopted with a total of 359 respondents surveyed and 25 couples interviewed, both in Australia and the US. Quantitative analysis provided both demographics and behavioural profiles while the qualitative gave more substance to the latter in the voices of participant couples. Chi-square and t-tests for significance were conducted to examine cohorts in relation to differences between spouses in interests, motivation and behaviour. The thesis also drew upon multidisciplinary knowledge particularly research in the area of health.

Several theories were relevant for and applied to these findings, including those of social identity and identity fusion, which focus on the shared identity that couples may form apart from their personal identities. Some participants expected a less interested spouse to fit in with their birding concepts and practices, and therefore dyadic power theory, which considers relative power and control, was also applicable. Still, dyadic power was not all encompassing, given the desire of most participants, particularly men, to watch birds with their spouse no matter what their level of interest in the activity.

The results demonstrated that participants shared an identity and/or were interdependent. They generally preferred to watch birds together, although their birding interests and priorities often differed, and so they negotiated ways of reconciling those interests and priorities. Both contributed complimentary skills and/or support to their birding travel; for example, one might navigate and the other provides food. Where one had health problems or a disability that
interfered with their ability to watch birds it appeared that their spouse helped without reservation. Male participants also appeared to play an important supportive role when their spouse felt uncomfortable or discriminated against by a guide or other birders. This, and a couple’s knowledge of each other’s desires, in regard to birding, were possible reasons why many participants preferred to travel independently of birding tours. The study concluded that the couple relationship was more important than the activity, particularly to men.

The committed couple appears to be the crucible for bringing together the elements of two different modes of viewing birds and birding. This thesis discusses the ramifications for birding organisations and bird tour operators that have largely concentrated on those forms of the activity of more interest to men.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The American birders that I guided for over three decades inspired this topic. As well, many of those birding clients helped arrange my USA trips, or amassed participants, or became participants themselves in this study. Some advised me on the survey and interview questions. Without you, my friends, this thesis would not exist.

My principal supervisor, the ever patient Associate Professor Erica Wilson, took me under her wing at a rough time in the passage of this study, along with Associate Professor Kevin Markwell, whose remarks had me smiling, even when the internet failed yet again, courtesy of living in the Top End bush during the Wet Season. To my third and external supervisor, Dr. Heather Aslin, your support was invaluable when I first began this study. Thanks also to Dr Dean Carson and Dr Lesley Barclay of Charles Darwin University, and Dr Noah Nielsen of Southern Cross University. Dr Ellen Prediger, Dr Nicole Duplaix and Professor Jim Spickard played major roles in helping me at particularly frustrating times. Professor David Scott of AIM, Texas, encouraged me greatly with his words on the value of this research. Special thanks to Muriel Horacek, the Hilts, Newmans, and Silcocks, Dr. Ellen Rudolph, Professor Meredith McGuire, Noel Tovey AM and Dr Jo Harrison. And I cannot forget Jim Conrad of Earthfoot for his support.

I would also like to thank the School of Business and Tourism, Southern Cross University for their support: financial, administrative and moral. Kayleen Wardell, you were a gem. Libby Collett and Haylie Clark, thank you for your editing. To all, I will be forever grateful for your patience, honesty and enthusiasm, and your insights.

I began this PhD in a year of upheaval. My adopted Kunwinjku son died and my partner, Michael, was diagnosed with a rare and devastating bone cancer. Then, over the course of this study my son-in-law developed brain cancer, my nephew died, my eyesight began to deteriorate and I was hospitalised with pneumonia. During the defence of this thesis another adopted son died. Through all this Michael was a great support as were our dear women friends, the Scrubfowls. For my determination to finish I thank my mother, Mona May Malcolm, and my Kunwinjku and Larrakia relatives, in particular Stephanie Thompson-Nganjmirra. No matter what life threw at them they managed. To them I dedicate this thesis.
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OPENING PHOTOGRAPH: NORTH AMERICAN BIRDING TOUR

Michael Carmody’s Legacy Bird Tour, Sept. 2014.

Front row (crouching): Craig Maxwell, Hal Opperman, Lynn Dunlap, Terry Moore

Back row (standing): JoLynn Edwards, Michael Carmody, Joan Weinmayr, Laura Gilbert, Jan Ray, Linda Vidal, Judy Licata, Denise Lawungkurr Goodfellow, Maurianne Reade, and Tom Swanstrom

Photo by Tony Licata

Michael is an ex-president of the Washington Ornithological Society and has been guiding birders and wildlife enthusiasts for thirty years.
APPROVAL NUMBERS FOR PHD

I began this PhD at Charles Darwin University in 2007, with Dr Dean Carson and Dr Lesley Barclay as supervisors, and most surveys were carried out during my time there. Due to supervisory issues, I then transitioned to Southern Cross University where I completed the rest of the surveys under the supervision of Associate Professor Erica Wilson, Associate Professor Kevin Markwell and Dr Heather Aslin (external). The Approval numbers for Southern Cross University are SCU-ECN-11-105, and for Charles Darwin University, H09004.
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The birding social world includes all who watch birds for recreation or consider themselves birdwatchers or birders (Eubanks, Stoll & Ditton, 2004, p. 152)

This chapter begins with a brief history of those who watch birds, followed by an introduction to their profile, demographics and gender. An outline of the activity as serious or casual leisure leads into an overview of the thesis topic and focus, the research objectives, its significance and the thesis outline.

1.1 Overview of the history of human interaction with birds

Birds have been observed and studied as long as humans and their ancestors have hunted them. Yet for millennia, as demonstrated by ancient rock art and stories in Arnhem Land (Gunn, Douglas & Whear, 2011) and paintings in the tombs of the pharaohs of Egypt (White, 1970), birds have meant more than mere food. For example, the Kunwinjku of western Arnhem Land have stories about birds they did not hunt, such as the Red-backed Fairy-wren and White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike. Kunwinjku, like other Australian Aboriginal people, have special relationships called dreamings that connect them to wildlife, clan and country. These dreamings include birds (such as Pied Heron, known in Kunwinjku as Nogadjok marbut). To the ancient Egyptians also, some birds had religious significance, for example the god Horus was represented by a man with the head of a falcon. They also mummified some species, for example Sacred Ibis, *Threskiornis aethiopicus* (the ibis also represented Thoth, the god of wisdom (Thomas, 2013). In India, the Mughal rulers of the 16th Century were keen observers of nature (Kumar, 2000; Sen, 2010), in particular Jahangir, who described the breeding habits of the Sarus Crane in his autobiography *Jahangimama* (Koch, 2009, p. 297). Jahangir was influenced by the scientific research and representative illustration of the natural world emanating at that time from Europe where interest in natural history had flourished under the patronage of prominent families such as the Medici of Florence and royalty, for example Emperor Rudolf II (Koch, 2009, p. 299).

During the same period interest in natural history and science was also growing among learned men in Great Britain where the first bird book to attract attention was a scientific discourse, *Ornithologiae libri tres*, by the ornithologist Francis Willughy, published in 1678. The first to be enjoyed widely may have been *The Natural History of Selborne*, by Reverend Gilbert White (1789), about White’s experiences watching birds and other wildlife. Reverend White’s publication was followed by the *History of British birds* (Thomas Bewick, 1797), essentially a
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field guide (book used for bird identification) for amateurs. The USA also had a suite of bird enthusiasts, led by John Audubon (1785-1851), who studied and painted birds, and recognised the importance of habitat, Alexander Wilson (1766-1813), who became known for his “preference for field observation”, rather than killing the birds for identification (Moss, 2004, p. 39); and later by Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), one of North America’s best-loved writers whose attitude to wildlife he expressed eloquently in one sentence:

I once had a sparrow alight upon my shoulder for a moment while I was hoeing in a village garden, and I felt that I was more distinguished by that circumstance than I should have been by any epaulet I could have worn (1854, p. 185).

By the 19th Century, birdwatching for recreation had spread widely through the activities of westerners such as the Catholic missionary, Père Armand David (who also ‘discovered’ the Giant Panda), and the British Consul, Robert Swinhoe, both of them stationed in China, and sundry civil servants and army officers based in India and Africa (Moss, 2004).

Throughout this period social attitudes towards birds were still largely utilitarian: that is, birds were used for food or sport or other purposes rather than appreciated for their aesthetic qualities or as creatures in their own right (Watson, 2010). The usefulness, for example, of breeding egrets and ibis, lay in their plumes, and millions were slaughtered in the USA for fashion (Graham & Buchheister, 1990), as was the Carolina Parakeet Conuropsis carolinensis, the USA’s only indigenous parrot. Two Boston socialites, horrified by the slaughter, launched a campaign against the wearing of bird plumes (Price, 2004), and brought about a boycott of the trade. The campaign culminated in the formation of the National Audubon Society in 1905 and the passage of acts by Congress that aimed to protect birds, for example the Lacey Act and the Weeks-McLean Law (Migratory Bird Act) in 1913 (Souder, 2013). Federal acts were necessary because many migratory birds, species such as Eskimo Curlew Numenius borealis, Lesser Golden Plover Pluvialis dominica, and indigenous cranes of which there were two species Grus canadensis and G. americana, passed through several states (Cooke, 2003). In an attempt to further reduce the killing of birds that took place in the holiday season in what Rabun (2011) referred to as a “popular 19th century Christmas hunting tradition”, Frank Chapman, ornithologist at the American Museum of Natural History, and his friends, began the Annual Christmas Bird Count where, in one day, individuals would count all the live birds they could find within a 15 mile radius (Cooke, 2003). The counts continue to this day with observations under the auspices of the National Audubon Society (Audubon Society, no date given).
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Killing birds for the purpose of identification was still common at this time; indeed, ornithology, the study of birds, was based upon the collection of shot specimens (Sheard, 1999). The early field guides, for example, Elliot Coues’ *Key to North American Birds* (1872), helped identify different species and also gave instructions on killing and taxidermy (Karnicky, 2004). The practice of killing of birds for identification declined once binoculars (sometimes in the form of opera glasses), and better field guides, became available (Karnicky, 2004; Schaffner, 2011), along with the ability to take blood and other specimens from trapped individuals.

1.2 A profile of birders and birdwatchers

The profiles of those who watch birds are examined in this section, the importance being that there are different ways of relating to, and watching birds. Those mostly interested in the pursuit, identification and listing of species are known as ‘birders’ while those not particularly interested in these activities but watch birds for other reasons, are known as ‘birdwatchers’. Birders are considered to be serious about the activity while birdwatchers or non-listers are not. These titles are explained more fully below and in the Literature Review. The profiles are important because there are gender and status components and bias attached to these terms which may affect heterosexual couples. Those differences between spouses form a central theme of this thesis.

The relatively sedate pastime of simply observing birds, as White and Wilson had done, or being concerned about conservation issues, like those involved in the establishment of the Audubon Society and chapters, was not enough for some. In the USA during the 1960s a group broke away from the Audubon Society (Donnelly, 1994; Scott & Lee, 2003; Wilds, 1994) to participate in a nonconsumptive type of bird hunting that bore a resemblance to competitive sport (Moore, Scott & Moore, 2008; Sheard, 1999). This activity involved the search for new species, their identification, and the recording or listing of those birds. At first these people referred to themselves as ‘birdwatchers’ and their new organisation as the American Birdwatching Association. But soon ‘birder’ became the more acceptable term for those considered serious about the pastime, and the American Birding Association (ABA) was born. Some researchers, for example Cooper and Smith (2010), and Prior and Schaffner (2011) also define a ‘birder’ as someone serious about the activity of identifying and listing birds.

‘Birders’ were also seen to be active in that they pursued birds while ‘the term birdwatcher’ was now reserved for those who passively or opportunistically watched birds, according to researchers such as Connell (2009), Cordell, Eubanks, Betz, Breen, Stephens & Mou, (2008),
Isaacs and Chi (2005), and Prior & Schaffner (2011). Well-known birders including Kenn Kaufmann (1997) and Bill Oddie (1995) believed ‘birdwatchers’ to be the antithesis of the ‘active’ or ‘serious’ birder. Kaufman (1997, p. xi) made this clear in his statement that:

In the early 1970s we were not birdwatching. We were birding, and that made all the difference. We were out to seek, to discover, to chase, to learn, to find as many different kinds of birds as possible.

According to Scott et al. (2003a, p. 3), birders were “quick to distance themselves” from those who only watched birds around their home.

‘Birdwatcher’ has been used by many, both researchers and lay people, to denote someone interested in other, non-listing, bird-related activities such as nest-monitoring (Cooper & Smith, 2010). Birdwatchers might also watch birds as a social activity (Kellert & Berry, 1987; Scott, Cavin & Lee, 2005b) or, as Prior and Schaffner (2011) and Kellert (1985) state, because they are beautiful and aesthetically pleasing. Watson (2010) found that birdwatchers might even consider their garden birds as part of their social world, thus relating to them as entities in their own right while to birders, according to some researchers, a bird might have more of a utilitarian value as a sighting to be collected (Miller & McGee, 2000; Moore et al., 2008; Scott, 2013); according to McFarlane (1994) those most serious about the pursuit, identification and listing of birds were less interested in conservation.

‘Birdwatcher’ is also used to describe someone casual about any bird-related activity. For example Stoll, Ditton and Eubank (2006, p. 246) described a ‘birdwatcher’ as someone “whose birding is incidental to other travel and outdoor interests and for whom the activity is an enjoyable yet inconsistent outdoor activity”. Rather than forming perfect or rigid dichotomies the terms ‘birder’ and ‘birdwatcher’ form a continuum as will be discussed later in this thesis (Section 6.1.2).

While ‘birdwatcher’ is the older term ‘birder’ is now more widely accepted in the USA, as is ‘birding’, what ‘birders’ do (Stoll et al. (2006). The term is also generic now and those who participate in most non-lethal bird-related activities are called ‘birders’, whatever their interest of level of interest. Throughout this dissertation I will follow modern US usage of ‘birder’ as a generic term, as do most researchers and also lay people. When referring to those serious about their interest, whatever it is, I will add the descriptor ‘serious’. If I am specifically referring to those who list I will add or use the terms ‘lister’ or ‘listing’. I have also used ‘lister’
to mean someone serious about the activity as a “competitive sport” (Cooper & Smith, 2010, p. 3). As well I follow Cooper and Smith’s use (2010, p. 3) of ‘birdwatcher’ as someone casual about the activity, that is to whom it is a “recreational hobby”, or a person with generalist or specialist interests other than listing. However, I will quote directly and without alteration a researcher who uses the term ‘birder’ or ‘birdwatcher’.

There are subsets of those who pursue, identify and list new birds. For example, a ‘twitcher’ is a term used to describe a serious or even extreme birder, that is, one who would travel any distance sometimes at great expense to see, identify and list a new bird. These are often ‘vagrant’ species rarely or not sighted before in their state or country (Connell, 2009; Moore et al., 2008; Oddie, 1995; Sheard, 1999). An indication of how far twitchers will travel to see such a bird, can be grasped from a British newspaper report (anonymous, 2011) of a Slaty-backed Gull, a bird native to eastern Russia and Japan, that turned up at a UK rubbish dump in 2011. The article mentioned that 1200 twitchers flocked to see the bird, many coming from countries throughout Europe. When a vagrant robin turned up in a British garden in the same year, 2011, several thousand twitchers - the “flaparazzi” as William Langley of The Telegraph, UK (2011), called them – turned up to see it, some attempting to climb the ten foot high walls surrounding the yard in which the bird had landed. North Americans have also been known to travel long distances to see a new bird; a birder by the name of Ryan Shaw once drove for twenty hours from Tacoma, Washington to southern California, in order to list a Nutting’s Flycatcher (True, 2011), a species native to parts of Central America. David Sibley, a famous American birder (Weeks, 2001) mentioned in an interview that in 2000 a Green-breasted Mango Hummingbird, a rare vagrant from Costa Rica, turned up in North Carolina and birders flew in from all over the continent to see it. Chasing the bird would have involved a round trip of over 2000 kms for this one bird (Sibley did not mention in the interview whether he actually got to see the bird). Scott, Lee and Lee (2009), in a survey of ABA members found that 83% of ‘active’ birders travelled to see a rare bird, and they took an average 191 trips in the year of the survey.

The term ‘lister’ is more common in the USA than ‘twitcher’, and may be used for anyone who collects sightings of birds that they have identified. Both terms are used to describe those who set out to list all new birds during a specific time or in the formal competitions known as ‘twitchathons’, the aim of which is to record or list as many bird species as possible within a day or other specified period (Connell, 2009). There is also an informal competition called a Big Year, when a birder will set out to see as many birds as possible within a twelve month period, as well. As well there are the “big listers” (10,000 Birds, 2013), people such as Phoebe
Snetsinger and Richard Koeppel who set out to list more bird species than anyone else, and spent much of their lives chasing birds all around the world.

The importance of twitching or listing can be ascertained from the existence of the Rare Bird Alert (Swick, July 31, 2015) which notifies birders if an unusual bird, for example a rare species or new vagrant, turns up in their state or country. An eBird comment (Audubon Society & Cornell Lab of Ornithology, no date given) further put listing into perspective by stating that the RBA enabled birders to judge “whether it’s worth calling in sick to work (to go chase the bird)”. Others list birds without leaving home. For example, Scott, Baker and Kim (1997, p. 5) reported that a participant in their study of the Great Texas Birding Classic stated that he kept a list of birds that “mocking-birds” imitated, and another that he “maintained a life list of birds heard on television”.

The ability to identify a species is essential to those who keep lists of birds (Scott et al., 2005a; Scott, Lee & Lee, 2009). Scott et al (2005b, p. 3) stated that the ability to identify difficult birds is “a standard by which many birders judge and accept others as rightful members of the birding social world” (here, as with many other researchers, Scott et al [2005b] is using the term ‘birder’ to describe those ‘serious’ about the activity). Those serious about listing prefer difficult-to-identify species, as Connell (2009) noted:

(Twitchers or listers) prefer the excitement of recognising a new LBJ (‘little brown job’) to seeing the most colourful and exotic species, especially those in flocks such as ducks or penguins, or those with interesting behavioural characteristics or songs (Connell, 2009, p. 205).

The LBJ’s to which Connell referred are generally dull-coloured birds that lack obvious fieldmarks to the untrained eye, a fieldmark being a characteristic that can be used to identify one species from another. Figure 1.1 depicts Lincoln’s Sparrow, an LBJ. This species is similar to several other species, in particular Swamp Sparrow. Indeed it is difficult to tell the juveniles apart (an important fieldmark is whether the crown is streaked or solid in colour).
The number of birders who want to see as many species as possible, appear to be small, with estimations from 3% (Kellert (1985) to 7% (McFarlane, 1996) of the US birding population. According to the Carolinian Canada Coalition (2011, p. 6) only 7% of avitourists were “‘hard-core’ birders (whose) travel planning is totally determined by the opportunity to observe birds, especially rare species or birds they have not previously seen”. “Hard-core” leisure, according to Scott et al. (2005a, p. 1) is “a form of serious leisure that involves extraordinary commitment (in both behavior and attitude)”. Scott et al. (2005a, p. 4) gave the example of birders who too “15 hour” ocean trips in the hope of seeing pelagic (ocean-going birds) that often resulted in “long bouts of seasickness”. ‘Twitching’ can also be hardcore leisure (Connell, 2009; Oddie, 1995; Sheard, 1999), as demonstrated by the reports in British newspapers and the actions of American birders such as Sibley (Weeks, 2001). The same study by the Carolinian Canada Coalition (20aa, p. 23) also found that 81% of visiting birders were casual and ‘novice’ birders.

Large numbers of birders, whether they are serious about listing or otherwise, will visit particular areas to see a diversity of birds. In 2007 a survey by Parks Canada found that 40 000 birders visited the tiny (15 square kms) Point Pelee National Park, Canada, most during the months of April and May during the spring migration of birds along two major flyways. While
most visitors were from Ontario and the US, 17% of visitors to the region came from as far away as the UK (Carolinian Canada Coalition, 2011).

1.3 Demographics of the US birding population

Most of the 47 million birders in the USA (US Fish and Wildlife Service (2011). are married (see for example Bireline, 2005; Hodur, Leistritz, & Wolfe, 2004; Sali & Kuehn, 2007) and more than half are women (US Fish & Wildlife Survey, 2011). US birders appear to be well travelled (Scott et al., 2009; Sekercioğlu, 2003). According to the US Fish and Wildlife Service (2011, p. 45), 18.9 million US citizens travelled away from home to watch birds in 2011. According to researchers (Cole & Scott, 1999; Lee, McMahan & Scott, 2014) women birders take fewer trips than men to watch birds. They also own less of the equipment needed to identify birds than men, such as binoculars, telescopes and field guides (see McFarlane, 1994; Moore et al., 2008; Sali & Kuehn 2007),

Travel carried out for the primary purpose of watching birds, is known as avitourism, a term attributed to Richard Payne (2008b pers. comm.), a past president of the ABA. Avitourists appear to constitute a large sector of wildlife tourism (Curtin & Wilkes, 2005; Jones & Buckley, 2001), and ecotourism; Wight and Corvetto (2003, p. 26) stated that birding was the sixth “most popular activity listed in an in-flight survey of ecotourists”. Bird tour guides and companies operate in many countries to service the avitourism market as indicated by Birding Pal (2015). The site does not mention travellers by nationality, but it is likely given the numbers of birders in the US, that Americans dominate.

1.4 Gender and birding

Gender is the relationship between biological sex and behaviour according to McIntyre & Edwards (2009) and Baron Cohen (2003). There is also a social construction in gender formation as recognised by feminist authors such as Aitchison (2003). Gender is important to this thesis. Firstly, the study centres on couples, most of whom are heterosexual, and secondly, men and women who often relate to, and watch birds differently. Therefore, spouses may prefer different activities, and those differences have the potential to affect their bird-related recreation and travel.

Several studies have found that women are less interested in the pursuit, identification and listing of birds than men (Cooper & Smith, 2010; Harrington, 2002; Hvenegaard, 2002;
McFarlane, 1994, 1996; Moore et al., 2008; Scott, Ditton, Stoll & Eubanks, 2005c; Scott et al., 2005b; Scott, Lee & Lee, 2009; Scott 2013) and are more likely than men to be involved in bird-related activities not related to listing (see Cooper & Smith, 2010; Lee, et al, 2014; Maple, Eagles & Rolfe, 2010; Scott et al., 2005b; Scott & Lee, 2010). For example, Cooper and Smith (2010, p. 3), basing on their studies of data from birding and bird-related organisations, reported that the monitoring of birds’ nests, a pastime they reported as ‘birdwatching’, was an activity in which more women participated. Women were also more likely to watch birds for familial or social reasons, according to McFarlane (1994). Cooper and Smith (2010) stated that ‘birdwatching’ was ”female biased” and ‘birding’ (meaning pursuit, identification and listing of birds) was ”male biased”.

1.5 The distribution of birders world-wide

Birding Pal (2015), a website for travelling birders, gives an indication of the distribution of birders around the world, advertising over 3200 contacts in 156 countries, including all US states, all central American and Caribbean countries, fourteen South American countries and territories, 50 African countries, 33 Asian countries including North Korea, 43 European countries, 19 Middle East countries, and Australia and the Pacific region (ten countries). Yet a prolonged search of websites found few statistics on numbers of birders in each country apart from the UK and the US where the Fish and Wildlife Service has carried out surveys of all wildlife users for several decades. Increasing from 21 million in 1982/3 (Wight, 1998), recent estimates (US Fish and Wildlife Survey, 2011), calculated that about 47 million or 21% of the adult US population watch birds. By comparison, the UK may have the biggest European population of birders, the UK-based Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (2016) having 1,090,000 members.

Birding appears to be expanding in Asia as well. Thailand and Borneo are destinations for birders often mentioned in birding chat lines, and tour operators and birders from most Asian countries attended the 2011 Borneo Bird Festival (the author was one of the speakers). The Wild Bird Society of Japan (2011) has 45,000 members that belong to 90 chapters nationwide. Birding appears to be growing most rapidly in India and parts of China; there are now birdwatching societies and clubs in more than 20 major cities in China, most of which started up within the last decade (China Bird Watching Network, 3 Jan, 2014). The reasons for the increase in birder numbers appear to be firstly, a response to growing prosperity that allows for the purchase of expensive equipment such as binoculars, and secondly, increased visitation by
birders and birdwatching organisations (Ma, Chen, Wang & Fu, 2012). Sen (2010) estimated that the number of Indian birders was about 45,000, but suggested that, given the size of the population and growing prosperity, the figure could reach several million by 2025. Similarly birding appears to be growing rapidly in South America, with every country on that continent represented at the Colombian Bird Festival 2013 (at which the author was one of two intercontinental speakers). It appears that India, China and South America may at some stage surpass the numbers of birders in the USA.

1.6 Birding and couples

In this study bird-related activities carried out for both leisure and travel are examined through the lens of the couple relationship. Therefore, couples are central to this thesis; they are the arena where the different values, attitudes and priorities of two individuals meet and potentially combine in a third, shared entity, that of the couple. For the purposes of this study a couple is two people either romantically and/or legally united. In 2015, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) was revised to define a "spouse" to include married, same-sex partners and common-law (defacto) marriages regardless of state of residence (United States Department of Labor, 2015). The term ‘married’ is used in this thesis to describe all couples and I use both ‘spouse’ and ‘partner’ depending on context. The term ‘wife’ may not be agreeable to many, although since the advent of same-sex marriage, it has become more acceptable. Furthermore, there does not seem to be a suitable feminine replacement.

The large body of birding research within the US has focussed on individuals (McFarlane, 1994), and a “within-person perspective” (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2008, p. 2049); questions are typically asked only of the respondent about the respondent only (for example, Cordell & Herbert, 2002; Eubanks et al., 2004; Hvenegaard, 2002; McFarlane, 1994; Scott et al., 2005a), thereby giving a profile only of the individual and not the social being. Marriage or mention of a significant other is included in the demographic questions of some surveys, but otherwise spouses are rarely mentioned (for example see Cole & Scott 1999; Hvenegaard, Butler & Krystofiak 1989; McFarlane, 1994; Scott & Thigpen, 2003; Seong-Seop & Scott, 1997). Indeed Cole and Scott (1999, p. 47) stated that in their survey comparing wildlife watchers (that is, holders of a Texas Conservation Passport, an annual pass that allows the holder to enter all Texan state parks) and birders (namely members of the ABA) they (Cole & Scott, 1999, p. 60) “completely ignored” considerations such as “familial commitments that influence both trip
planning and the kinds of activities pursued on trips” of interest to spouses, among other family members who “care little about observing wildlife and birds”.

Avitourism has been the subject of limited research, for example, by Hvenegaard (2002) in his paper on birder specialisation, and Scott, Lee and Lee (2005) in their study of ABA membership. This research mostly focused on activities that appear to pertain more to men, such as the identification and listing of birds, and individuals. Despite the concentration on individuals Hill (1988) reported that shared leisure and travel experiences were important to marital stability; Yoo (2014) found, on interviewing conference attendees and accompanying spouses, that the accompanying non-working spouses’ presence resulted in a strengthened pair bond. Trauer and Ryan (2005, p. 490) concluded that holidays are “a time for togetherness with significant others”. According to studies (for example Acitelli, Rogers & Knee, 1999; Swann, Jetten, Gómez, Whitehouse & Bastian, 2012) couples in a committed relationship, develop a shared identity and/or interdependency, the strength of which is increased by shared leisure time (Kalmijn & Bernasco, 2001). Yet spouses’ leisure and travel interests may differ. For example, researchers such as Cooper and Smith (2010) have reported a gender difference in the way that men and women watch birds, with one way treated as serious leisure and the other as casual.

1.7 Birding as serious or casual leisure

Here, a second theme of the thesis is introduced; that of birding constructed as either serious or casual leisure. The subject is important because birding research has generally focused on a particular set of activities regarded as serious, for example the pursuit, identification, and listing of species. On the other hand, non-listing activities such as watching birds in one’s garden or nest-monitoring are regarded as casual. Because the former are more popular with men and the latter with women, these interests demonstrate a gender bias.

The word ‘leisure’ hails from the Latin, licère, ‘to be permitted’ and according to the Oxford Dictionary (2012) means “free time”, or time not tied to work (other definitions will be discussed in Chapter 2). Stebbins (1982; 2005) defined serious leisure using criteria such as perseverance, identification with the activity and centrality of the activity to one’s lifestyle, as well as commitment (and motivation which drives dedication to the activity), and a sense of achievement. Conversely, Stebbins (1997) saw casual leisure as transitory, needing few skills, and not needing perseverance as it offered immediate rewards.
Research has generally focused on birding as serious leisure (for example Eubanks et al., 2004; Harrington, 2002; Hvenegaard, 2002; McFarlane, 1994, 1996; Scott et al., 2005a; Scott et al., 2009). Researchers separated those who watched birds into two main groups by criteria linked to the pursuit, identification and listing of birds. Birders classified as serious by researchers displayed a number of the criteria that Stebbins attributed to serious leisure (this will be covered more fully in Chapter 2), for example, centrality to lifestyle (Cole & Scott, 1997; Eubanks et al., 2004; Hvenegaard, 2002; Jun, 2008; McFarlane, 1994; Scott et al., 1999; Scott & Shafer, 2001; Scott & Thigpen, 2003; Wright, 2004), and commitment and a sense of achievement (in successfully finding and identifying birds, and compiling bird lists). Those considered less serious (casual birders or birdwatchers), owned less equipment and took fewer trips for the purpose of seeing birds.

The ‘birdwatcher’, according to Stoll, Ditton and Eubank (2006), also fitted the activity around other interests and therefore ‘birdwatching’ did not meet one of the criteria for serious leisure, that of being central to lifestyle. Neither were birdwatchers seen to be interested in the sense of achievement that serious birders/listers felt at the successful identification of a difficult bird (Connell 2009) or in adding to their bird list. Yet Cooper and Smith (2010), Watson (2010) and Lee et al. (2014) pointed out that some non-listing, bird-related activities were serious indeed. For example, the monitoring of nesting activity requires diligence, persistence and accuracy, and can add substantially to the avian body of knowledge (Watson, 2010). Birdwatchers watch and feed hummingbirds (Lee et al., 2014) and supply housing for Purple Martins (Progne subis), a species almost completely dependent on the nesting boxes supplied by humans (Ray, 2012). The criteria researchers have used for categorising birders as casual or serious are set out in Table 2.2. Nonetheless the classifications of leisure as serious or casual is not strict a binary concept but on a continuum (Shen & Yarnal, 2010; Stebbins, 1992), as therefore, must be the dichotomies of ‘birder’ and ‘birdwatcher/casual birder’ and lister/non-lister, as will be explored later in this thesis in the context of couples.

Women have generally been found to constitute a minority of ‘active’ or ‘skilled’ ‘serious’ or ‘committed’ birders (see McFarlane & Boxall, 1996; Scott, Baker & Kim, 1999; Scott, Lee & Lee, 2009), a major reason being that their relative lack of interest in listing and identification of birds (Cooper and Smith, 2010; Harrington, 2002; Hvenegaard, 2002a; McFarlane, 1994, 1996; Moore et al., 2008; Scott, Ditton, Stoll & Eubanks, 2005c; Scott et al., 2005b; Scott, Lee & Lee, 2009; Scott 2013). A number of studies, however, (for example, Cooper & Smith, 2010; Lee, et al, 2014; Maple, Eagles & Rolfe, 2010; Scott et al., 2005b; Scott & Lee, 2010) have
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found that women were as likely as men to be serious about activities involved with birds that did not involve identification and the keeping of bird lists. Moore et al. (2008) stated that women were less interested in competitive listing activities (such as twitchathons), and therefore, were not as easily accepted as members of the birding social world as men (Scott et al., 2005b), a finding supported by Cooper and Smith (2010) who reported that few women were in positions of authority in the ABA.

According to Aitchison (2003, p. 77), feminists saw the dualisms of masculine and feminine as illustrating a power relationship that elevated the male “at the expense of the female gender”. This power relationship has been demonstrated by the authority of (male) birders who historically shaped the legitimacy of bird-related activity by promoting the ‘active’/serious (male/masculine) birder/lister over the passive/casual (female/feminine) birder/’birdwatcher’.

Although more than half of US birders are women there is little research on them or what they do. Instead women appeared to have been added to ‘male knowledge’ (Wambui, 2013, p. 1), that is, they were included in research that focused on areas of birding of most interest to men. Yet such categorising affects many male birders as well. To Ridgeway and Correll (2004) socio-cultural beliefs about gender shape and prejudice the behaviour and attitudes of “otherwise similar” men and women, thus resulting in inequalities in the ways that both are treated (Correll & Ridgeway, 2006).

Men and women (where possible I use ‘men’ and ‘women’ as nouns rather ‘male’ and ‘female’, considering that to use these terms as nouns may be as disrespectful as using ‘Aboriginals’ to describe ‘Aboriginal people’) may watch birds and think about them differently according to Moore et al. (2008). If so, then in a heterosexual relationship spouses may vary in their attitudes to birds and birding; men may be more interested in seeing, identifying and list new or rare species, while their partners may be more content to just watch a bird and learn about it and its environment (Moore et al., 2008 p. 91, Scott et al. (2005b). Women may not be interested in attending the same birding events as men (Moore et al., 2008), and women, more so than men, may use such a pastime as a vehicle to increase contact with friends of family, as Scott and Godbey (1992; 1994) found with members of the contract bridge clubs they studied. The differences between men and women who watch birds may be resolved in couples, firstly, because they can adopt each other’s modes of behaviour, particularly if they have been together for a long time (Burke, 2006; Herzog, 2007; Jackson, 1998; Levenson, Carstensen & Gottman, 1993). And secondly, spouses use a range of strategies to resolve conflict, including negotiation,
compromise, avoidance, accommodation (Evertsson & Nyman, 2011; Hughes & Hogg, 2006) and cooperation (Kozak, 2010).

To recapitulate, the literature on birders has focused on the activity as serious leisure, in the form of bird identification and listing, pastimes that interest more men than women. Consequently women are seen to be less serious about birding than men, although according to other literature (for example Cooper & Smith, 2010; Scott & Godbey, 1992; 1994) they may be just as serious about birds but in different ways. The research has also focused on individuals despite most US birders being married. Given the potential for spousal differences, as shown in the Literature Review, spouses may prefer dissimilar types of leisure and travel, and resort to negotiation to resolve those differences.

1.8 Thesis topic and focus

My thesis topic is US couples who watch birds together and travel internationally, with birding being one or all of the reasons for that travel. The thesis explores potential differences between spouses related to birding leisure and travel, and whether/how couples resolve those differences. North American (US) birding couples were chosen for this thesis because the numbers who watch birds in the USA are significant – about 47 million according to the US Fish and Wildlife Service (2011), and most birders are married (Bireline, 2005; Hodur, Leistritz, & Wolfe, 2004; Sali & Kuehn, 2007). Despite those statistics there is little research on couples at leisure or travel, and none on couples who travel together with birding being the reason or one of the reasons for travel (Scott, April, 2009, personal comment). Also US birders, including couples, dominated my clientele in my thirty plus years as a birding guide, and through them, and as the author of several bird books, I was able to gain access to other US birders and bird societies and clubs. I also identified with couples as I too was in a committed relationship.

There is much research on US bird-related recreation; indeed no other country appears to have so much information in the form of both government surveys such as those run by the Fish & Wildlife Service, and academic papers. Most of this research, as the following sections will demonstrate, has focused firstly on individual birders and secondly on activities more popular with men. Every one of 51 questions Scott, Lee and Lee (2009) presented in a study of ABA members, was directed towards the ‘I’, the individual, despite most birders, including ABA members (Scott & Lee, 2003; Scott, Lee & Lee, 2009), being married (Bireline, 2005; Hodur, Leistritz, & Wolfe, 2004; Sali & Kuehn, 2007).
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While there appears to be no directed research it does seem that many birders travel with their spouse (Ellis & Vogelsong, 2003; Kerlinger, 1995, Sali, Kuehn & White, 2008). Travelling with a partner appears to be common practice in other areas of tourism as well, for example ecotourism (Kwan, Eagles & Gebhardt, 2008; Wight, 2001) and corporate travel (Yoo, 2014). Leisure and tourism are linked according to some studies (Carr, 2002; Rojek, 1993) in that what one does at home is reflected in one’s actions while travelling. So if spouses have different interests or levels of interest in birds, or motives for watching birds they may well have different travel interests. Differences within a relationship suggest a need to negotiate or compromise, particularly when one is in unfamiliar territory as may occur when one travels internationally.

To recapitulate, this study focuses on gaps in the literature on those who watch birds for leisure and travel. These gaps are created by studies that a) are confined to a narrow range of interests, mainly those more popular with men; b) focus on birding as serious leisure; and c) deal with individuals rather than the social being. Therefore, the focus on this study is women, birding usually described as casual leisure, couples, and the intra-couple relationship.

1.9 Research objectives

Drawing on the opportunities and critiques provided by the concepts of ‘serious leisure’, and based on a consideration of the research gaps as mentioned in Section 1.7, the overall aim of this thesis is to explore the experiences, perceptions and interactions of US couples who watch birds together for leisure and travel. To achieve this aim, the study has the following objectives:

- to outline the demographics and behavioural profile of birders who are in a committed relationship, and the role of gender and the couple relationship in this profiling;
- to explore the nature and meaning of couples’ birding experiences as travel;
- to identify any intra-couple differences, gendered and otherwise, in the contexts of birding leisure and travel;
- to understand how couples negotiate their birding travel.

Because of the research gaps I considered it best to adopt a mixed methods approach, using both qualitative and quantitative methods, thus broadening the picture already drawn by past research. Together these approaches enabled the exploration of intra-couple relationships in the context of gender, serious leisure, and resolution or otherwise of differences within couples who watch birds and travel internationally. Given the lack of research on couples who watch
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birds, this thesis draws on the field of research into the social psychology of couples, for example on couple identity (Acitelli, et al., 1999), health studies as demonstrated by Hart (2014), Arden-Close, Moss-Morris, Dennison, Bayne and Gidron (2010), and in other areas of serious leisure such as gaming, canoeing, skiing and boating (Ahlstrom, 2009; Goff, Fick, & Oppliger, 1997; Hudson & Gilbert, 2000; Kuentzel & Heberlein, 2008).

1.10 Significance of the research

The US Fish and Wildlife Survey, Birding Addendum (2011) found that US birders spent nearly $US 107 billion on equipment and travel-related expenditure generating 666, 000 jobs and $13 billion in tax revenue. According to David Hartley, Conservation Manager, ABA, (2005) bird festivals, popular in the USA where hundreds are held every year, and birders may be of “economic, educational, and conservation-related” benefit to communities and small towns. In my personal experience (as a presenter at Australian, Borneo and Colombia Bird festivals), bird festivals can offer diverse experiences of varying attraction to different groups. Bireline’s (2005) study of three birding festivals held in Florida found that more women attended than men and while many were experienced birders most did not keep a life list. By comparison, the Great Texas Birding Classic attracted mostly men interested in competition and listing (Scott, 1999).

As mentioned previously, there are gaps in the literature on those who watch birds mainly in relation to women and their preferred style of leisure, couples, and the intra-couple relationship as it pertains to birding for leisure and travel. Professor David Scott, the author of much research on US birders, has remarked that there is “no research” on couples who watch birds [28 April, 2009 pers. comm.). Ahlstrom (2009, p. 19) made a similar finding in her study of couples and gaming, pointing out that researchers “commonly include one question about relationship threats” and adding that they “seldom elaborate on the relationship problems that may be brought about and prolonged by the activity’.

Inclusion of one’s spouse in such research may be imperative. According to Kang and Hsu (2004) spouses may well have different needs and desires and priorities, while Dunbar (2004, p. 245) reported that tests of dyadic power revealed differences in perspective between men and women, and that “both parties’ perceptions” should always be used. Hence studying both members of a couple may provide a more complete picture of birding activity and travel. Much birding research has focused on the categorisation of birders as serious or otherwise, by their degree of involvement in the seeking of new birds and listing, the type of birding of more
interest to men. Thus findings that more men are serious birders than women may not truly reflect the level of dedication among women, but rather the way that serious birding is defined and examined. Other bird-related activities preferred by women might well fit the criteria for serious leisure such as nest-monitoring (Cooper & Smith, 2010), or “hummingbird appreciation” as mentioned by Lee et al. (2014, p. 15). Or they might use birding as a vehicle for showing commitment to friends and family so involved, as Scott and Godbey 1992; 1994) had found in their research on formal and social contract bridge clubs.

According to researchers there may also be a gendered dimension to attitudes about conservation; for example, Lee et al. (2014) concluded that men and women hold different value systems in relation to the natural world, and hence different approaches may better engage individuals in important conservation efforts (Moore et al., 2008), and couples, I would add... Therefore, there is a need to gather “accurate information regarding gender-related differences” and how couples may negotiate different birding “priorities or styles” to help facilitate each other’s involvement and enjoyment of the activity. As well the exploration of different approaches and interests may provide markets by enabling the further diversification of tourism.

Sekercioğlu (2003) concluded that avitourism did not require expensive infrastructure, and might be conducive to the wellbeing of Indigenous and rural people and to conservation, although there are some doubts about avitourism’s contribution to conservation (Steven, Morrison & Castley, 2014), as will be discussed later in this thesis. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that the investigation of birding for leisure and avitourism is an important area of research for social scientists and ecologists, the leisure and travel industries, conservation bodies, and government. This research may also be theoretically significant in terms of broadening understanding about couples and gender, and other intra-couple dynamics, while undertaking leisure activities and travel.

1.11 Thesis outline

This introductory chapter has provided the historical and demographic backdrop to the subject of couples who watch birds together for leisure and travel, set against the male perspective and the social world that defines birding. It also draws attention to the gaps in the existing birding leisure and tourism research, including that of women who watch birds, and the couple relationship in leisure and travel, intra-couple disparities in interests and priorities, styles of birding, and levels of dedication that affect leisure and travel, and strategies for a successful
trip. This chapter also outlines the research objectives that address those gaps and briefly covers the research methods used.

The tourism literature, reviewed in Chapter Two, demonstrates in detail the dearth of research on the experience of birding women and couples in leisure and avitourism, and explores some relevant theories. Chapter Three discusses the methods used in this study, and examines both the qualitative and quantitative paradigms, and their use in a mixed methods approach that combines a questionnaire and interview; justification for the use of this approach is detailed, data collection and analysis are explained, and issues of validity, trustworthiness and generisability, and limitations associated both with the use of mixed method and this study, are all raised and discussed. In this thesis references to a survey mean the questionnaire used. Findings of the survey and the interviews constitute chapters Four and Five, respectively. These findings are combined and discussed in Chapter Six and linked to existing research on birding, tourism, couples, leisure, and relevant theory. Chapter Seven, the conclusion, summarises the thesis and its key findings, and suggests further research.
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter extends the scholarly context outlined in Chapter One, on this study of US couples who watch birds. It seeks to highlight research problems and opportunities in the context of tourism, leisure, gender, and couple relationships, identify relevant theories and locate important research gaps. It includes an interrogation of the literature on potential differences between spouses through explorations of birding as serious and as casual leisure; gender and leisure, and of social worlds. Attention is paid to the absence of alternative voices, for example the feminine and a “couple” voice, and to the dichotomies purported to exist between male and female interests (Johnson & Repta, 2012), those of birders and birdwatchers (as defined in the introductory chapter, and in the next section) and casual and serious leisure (Shen & Yarnal, 2010).

As outlined in Chapter One, couples who watch birds for leisure, and for whom birding is part or all of their travel experience, are the focus of this thesis. There is little research on couples at leisure: less in tourism and nature-based tourism, and nothing in avitourism. Furthermore, existing research on birding is largely focused on individuals, and on activities and types of interest found more in the domain of men, that is the pursuit of new or rare species, bird identification, and listing (see Hvenegaard, 2002; McFarlane, 1994; Scott et al., 2005b). Non-lethal, bird-related activities from any other perspective are largely under-explored. This chapter begins with a further exploration of the research on the categorisations of birders (Section 2.1), followed by Section 2.2 on birding as serious leisure, 2.3, on the demographics of US birders, and 2.4 on avitourism. Section 2.5 investigates the literature of theories relevant for couples who share a leisure pursuit and international travel, while 2.6 deals with the characteristics of couples and 2.7, couples at leisure and travel. The literature on gender and leisure is highlighted in Section 2.8 and conservation and gender in Section 2.9. Section 2.10 deals with the literature on the social worlds of birding, followed by that on couples dealing with difference and 2.11, the conclusion.

2.1 Who or what is a birder?

*If you're not looking for birds, identifying birds, and finding your principal satisfaction in making that identification, you're not birding* (Wright, 2004, p. 106).

Building on the brief overview provided in Chapter One, this section covers the demographics, description, nomenclature and categorisation of those who watch birds. Two terms are
commonly used in the USA to describe someone who watches birds, that is, ‘birder’ and ‘birdwatcher’. ‘Birder’ is generally used as a generic term, but also refers to someone who is serious about birding. Conversely, ‘birdwatcher’, once the generic term, is now generally reserved for those considered in the research literature who do not list birds or who are considered to be less ‘serious’ about the activity (Cooper & Smith, 2010).

2.1.1 Categories of birders

Researchers use several terms other than ‘birder’ and ‘birdwatcher’ to describe those who watch birds and some are confusing or appear tautological. It is important to examine these terms, firstly to clarify their meanings, and secondly because birders (using the term generically), for example, may differentiate themselves or be differentiated from others involved in bird-related activities. This section examines the literature and other sources surrounding the terminology of birding.

Although ‘birder’ is an all-inclusive term within the USA, it is also used to denote those who are serious about the activity of finding, identifying and listing birds (Wright, 2004). Listing is an important part of the definition. For example, Cooper and Smith (2010, p. 3) referred to ‘birding’ as a “sport” with a focus on dedicated listing. Likewise Prior and Schaffner (2011, p. 55) sketched a picture of birding as the application of “specialist attention” to the “minutiae of species and subspecies variation, the practice of listing, and perhaps participation in competitive birding events”. In other words Prior and Schaffner were discuss ‘birding’ as a serious listing activity.

‘Serious’ birders, meaning those at the opposite end of the spectrum to ‘casual’ are variously described as “committed” (Eubanks et al., 2004; Kellert, 1985; Moore et al., 2008; Scott et al., 2005c), “active”, “skilled”, “specialised”, advanced” (Hvenegaard, 2002; McFarlane, 1994, p. 365; Scott et al, 2005c), and “elite” (Scott et al., 2005a). There are more names for those at the extreme end of the serious birding spectrum, for example “combat” (Salzman, 1995, 11-12), “gonzo” (Williams pers. comm. Sept. 2008), “hardcore” (Scott et al., 2005a, p. 3), and ”twitcher” (Oddie, 1995, p. 23; Sheard, 1999, p. 183). Curtin and Wilkes (2005, p. 469), in their study of bird tour operators, stated that “lister” is also used to describe “hardcore, elite” birders; the term is often interchanged with “serious”, “twitcher” and “committed”, or “skilled” (Scott, 2013; Scott, Lee & Lee, 2009).
Listers are not just interested in new birds according to Scott et al. (1997). Some construct lists of known birds they see in a particular time period or on a particular trip, or in films or on television. This desire to list or ‘collect’ is also found in other serious leisure pursuits such as stamp collecting (Gelber, 1992) and mountaineering (Donnelly, 1994), as in wishing to climb all seven of the world’s highest peaks (http://www.mountainmadness.com/adventures/seven-summits). Lorimer and Lund (2003, p. 134) wrote of “bagging” or “collecting” “an entire round of ... mountain summits” by ascending them”. Other desires include the wish to see species of nudibranchs (Cater, 2008), and to collect and eat fungi (Fine & Holyfield, 1996). Liep (2001) compared the collection of bird sightings with the ownership of objects called kula, on the Trobriand Islands. ‘Kula’ were of great value to Trobriand Islander men, and they went to great lengths to acquire them, although kula had no obvious use. Pratt (1992, p. 26) wrote that some are simply interested in “specimen gathering” giving as an example tourists who collect “photographs and souvenirs” or lists of destinations.

Scott et al. (2005c, p. 65) gave some generalised descriptions of types of birders. A ‘committed’ birder was a person who would travel at short notice to see a bird, who subscribed to birding journals, might lead field trips, kept a life list, who belonged to birding clubs, owned a lot of birding equipment and for whom birding was an “outdoor activity”. An ‘active’ birder travelled infrequently from home to watch birds, might not belong to a bird club but did not lead field trips, kept a general bird list, and for whom birding could either be an outdoor activity or not. ‘Casual’ birders (and his definition applies to ‘birdwatchers’) were those to whom birding was incidental to “other travel and outdoor interests”, who did not subscribe to birding journals or keep a life list, and “for whom birding is an enjoyable yet inconsistent outdoor activity”.

Yet even with the same researcher a definition may change. In an earlier paper and with another author, Scott described the ‘active’ birder as one for whom birding was most central to lifestyle (Scott & Thigpen, 2003), a description which fits that by Sheard (1999, p. 202) of “twitching” as “active” birding. Prior and Schaffner (2011, p. 55) state that twitching is an extension of birdwatching and includes a focus on those birds that are rare or difficult to find or vagrants, the difference being in motives. Whereupon the rationale for birdwatching is “aesthetic” (and here Prior and Schaffner are in agreement with Kellert [1985]), that for “twitching” is “rigorous scientific classification”. This may well be the case, but it can also be an addiction as with other serious leisure taken to extremes (Ahlstrom, 2009).
Sheard (1999, p. 202) considered that twitching, which he considered a “sport-like activity”, had arisen historically because the observation of birds had become “increasingly routinised” as it evolved within the conservation movement. However, ‘twitcher’ is also synonymous in the eyes of some lay people with any sort of keen birder. For example Jonathon Franzen, US novelist, writer for The New Yorker, and keen birder, was described as a ‘twitcher’ in an interview with presenter Julia Christensen on ABC 105.7 (Christensen, 2011), a title he had earlier refuted in the personal communication below:

I admit to being a lister, and to caring about seeing lots of different species when I’m on a birding trip; I enjoy the chase and I enjoy novelty. But I wouldn’t call myself a twitcher: I don’t like to burn gasoline in pursuit of a rare vagrant, and I’m not a person who looks at a new species for five seconds and ticks it on the list and then is desperate to run on to the next. (11 January 2011).

In this exchange with me Mr. Franzen also demonstrated that being a lister did not necessarily mean that one was a ‘hardcore’ birder as Curtin and Wilkes (2005) had mentioned.

Researchers have used numerous and complex criteria to judge a birder’s status resulting in a plethora of ambiguous descriptors and subcategories, some of which appear to conflict with others. For example, Bryan (1979, p. 37) referred to birders who did not use binoculars as “beginners” while Kellert called such people “casual” birders (1985, p. 343). These contradictions are further elaborated upon in Table 2.1, on criteria used by researchers in categorising birders. McFarlane (1994, p. 364) stated that “casual birders” were individuals “relatively new to birding (with) ≤ 10 years of experience”, a time span that conflicted with Maple et al. (2010, p. 227), who stated that a “beginner” birder could have “10 plus years of experience”. This use of the terms ‘casual’ and ‘beginner’ suggests a level of confusion in classifying someone who may have been watching birds for years but not taking it seriously, and another who is just starting out. In her 1994 and 1996 papers on birding specialisation McFarlane used both ‘birdwatcher’ and ‘birder’ to identify those with low bird identification skills and who did not ‘chase’ or travel to see birds, as in “casual birders” or “birdwatchers”.

Kellert (1985) classified birders as either casual or committed (meaning ‘serious’) based on the numbers of species they could identify while Cooper and Smith (2010) concluded on the results of their survey of birding organisations and activities, that ‘casual and ‘committed’ observers of birds could be distinguished on the extent to which they listed the birds they saw. Kellert and Cooper and Smith may be making the same point. Generally to list a bird one needs to be able to identify it (although this is not always the case, as I know from personal experience as
a guide; clients sometimes accepted another’s identification, without checking themselves). Scott et al. (2005c) attempted to qualify what was meant by casual and serious and active birders, but decided their self-classification of “seriousness” might only be useful among those who travelled to watch birds (p. 73) or for those with more “generic birdwatching motives” (p. 53), that is, motives not necessarily linked to listing, such as being alone or outdoor, or enjoying the ambience of nature. Cooper and Smith (2010, p. 7) tried to untangle the confusion brought about by the use of myriad names, pointing out that the phrases “casual birdwatching” and “committed bird watching” used by Kellert and Berry (1987) were analogous to birdwatching and birding. They also raised the concept that ‘birwatchers’ might be just as serious about birds as any birder or lister, but in a different way.

The change to ‘birder’ from the older term ‘birdwatcher’ took place in the late 1960s, led by the organisation now known as the American Birding Association. According to Floyd (2006, January-February), editor of the ABA’s journal, Birding, the ABA was first known as the American Birdwatching Association, and its first journal, published in 1968, was entitled The Birdwatcher’s Digest. Stuart Keith, a British birder, suggested to the organisation that references to “‘birdwatchers’ (be dropped) in favour of ‘birders’”, the latter sounding more ‘serious’. The motion was quickly adopted (Weidensaul, 2008, p. 268) and in 1969 the organisation changed its name to the American Birding Association (my emphasis) and the journal was renamed Birding; its focus was the “competitive and sporting aspects of birding” with an “emphasis on definitions and ground rules” (Floyd, 2006, p. 20), in other words, listing. Eighty-three percent of ABA members surveyed by Cole and Scott (1997) kept life lists, as did 97% of ABA members in a later survey (Scott, Lee & Lee, 2009), although this had dropped to 87% in a later survey (Scott et al., 2010). Cooper and Smith (2010) in their study of birding organisations and activities, referred to the ABA as a ‘listing’ organisation.

The reason for the change of name was a desire of ABA members to separate what they did from ‘birdwatching’ and conservation (Kaufman,1997; Wilds, 1994). According to Scott et al. (2005b, p. 2), Scott being the author or co-author of several studies of the ABA, members of that organisation believed the term ‘birder’ indicated an individual with an “active” approach to birding (see also Scott, Lee & Lee, 2009). By ‘active’ the ABA members were describing the actions of those members who had travelled all over the USA to collect and record bird sightings (Scott et al., 2005b). This definition of ‘active’ differs from the definition that Scott et al. had used in another paper (2005c) where the term described a birder less dedicated to the activity, a point that illustrates the complexity surrounding the use of these terms. It has taken
some decades for the change from ‘birdwatcher’ to ‘birder’ to filter through all echelons of society and to be accepted internationally, in Australia, for example. In their 2006 national survey the US Fish & Wildlife Service still used the term birdwatcher, but by the next US F&W survey, held in 2011, ‘birder’ was applied to all within that publication wherever or however they watched birds.

2.2 Birding as serious leisure

This section explores the definitions of leisure and serious leisure, followed by authors’ comparisons of serious and casual leisure and their values and motivations, and the application of the criteria for serious and casual leisure to birding. It investigates the various characteristics used by both researchers and other birders to judge whether a birder was serious about the activity or not. Lastly, the literature examines both the value of casual leisure and the presence of another form of serious leisure that is social in nature.

The difference in interests demonstrated by Stolle et al. (2006) in their study of those who watched birds at Platte River, corresponds to the dichotomy of birdwatcher/casual birder versus lister/serious birder as supported by a number of studies (for example Connell, 2009; Cole & Scott, 1997; Cooper & Smith, 2010; Scott et al., 200a; Scott & Thigpen (2003).

While relatively few birders are serious about the activity according to several studies (Cole & Scott, 1999; Eubanks et al., 2004; Kellert, 1985; McFarlane, 1996; Scott et al., 1997b; US Fish & Wildlife Survey, 2006, 2011), most research has focused on the activity as a form of serious leisure and related issues such as individual choice and achievement, according to Arai and Pedlar (2003), Bireline (2005) and Edginton and Chen (2008). The research on the topic of serious and casual leisure has become quite complicated; a diagram by Hartel (2013) showed six subcategories under casual leisure and seventeen under serious leisure. In this thesis I shall concentrate simply on the two categories of serious and casual because they appear to be most relevant to identifying and understanding differences between spouses, and affect the way they watch birds.

Firstly, a brief explanation of why leisure has a place in a thesis that also deals with tourism is necessary. Rather than being a complete break from ordinary life as Urry (1990) described it, tourism is an extension of leisure practices at home, according to Richards (2013) and Rojek (1993). Carr (2002) referred to this link between leisure and tourism as the Tourism-Leisure Behavioural Continuum. Therefore, an exploration of leisure is integral to this thesis.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Although leisure has been long been studied (Unger & Kernan, 1983) researchers have found it difficult to define, and so it has been variably described in a number of ways, for example, as time off, or away from work (Clarke & Critcher 1985), as work that one enjoyed (Samdahl, 1988), or as an experience that is shaped by the relevant social world (de Fontenelle & Zinkhan, 1993). Feminist researchers have described leisure as freedom from obligations (Henderson & Bialeschki, 1991), and freedom with a sense of entitlement (Robinson, 2003). According to Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw and Freysinger. (1989, p. 134), the intrinsic nature of leisure is one’s perception of its ability to improve one's general wellbeing. As will be demonstrated in the following sections, leisure, according to researchers, forms a continuum, from non-work like to work-like activities, or ‘casual’ to ‘serious’, and from superficial to transformative experience.

In his definitions of serious leisure, Stebbins (1982; 2005) included the criteria of perseverance, commitment, identification (with the activity), acquisition of experience, a sense of achievement, and membership of a unique social world. Stebbins (2004, p. 50) added qualities such as “earnestness, sincerity, importance, and carefulness’, attributes that he had found in the recreationists he had been long researching. These were qualities that serious leisure shared with work, so Stebbins (2011) believed, and gave it similar status. He did not consider casual leisure as important as serious leisure (2015, p. 24), writing that, “casual leisure, as a concept is as old as serious leisure, but I only began in the late 1990s giving (it) concerted scholarly attention”. Stebbins wrote (2001, p. 257) of the “unique ethos” surrounding serious leisure that led those involved to develop “subcultures composed of special beliefs, values, moral principles, norms, and performance standards. Much of popular or unserious (casual) leisure cannot be conceived of in those terms”. Stebbins (2001, p. 308) believed that casual leisure, was largely short-lived, hedonic, required few skills, and was unable to make more than a “limited contribution” to a participant’s “distinctive” social identity, or to “community” (Cohen-Gewere & Stebbins, 2013, p. 102). In the words of Scott and Godbey (1994,p. 48), Stebbins gave “short shrift” to those whose leisure, he believed, occupied the “‘low’ or casual end of the recreation spectrum”.

Stebbins (2004a, p.52) included in his criterion of perseverance the need to confront and overcome fright and even danger, thus hardcore and extreme leisure fall within the ambit of serious leisure. Hardcore leisure, according to Scott et al. (2005a, p. 1), involved “extraordinary commitment” while extreme leisure (Anderson & Taylor, 2010; Austin, 2005; Fine & Holyfield, 1996) consisted of activity in which participants risked serious discomfort or injury.
In its most extreme form, such leisure is known as ‘edgework’ meaning the taking of risks that put one as close to ‘the edge’ (serious injury or death) as possible (Lyng, 1990). Examples of hardcore/extreme leisure include the ‘Re-enactors’ who starve themselves to participate in replays of Civil War battles, extreme bikers, BASE jumpers (Anderson & Taylor, 2010, Austin, 2005), and collectors of potentially poisonous fungi (Fine & Holyfield, 1996). Anderson and Taylor (2010, p. 42) summed up the attitude among the extreme leisurists by quoting a saying available on car bumper stickers (amazon.com, no date given) “It’s Not a Real Sport Unless You Can Die from Massive Internal Injuries”. Extreme birding has resulted in deaths; some birders figure in the Wall of the Dead, a memorial to naturalists who died in the line of work (Conniff, 2011). Nonetheless, birders are more likely to suffer discomfort while on the quest for new birds rather than serious injury or death. Scott et al. (2005a, p. 4) wrote of a birder who described a regularly occurring 15-hour trip off the coast of New Jersey as the “pelagic trip from hell”. Pelagic (open ocean) trips can mean long trips on mountainous seas, all the while enduring long bouts of seasickness. Extremeness in the context of tourism is not confined to the examples above. Mehmetoglu (2005) wrote of ‘hard’ adventure tourism which carries some risk while ‘soft’, is relatively risk-free.

Both hardcore and extreme leisure have been portrayed as having similar positive values to serious leisure. Kusz (2004, p. 209), reported that extreme leisure is portrayed by the media as consisting of “heroic activities embodying traditional American values”, such as “individualism, self-reliance, risk-taking, and progress” and “white masculinity”. Willig (2008, p. 692) wrote that ‘hardcore’ and extreme recreationists considered their activities “more authentic” and themselves “superior” to others who did not go so far, viewing their pastime as a way to “achieve mastery and status”.

Another term used in the study of serious leisure is “recreation specialisation”, coined by Bryan (1977, p. 175) to describe a continuum of behaviour he found in his studies of anglers that narrowed in focus from the general to the specific. The criteria for position on the continuum were knowledge, experience and motivation to specialise in the chosen activity from which Bryan (2001) constructed four segments of specialisation consisting of novices, generalists and two types of specialists (Bryan’s criteria were expanded to seventeen by more recent researchers according to Seong-Seop and Scott [1997]). To Burr and Scott (2004, p. 28), building on Scott and Shafer (2001), specialisation entailed:

A focusing of behaviour (which) entails frequency of participation, the types of equipment people own, and years of involvement; (skill, meaning) activity specific and may include physical
abilities, knowledge about history and cultural artefacts, and understanding of rules and etiquette; (commitment including) those personal and behavioral investments that recreationists make over time.

Drawing from Scott and Godbey’s (1992; 1994) studies of contract bridge clubs Scott (2012) argued to combine serious leisure and recreational specialisation, concluding in a later study of ABA members (Lee & Scott, 2013, p. 450) that they “may be measuring the same thing” (in a later paper Lee et al. [2014] stated that the debate over whether recreational specialisation and serious leisure were similar or different continued). The present study does not delve into specialisation; and given the focus of researchers on birders as listers, I have not treated specialist birders as a separate entity from serious birders.

As has occurred with other types of leisure, for example boating (Kuentzel & Heberlein, 2008), gaming (Ahlstrom, 2009), collection of wild fungi (Fine & Holyfield, 1996), and mountaineering (Beedle & Hudson, 2003; Donnelly, 1994), research has generally focused on birding as serious leisure (Eubanks et al., 2004; Harrington, 2002; Hvenegaard, 2002; McFarlane, 1994, 1996; Scott et al., 2005a; Scott et al., 2009) through the lens of the criteria raised by Stebbins (1982) that is, achievement, its centrality to lifestyle, and economic commitment (see Table 2.1) among others. A central life interest is one pursued to the exclusion of other interests (Cole & Scott, 1997; Dubin & Champoux, 1973; Eubanks et al., 2004; Hvenegaard, 2002; McFarlane, 1994; Scott et al., 1999; Scott, Lee & Lee, 2009; Scott & Shafer, 2001; Scott et al., 1999; Scott & Thigpen, 2003), and which may even influence family and career decisions (Scott & Shafer, 2001). Table 2.1 provides a list of the criteria that various researchers have used to determine whether respondents could be classified as casual or serious about birding.
Table 2.1 Criteria used by researchers in categorising birders as casual or serious

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whether participants use binoculars or not</td>
<td>Kellert (1985) gave the lack of use of binoculars as a criterion for classifying birders as casual. Bryan (1979, p. 37) referred to such birders as “beginners”, but also stated that certain specialists can be differentiated by what equipment they do not use - fishers may not carry a net ‘for this might indicate lack of expertise’ in landing the fish. Instead bare hands are used. Eubanks (2007) made a similar argument for not always using binoculars to identify a bird but rather relying on one’s experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did participants want to see any particular species?</td>
<td>Bryan (1979) observed that just as fishers became more specialised they shifted from wanting to catch any fish under any conditions to targeting particular species in particular places, that this parallels the behaviour of birders who may lose interest in very common birds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length/difficulty of specific birding trips</td>
<td>Cole &amp; Scott (1997), Hvenegaard (2002), McFarlane (1994), Scott et al. (2005a) and Scott &amp; Thigpen (2003) observed that serious birders took more birding trips than casual birders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did participants keep a bird list?</td>
<td>Cooper &amp; Smith (2010) found that birdwatchers were less likely to keep a bird list. Those who listed birds were more likely to own the equipment needed to list (see next box).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centrality to lifestyle: economic commitment (bird books; equipment).</td>
<td>Mentioned by several researchers (for example Cole &amp; Scott, 1999; Eubanks et al., 2004; Hvenegaard, 2002; Hvenegaard et al., 1989; Jun, 2008; McFarlane, 1994; McQuarrie &amp; Jackson, 2005; Scott &amp; Shafer, 2001). Scott and Thigpen (2003) calculated the centrality of birding through criteria such as the amount of equipment and bird books owned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of species on bird list including hard-to-see/rare birds</td>
<td>Connell (2009), Eubanks et al. (2004), Moore et.al. (2008), Sekercioğlu (2003) note that the more serious birders (twitchers) target rare and difficult birds. Connell and Moore et al. point out that these birders tend to be male.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived skill and identification ability</td>
<td>Kellert (1985); McFarlane (1994); Scott &amp; Lee (2010); Scott and Thigpen (2003); Seong-Seop and Scott (1997) attribute higher skills at birding and identification with serious birders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in other activities</td>
<td>Scott et al. (2005c) reported that those serious about birding tend not to be involved, or as involved, in other leisure activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of risk</td>
<td>Serious birders were more likely to take risks when birding (Salzman, 1995; Scott et al., 2005a) and less serious birders were less likely to take risks (Seong-Seop &amp; Scott, 1997).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal orientation skill development</td>
<td>Specialists place increasing importance on their skill over time, aiming for control and predictability of their particular pursuit – a specialist angler, for example, depends on skill (knowledge of fish behavior and habitat) to catch fish rather than luck (Bryan, 1979, pp. 39, 50).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals: affiliative, appreciative</td>
<td>Affiliative; where a person becomes involved in birding primarily to spend time with another; appreciative – the seeking of ‘peace, belonging, familiarity, and stress reduction according to McFarlane (1994, p. 362). These goals, according to McFarlane are a feature of casual birders, and to Prior and Schaffner (2011, p. 55) are typical of a “birdwatcher”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Researchers measured economic commitment by criteria such as those items that aid in the listing and identification of birds, namely the amount and cost of birding equipment (Hvenegaard, 2002; McFarlane, 1994), field guides (bird identification books) journals (Hvenegaard et al., 1989; Moore, et al., 2008, p. 97) and magazine subscriptions (McFarlane, 1994; Scott & Thigpen, 2003), and the cost of trips taken to see birds (Lee et al., 2014). Scott et al. (2005c, p. 72) appear to be the only researchers raising a word of caution, suggesting that was really being measured was “discretionary household spending”. In other words researchers were stating that if one had the income to buy the equipment or travel, then one was serious about birding.

Some researchers (see Lee et al., 2014; McFarlane, 1994; Sali & Kuehn, 2007; Scott et al., 1999) explored motivations for birding. Motivation is the stimulus that directs one to behave in a certain way; in birding research motives examined have included affiliation, appreciation, achievement and conservation (McFarlane 1994), and competition, enjoyment, sociability and self-expression, and conservation (Scott et al., 1999). Sali and Kuehn (2007, p. 318) grouped motivations into five categories – “emotional, intellectual, physical, social and spiritual”. Researchers sometimes differed on the degree of value birders placed upon certain motivations. For example, McFarlane (1994) found social reasons for birding to be of little interest to serious birders in her study, and yet Scott et al. (1999) in their study of participants in the Great Texas Birding Classic, many of whom were also serious about birding, found them important.

Researchers found that those serious about birding were motivated by commitment to achievement in the form of expanding their knowledge, improving and challenging their skills, and seeing new or rare birds to add to their bird list. For example, Scott, Lee and Lee (2009) reported that the commitment to improvement of birding skills rated higher than any other commitment factor among the ABA members they surveyed. By comparison, McFarlane (1994) reported that only 17% of casual birders (a category which also includes birdwatchers) were driven by achievement, a statement backed by Hvenegaard (2002a) who mentioned low motivation for achievement in terms of ‘novice’ birders as well.

A characteristic used to judge the ‘seriousness’ of a birder, according to McFarlane (1994) and Scott and Thigpen (2003), was the number of field guides they owned; Scott and Lee (2003), in a study of ABA members, found that respondents had a mean of 19. Field guides were essential, argued Scott and Lee (2010, p. 191) because identification skills did not come naturally, and to those with a “fixation on listing” it was necessary to learn and perfect such
skills over time by studying such books. Yet serious birders were also expected to do without such aids to help them find and identify birds in the field. Cocker (2001, p. 141) wrote in his autobiography, Birders: Tales of a Tribe, that "no self-respecting birder would ever dream of carrying a field guide in the field. There is no more humiliating admission of inadequacy". Cocker was not alone in his appraisal. Scott et al. (2005a), Scott, Lee and Lee (2009) and Scott and Shafer (2001), assessed the self-reported skill of birders in part by using the number of birds they could identify without a field guide, and Sandilands (2000, p. 50) wrote of a birder whose expertise appeared to be “marked by a distinct absence of bird identification books". However, not having means to identify a new bird could present difficulties as Cocker pointed out; on a trip he and friends spotted a bird they could not identify, and had to race to the local hotel to grab a field guide. One may memorise the familiar birds of one’s home territory or even one’s country, but further afield (as Cocker attested by virtue of his experience) field guides, either as publications or on iPhones or iPads, are considered necessary and are commonly carried.

Serious birders/listers were also disparaged if they relied on bird tour guides (here I include the term ‘tour’ to distinguish those people who guide birders from field guides, the books that aid birders to find and identify birds). Indeed, extreme listers have had their feats downplayed by other birders because they hired guides. Phoebe Snetsinger, an American who at one time had the world’s longest bird list, hired bird tour guides to help her find particular target species. According to Eric Salzman (1995, p. 11), a reviewer for the ABA’s journal, Birding, her list was considered by some to be “not sporting” and a result of “not true competitive birding”.

Likewise James Vardaman’s Big Year was downplayed because, like Ms. Snetsinger, he also hired a guide (Scott et al., 2005a). In turn, those who have done the ridiculing have also been ridiculed; Salzman (1995) labelled those who derided such efforts as “adherents of the Find-It-Yourself School of World Birding”.

While casual leisure has largely been ignored by researchers some studies have maintained that it is important; Arai and Pedlar (2003) argued the value of the social voice expressed in casual leisure, as did Kelly (2012, p. 14) who reported that casual leisure promoted “social cohesion” and was therefore of significant benefit in its ability to bond families and community. Reicher, Spears and Haslam (2010, p. 14) expanded upon these arguments by stating that social groups and social identity, and hence casual leisure, were fundamental to the understanding of what was rational. Arai and Pedlar (2003, p. 189) criticised the focus on serious leisure asserting that the centrality of “individual benefits, choice and autonomy” to leisure theory ignored the
social voice and therefore interdependence and obligations in society (p. 187). Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, and Wetherell (1987, p. viii) referred to the lack of research on casual leisure as “theoretical neglect”.

As with Scott et al.’s (2005c) statement that the items used for bird identification were a measure of personal income, other criteria of seriousness were also open to interpretation. For example McFarlane (1994, p. 366), considered that serious birders might have a broad range of interests as Decker, Brown, and Gutiérrez, (1980) had found with serious hunters who derived “multiple satisfactions” from their activities,. Nonetheless her qualification of ‘serious birding’ still focused on “increasing knowledge, expanding skills and abilities and listing new or rare birds” whereas Decker et al. found that the foremost interest of hunters was “to get outdoors and enjoy nature” (1980, p. 323).

Scott and Godbey’s studies (1992; 1994) expanded the definition of what constituted serious leisure in their study of contract bridge clubs. One group of clubs were formal, playing rule-based games while another group played social games in which the rules were not followed as strictly. The latter game had the hallmarks of what Stebbins had described as ‘casual leisure’ in that it was flexible and communal, did not involve a striving for achievement and often occurred at people’s homes, whereas the formal games happened at “club facilities” (Scott & Godbey,1992; p. 58). The commitment in the former clubs, those that were largely social, was to the game as a vehicle for building relationships rather than as an end in itself. Importantly, Scott & Godbey (1992; 1994) unseated the concept of serious leisure as the only paradigm worthy of study, as did a later paper by Brown (2007) on the casual and serious subworlds of shag dancing.

While serious and casual leisure have been presented in the literature as polar opposites, Bryan (1977) described increasing specialisation as a m, a point taken up by Stebbins (1992, p. 6) who applied the concept to serious and casual leisure, submitting that: “a more sophisticated, research-informed conception will eventually replace this primitive dichotomy. That conception will necessarily convey continuousness”. Serious and casual leisure as a continuum will be explored later in this chapter.

2.3 Demographics of US birders

Given the specific market focus in this thesis, it is important to paint a more concise picture of the demographics and travel behaviour of the US birder, expanding upon the information
already reported in Chapter 1. According to the 2011 US Fish and Wildlife Service Addendum to Birding 47 million US citizens watch birds. The 2006 US Fish and Wildlife Service Addendum stated that 54% of US birders were women, a percentage that increased to 56% in the 2011 US Fish and Wildlife Service report. That the percentage of women birders is growing faster than that of men was also reported by Cordell and Herbert (2002) in their study of data from the US National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (SNRE). Of the 97 respondents Hvenegaard (2002) surveyed in his study of specialisation among birders visiting Thailand, 60% were categorised as advanced birders, over 80% of whom were male.

The average age of birders is greater than that of the general US public according to several studies (for example Ellis & Vogelsong, 2003; Isaacs & Chi, 2005; Scott, Lee & Lee, 2009; US Fish & Wildlife Service, 2006, 2011). The birding addendum to the US FWS survey (2011) reported that 53% of birders were 45 years of age or older and 30% were 55 or older. Scott et al. (2009), in a study of ABA members, found that 36% were aged between 55-64 years. Hvenegaard’s study (2002) of birders visiting Thailand differed in that his study group were younger than those mentioned by other researchers. He also found that experienced birders (44 years) were older than novice birders (34 years). Birders also appear to be relatively affluent; according to several studies (for example Hvenegaard, 2002; Isaacs & Chi, 2005; La Rouche, 2001, 2006;; Scott & Lee, 2003; Scott, et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2014), generally with higher than average incomes. Female birders were the exception, according to Cordell and Herbert (2002) who found that they earned less than males. Hvenegaard (2002)

Most birders are tertiary-educated (Hvenegaard, 2002; La Rouche, 2001; McFarlane, 1994; McFarlane & Boxall, 1996; Scott et al., 2009; Sekercioğlu, 2003; US Fish & Wildlife Service, 2006, 2011). A study of ABA members found that 85% had a graduate or advanced degree (Scott et al., 2009). While not directly comparable these percentages appear to be higher than for the general US public; according to the US Census (2013. p. 11) 21% of the total population aged 25 years or older had gone to college. 18% had a bachelor’s degree, and 11% a “graduate or professional degree” (this category includes masters and doctorate qualifications), with men and women almost equivalent (11% versus 10.5% respectively). Few studies of birders mentioned women’s academic qualifications, the one exception found being Seong-Seop and
Scott’s (1997) survey of attendees at the Texas Hummer/Bird Celebration, which found that over half the female respondents were college graduates.

Where the question is asked in surveys, most US birders prove to be married or have a ‘significant other’ (Chi, Isaacs, Icabalceta, Jorge, Holloway & Lavergne, 2004; La Rouche, 2001, 2006; Lee & Scott, 2004; Sali & Kuehn, 2007; Scott & Lee, 2003; Scott & Lee, 2010; Scott & Thigpen, 2003; Seong-Seop & Scott, 1997; Tsaur & Liang, 2008; Yeong, Isaacs, Icabalceta, Holloway, & Lavergne, 2004; US Fish & Wildlife Survey, 2006, 2011). Most ABA members are also married according to Richard Payne, ex-president of the ABA (2008a, pers. comm.), and a study of ABA members, 64.5% of whom were male (Scott & Lee, 2003), reported that 70% were married, a figure rising to 73% in a later study (Scott, Lee & Lee, 2009, p. 5).

### 2.4 Avitourism

Avitourism is travel primarily to watch birds (Payne, 2008b pers. comm.). US birders appear to be well travelled. According to the US Fish and Wildlife Service (2011, p. 45), 18.9 million US citizens travelled away from home to watch birds in 2011. Sekercioğlu (2003) noted that 49% of ABA members had travelled internationally specifically to watch birds, a finding supported by Scott et al. (2009) who, in a later survey of ABA members, stated that travel was an integral component of their birding behaviour, and that half of all members, had travelled to watch avifauna (birds) in an average of nine countries (outside the US and Canada).

Despite the relatively large numbers avitourism is not indicated in the survey of U.S. Travellers to Overseas Countries (OTTI, 2012, p. 100), although it does include “environmental/eco.excursions” which would cover bird-related interests. Avitourism belongs to a group of nature-based tourism products that include wildlife tourism (Jones & Buckley, 2001), wildlife ecotourism (Acott, La Trobe, & Howard, 1998; Cleaver & Muller, 2002; Royuela, 2014; Wight, 1998), and adventure tourism (Mehmetoglu, 2005). Wildlife tourism is the finding and/or viewing of wild animals, whether captive or free, and the feeding of and/or touching particular species (Newsome, Dowling & Moore, 2005).

According to Fennell (2014), the term “ecotour” was first mentioned in *Ecotour of the Trans-Canada Highway, Nova Scotia* (1976). This small publication of cartographic material, produced by the Canadian Forestry Service, aimed to bring about understanding of the “natural and cultural” landscape (p. 31). The most widely quoted definition of ecotourism belongs to Héctor Ceballos-Lascuráin, a Mexican architect/conservationist who defined it first in 1983 as:
travel to natural areas untouched by humans with the specific goal of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural aspects (both past and present) found in these areas (Ecoclub, 2006, no page number given).

He redefined it in 1993:

Ecotourism is environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy, study and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features - both past and present), that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations (Ecoclub, 2006, no page number given).

Ceballos-Lascuráin was not the first to speak of tourism in terms of responsibility. Hetzer (1965) identified four principles of ‘responsible tourism’, that is, “minimizing environmental impacts, respecting host cultures, maximizing the benefits to local people, and maximizing tourist satisfaction”. There are now other definitions of ecotourism all of which highlight responsibility for example to the International Ecotourism Society (TIES) (2014) ecotourism is “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people. Ecotourism can be “deep”, meaning small, sustainable, appropriate tourism that fits in with host/indigenous communities (Hall, 1994), or “westernised” and even mass (Acott et al., 1998, p. 238). Wildlife ecotourism combines both ecotourism and wildlife tourism in that it only covers wildlife “in their natural habitats” (Sinha, 2001, p. 20) while maintaining the same ethics as ecotourism.

While avitourism, is generally classified as ecotourism (Wight & Corvetto, 2003), it also has a mass tourism aspect, as when many birders travel to an area in the hope of seeing a rare or vagrant species or spectacles such as the Platte River cranes (Stoll et al., 2006). Avitourism has also been categorised as adventure tourism. The first trip reports published in the ABA’s Birding, stressed “great birding adventure (Wilds, 1994, no page number given). “Birding adventure” is mentioned in the tourism marketing plan for Southwestern Ontario (Carolinian Canada Coalition, 2011, p. 81). Buckley (2006, p. 1) classified adventure tourism as meaning “guided commercial tours where the principal attraction is an outdoor activity that relies on features of the natural terrain, generally requires specialized sporting or similar equipment, and is exciting for the tour clients”. The key phrase is ‘outdoor activity’, with birding being a sideline.
Payne (2008b), who devised the term ‘avitourism’, made no mention of the commercial aspect included in Buckley’s (2006) definition. Indeed the only authors to mention the commercial aspect were Curtin & Wilkes (2003 and Che (2003) in their papers on birding tours, although it goes without saying that birders travelling abroad will travel commercially and probably stay in commercial accommodation. The international travel of avitourists fits the definition of tourism rather than a leisure activity in that it “includes an overnight stay and/or travel away from the participant’s place of residence” with a minimum travel distance of, in Australia, 40 kilometres (Buckley, 2006, p. 2). Therefore, even if survey respondents did not hire a guide, their international travel to see birds still qualified as tourism.

Those serious about the activity were discouraged from using commercial operations; birders who used guides were disparaged, as will be discussed later in this section. Likewise, in their paper on mountaineering tourism, Beedle and Hudson (2003, p. 636) drew a contrasting picture of experienced climbers, and adventure tourists, stating that the former “reject the notion of buying a guide and rely upon their own carefully constructed accumulation of skill and experience”. They wrote that adventure tourists:

> have the nature of their experience defined for them through a combination of a dependence upon guides, existing sources of information about mountains, and a protection afforded by constantly improving equipment and other technology-resources (such as mountain rescue possibilities).

The first organised US bird trips occurred during the 1930s when the National Audubon Society arranged tours to Florida. Organised birdwatching trips were also offered by the Connecticut Audubon Society in the 1950s. According to Hvenegaard (1994) the first organised international bird tours occurred in 1961, to Europe. The Connecticut Audubon Society began to run international trips in 1981, first to Africa and the Galapagos and then to Borneo and Australia/New Zealand, coining the term “EcoTravel” ([http://www.ctaudubon.org/a-short-history-of-ecotravel/](http://www.ctaudubon.org/a-short-history-of-ecotravel/)). These programs (also run by other Audubon chapters) supported the Audubon mission of conservation, education and research.

Several articles on birding in other countries appeared in *Birding*, the ABA journal, beginning in Volume 2, no. 3, 1969 (Wilds (1994), when Peter Alden wrote of raptors (birds of prey) that could be seen along a new road in Venezuela. According to Floyd (2006), Vol. 6 (1974) of *Birding* contained much coverage of international birding destinations, including an article by Stuart Keith, who had birded in Africa and elsewhere. The article, entitled “Birding Planet Earth – A World Overview”, issued a challenge to US birders that North American birds were

Hvenegaard (2012), Şekercioğlu (2003) and Ma, et al., (2012) highlighted the benefits of avitourism, stating that it resulted in greater knowledge about the birds in the areas such people visited, and the encouragement of local initiatives in conservation. Ma et al. (2012) stressed these benefits in their paper on the growth of birding in China. Still, whether birding for adventure or sport or for utilitarian purposes, such as listing (Miller & McGee, 2000; Moore et al., 2008; Scott, 2013) could be considered ‘ecotourism’ may be questionable. Ceballos-Lascuráin expressed concern at the use of ‘ecotourism’ to describe what he considered to be “adventure tourism” or “extreme sports” that were carried out in a relatively natural environment with “little concern for conservation” or sustainability (Ecoclub.com, 2006). Fennell (2014, p. 103) wrote that a crucial aspect of ecotourism was that it be “geared towards minimum disturbance and impact”. This is not always the case with birders. The ABA was founded by birders more interested in sport than conservation (Wilds, 1994). Also, according to McFarlane (1994) the more serious birders were about the pursuit, identification and listing of species the less interested they were in conservation. Hvenegaard (2012, p. 82) elaborated on McFarlane’s (1994) statement, writing that birders who discovered a rare species, spread the word, resulting in more people seeking the bird and thus disturbing both wildlife and denigrating the habitat.

According to Fennell (2014, p. 522), “bonafide” ecotourism required a “tangible, concrete connection to the natural world, meaning not only seeing, but “feeling it, touching it – sensing it”. However, Staus and Falk (2013) noted that emotion may not be enough, that both intellectual connections were also needed in visitor experiences to influence attitudes and behaviour. These findings indicated that birding for utilitarian purposes (Miller & McGee, 2000; Moore et al., 2008; Scott, 2013), that is, for the sake of adding to the bird list, would not qualify as genuine ecotourism. Peterson (1991, in Hvenegaard, 1994) stated that the term had become a ‘buzzword’ or marketing gimmick, and Hvenegaard (2012, p. 82) referred to the ‘greenwashing’ used by some to depict the product as “beneficial or neutral”.

Avitourism is attractive to governments and industry because birders are relatively affluent (Hvenegaard, 2002; Isaacs & Chi, 2005; La Rouche, 2001, 2006; Scott & Lee, 2003; Scott, et al., 2009) and because of the relatively low cost of providing infrastructure; Hildreth, Vantassel
Scott and Lee (2003, p. 15) stated that ABA members, serious birders, travelled to “see birds and only birds” (the authors’ italics), and Wight and Corvetto (2003, p. 7) reported that birders on tour seek to watch birds “nearly 100% of their activity time”. Birders also travel often according to Scott and Thigpen (2003, p. 207) who asserted that the ‘active’ birders they surveyed took an average of 46 birding trips in a year, travelling around 7,080 kilometres. While birders have been disparaged for using guides, as mentioned above, many do, as evidenced by the large number registered with BirdingPal. There is also an extensive range of operators who offer specialised avitours, for example Wings/Sunbird (see http://www.sunbirdtours.co.uk), Field Guides (http://www.fieldguides .com), Victor Emanuel (http://www.ventbird.com), and the ABA (17 March, 2015). As reported by Scott and Lee (2003) and Wight and Corvetto (2003) serious bird tours offer products which, according to Curtin and Wilkes (2003, p. 198), may involve” intensive” birding that continues “all day and into the night with little time devoted for other guided activities or free time”. Che (2003, p. 201) reported that Field Guides, for example, stated that their tours were unsuitable for those “not interested in birding all day, every day” (my brief experience working as a guide for Field Guides and supported by anecdotal evidence from clients, is that their tours were unsuitable for anyone not prepared to focus solely on birds). According to Connell (2009, p. 206) intensive birding tours resemble “collecting tourism” in their focus on listing, thus drawing a parallel with Pratt’s statement (1992, p. 26) that such people are simply interested in “specimen gathering” as tourists would collect “photographs and souvenirs” or lists of destinations.

Hvenegaard (2012) reported on the motive of status in his paper on “last chance” birding – pursuing a threatened species with the hope of sighting it before it goes extinct. A list which features such species, and other rare and difficult-to see birds, has higher status than a list with more common avifauna. The chance to see rare birds or those exclusive to a region are a feature of birding tours (Hvenegaard, 2012). And it may not be just visitors who are listing, but also their guides. In a 2009 paper on ABA members Scott, Lee and Lee found that 53% of members of this “listing” organisation (Cooper & Smith, 2010, p. 5) who classified themselves as ‘skilled’ birders had served as bird tour guides.
According to the literature on serious birding and travel (for example Scott & Lee, 2003; Scott et al. 2009; Sekercioğlu, 2003; Wight & Corvetto, 2003), it appears that serious birding in the form of listing, as mentioned by Che (2003) and Curtin and Wilkes (2005), is a significant tourism market. Scott and Thigpen (2003, p. 207) reported that the most “active” birders travelled significantly more than casual birders (46 trips in a year compared with 3), and covered more distance (7,081 and 933 kilometres respectively). Twitchers are the source of much publicity. They have been the topic of films such as The Big Year (2012), and books like Ken Kaufman’s (1997) Kingbird Highway. There was even a novel, The Twitch, by Kevin Parr (2014), about a murder committed by a birder intent on winning a birding competition. Despite the publicity, the research shows that listers are not the most prolific avitourism market, because relatively few Americans are that serious about birding (see for example Eubanks et al., 2004; Kellert, 1985; McFarlane, 1996; Scott et al., 1997b; US Fish & Wildlife Survey, 2006, 2011). Furthermore, according to Curtin and Wilkes (2005, p. 471), listers on intensive trips never return to a destination, losing interest once they have seen the birds there.

… the motivation to be able to tick off another particular species is intense, and therefore time spent at a location is perceived as a once in a lifetime opportunity to be able to fulfil their wish list (Curtin and Wilkes 2005, p. 471)

According to Cater (2008, p. 58), the lack of repeat visits to a destination is also be a feature of that type of diving tourism which features “characteristic megafauna” such as sharks. While an “important motive for travel to specific destinations ... once they are ‘ticked off’ they have less pertinence”. Curtin and Wilkes (2005, p. 469) found that within the serious bird tour industry demand had risen for trips with a far more “relaxed and enjoyable feel” and that operators had begun to advertise more general interest tours so as to attract and hold those clients who do not wish to bird so “intensively”. Such a change has also occurred within the American Birding Association (Cordell & Herbert, 2002; Payne, 2008b pers. comm), and the trips they run, with a move towards both conservation and widening the scope of the organisation.

One reason for the move towards more generalised avitours is economic. Cole and Scott (1999, p. 59) noted that although serious birders spent more money annually than casual birders, their much smaller numbers meant that “communities and organisations” should target those less interested in seeing particular bird species. Maples et al. (2010) made similar findings on Point Pelee National Park, Canada, an area noted for the large number of migratory birds that pass through each year, suggesting that the authorities run a range of programs for birders with
different interests. While these examples are somewhat dated the move toward more generalised trips appears to be continuing. For example, in 2015 the ABA website featured a tour of India showcasing photos of not only birds, but the Taj Mahal, tigers and Nilgai deer (ABA events, 2015).

Despite the implication that birders are solely interested in birds, most are interested in other fauna as well (Cordell et al., 2008; Cordell & Herbert, 2002; Hvenegaard, 2002; Jones & Buckley, 2001). Of the 22.5 million Americans who, in 2011, took trips away from home to watch wildlife, 84% observed birds (down from 87% in the 2006 US Fish & Wildlife survey), 61% watched land mammals (70% in the 2006 US Fish & Wildlife Survey), 18% marine mammals (up from 15% in the US Fish & Wildlife Survey, 2006), 45% other wildlife including reptiles and butterflies. Somewhat surprisingly, 28% watched fish (US Fish and Wildlife Service, 2011). While the US Fish and Wildlife survey did not include the names of such sites one example of a popular public aquarium is to be found at Bonneville, Oregon where one can see (as the author did) sturgeon over four metres in length (www.oregon.com/attractions/bonneville-fish-hatchery).

The studies by Cole and Scott (1999), Curtin and Wilkes (2005), Maples et al. (2010) on the necessities for authorities, organisations and tour operators to broaden their targets, do not mention gender. The feasibility of the targets being women is indicated by both Moore et al (2008) and Lee et al. (2014). Writing in relation to female birders’ lesser interest in bird identification and listing, they indicate that women drive the change from trips and destinations that only offer intensive birding. It may also be that couples have played a part in this change as well, although there is no exploration of couples in the birding literature to explore this hypothesis.

2.5 Theories relevant for couples who share leisure/travel pursuits

A number of theories are pertinent to the subject of couples, and in this section the literature on social identity theory, identity fusion theory, self-categorisation theory, gender role theory, interdependence theory and dyadic power theory are discussed.

Over the last few decades, academic interest in couples has risen as demonstrated by the significant body of research on dyads and health (for example, Arden-Close et al., 2010; Hart, 2014; Peters, Jackson & Rudge, 2007). Research into leisure as an activity shared by spouses has also grown (see Ahlstrom, 2009; Albers-Miller & Landers, 2006; Goff, et al., 1997;
Kuentzel & Heberlein, 2008), and academic interest in couples and travel is now emerging with a paper by Yoo (2014) on spouses and conference travel.

Social identity theory, the first to be examined, followed by identity fusion theory, self-categorisation theory gender role theory, interdependence theory and dyadic power theory. The central concept of social identity theory is about one’s identity as part of a social world, and in relation to others (Reicher, et al, 2010; Stets & Serp, 2013). The social identity approach is comprised of social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and self-categorisation theory (Turner & Reynolds, 2001; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987; Hogg & Terry, 2000). Social identity theory holds that an individual’s behaviour moves along a continuum between their personal behaviour and that of the group to which they belong, the movement depending on which end of the continuum will most influence an individual’s behaviour. It deals with the way people evaluate themselves in relation to groups to which they belong, and includes their position in a hierarchy (Jost & Elsbach, 2001). Self-categorisation theory describes how individuals classify themselves in relation to a group (Riecher et al., 2010). Self-categorisation may lead the individual to behave in particular ways, depending on whatever category is salient at the time. Reicher et al. (2010, p. 18) gives the example of being an academic giving a lecture versus a sports fan. The academic wants to be seen as “measured, objective and dispassionate”, but in the latter role the individual wishes to be categorised as “partisan, loyal and passionate”. Reicher et al. (2010, p. 17) stated that self-categorisation includes a degree of “depersonalisation” or stereotyping.

According to identity fusion theory (Swann, et al., 2012) the personal and social selves unite, but the personal remains salient, and an individual can shift from being self-centred to “group oriented”, or belong to groups within groups, for example, a couple within a birding organisation or group (Reeve & Johnson, 2013, p. 317). Levels of personal and social identification may also fluctuate, according to Hart (2014) implying a continuum between the personal and the social.

Gender role theory, according to researchers (for example Kidder & Parks, 2001; Loi & Hang-yue, 2004; Williams et al., 2009), maintains that people are under social pressure from childhood to internalise and engage in behaviour consistent with culturally-defined, appropriate, stereotyped gender roles which are reflected in their social identities, females as social and empathic, and males as independent and achievement-oriented. According to Williams et al. (2009) women did not wish to participate in activities they identified as
masculine as they would be deviating from traditional gender roles. In the context of birding, Moore et al. (2008) noted the reluctance of women birders to participate in activities dominated by men, for example events that involved serious listing.

Two other theories of relevance are interdependence theory and dyadic power theory. Interdependence theory hypothesises that people stay in relationships that they find rewarding and discontinue relationships that are unrewarding. According to Givertz and Segrin (2005, p. 760) this does not necessarily hold for couples in a committed relationship who tend to stay together “through difficult times”. Whereas social interdependence theory considers relative dependence in an intra-couple relationship, dyadic power theory is about relative power and control. Both theories predict that the more powerful partner can dictate results for both (Simpson, Farrell, Oriña & Rothman, 2015, p. 396) although dyadic power theory suggests that males in many serious leisure activities would have more control within the couple.

Building upon identity fusion theory (Swann et al., 2012) and social identity theory (Turner et al., 1987; Kwang 2010, p. 30-31) identified three types of couple relationship: a) where the partner subsumed the self; b) where the individuals negotiated an identity that “acknowledges the unique qualities of both partners”, and c) where the self subsumed the partner. In models a) and c) there was decreased relationship satisfaction. In a) Kwang (p. 30) found there was still high commitment, and the partner being subsumed unlikely to leave the relationship. In c) there was lower commitment as the subsumed partner “is no longer a viable source of influence in the relationship” (Kwang, 2010, p. 30). Kwang (2010, p. 12) labelled her couple identification models as: A) the Forfeited Self, where one’s partner subsumes the self. These individuals reported “low satisfaction and high commitment”; B) the Negotiated Self, where both partners reported “high satisfaction and high commitment”; and C) the Imperialistic Self where the diagnostic feature is of low commitment. Kwang’s model will be further discussed in Section 6.5.

To summarise, a number of theories pertinent to the subject were examined in this literature review. The social identity approach reflects people’s self-categorisation and the role of the influence of the wider group, for example that of the social world or its representatives. This approach is fluid in that an individual can lean more towards one than the other, depending on influence. In fusion identity the strength of the attachment to the in-group, can affect the personal, whereas in the social identity approach the relationship to the in-group may be relatively interchangeable. Social interdependence theory considers the relative dependence of
spouses on each other through shared goals, while dyadic power theory considers relative power and control.

### 2.6 The characteristics of couples

This section examines the literature on couples, who they marry, how a committed relationship often changes them, and how those changes are manifested. Differences between spouses are also investigated as are ways that couples dealt with difference. The role of empathy and interdependency are also explored.

According to a number of studies (for example, Buss, 1985; Eika, Mogstad & Zafar, 2014; Kalmijn, 1994) individuals tend to marry those with whom they share a social identity, in other words similar or compatible values, attitudes, preferences, culture and leisure interests, socio-economic traits, (Buss, 1985) and educational attainment (Eika et al., 2014). Over time, according to Anderson Keltner and Jon (2003) people in committed relationships grow more alike emotionally. Spouses adopt some of their partner’s idiosyncrasies, to the point where the boundaries of the self may blur. They may feel they have more in common with their partner than with others, even those of the same gender (Burke, 2006; Herzog, 2007; Jackson, 1998; Levenson et al., 1993), even to the point of adopting aspects of their partner’s gender identity. This “role-taking”, according to a study by Burke and Cast (1997, p. 18) occurred in the newly-married couples they studied. Grunebaum (1979) and Levenson et al. (1993) concluded that senior spouses also become more alike over time, suggesting that “role-taking” exists among them as well.

As they negotiate the meanings of the shared relationship from their positions as individuals, spouses can develop a third or shared identity; according to Stanley (2011, p. 1) “two separate identities enter the portal and three identities come out the other side – you, me, and us”. Acitelli, Roger and Knee. (1999, p. 591) referred to that third identity as a “couple “ identity while Swann, Gómez, Jetten, Whitehouse and Bastian (2012, p. 444) cited a “fused” identity. According to Acitelli et al. (1999, p. 591) a sense of “oneness” developed as the couple identity became central to a couple’s lives. Also described as “cognitive interdependence” (Acitelli, 2007, p. 6) couple identity occurred within highly committed dyads, particularly those who in a long-standing relationship. One characteristic of a shared identity is the sort of language that couples use. Sillars, Shellen, McIntosh & Pomegranate’s study (1997) of 120 married couples found that one group consisted of spouses who were content with the relationship, and shared an intra-couple identity that was reflected in the language they used with each other. For
example these couples used inclusive pronouns such as "we" and “us”, “cross-referencing” (where a spouse repeats terms used previously in a conversation by their partner), and “confirmation” statements – comments that indicate knowledge of a partner’s point of view (Sillars et al. 1997, p. 2).

Commitment plays an essential role in couple relationships. According to Stets & Serpe (2013, p. 22) commitment to others is measured by how “close and important” those others are, and whether each would miss the other if they were apart. Gonzaga, Keltner, Londahl & Smith, (2001, p. 248) concluded from their study of “college-age” heterosexual couples that commitment was both indicated and strengthened by the external expression of love “in word, deed, and gesture”, all of which contributed to the growth of “interdependence, commitment and trust”. Schoebi, Karney and Bradbury (2012) in their survey of married US couples, stated that commitment comprised of a desire for the relationship to continue, and that it was entrenched in “experiences and judgments” (p.730) so deep-rooted that it was difficult to avoid, and a wish to engage in the type of behaviour that would support the relationship.

Sillars, Shellen, McIntosh & Pomegranate’s study (1997) of 120 married couples found that one of the two group of participant couples consisted of spouses who more often included the pronouns ‘I’, ‘my’ and ‘you’ in their dialogue, they talked more about themselves, and appeared to be more autonomous (p. 2). Hart (2014, p. 4), in her research on the responses of male partners of women suffering from breast cancer, mentioned the language that couples used, finding that the illness appeared to change the balance of interdependency within some. While some men retained their autonomous identity in that they continued to display the “you and me” identity which separated “his” and “her” needs, others reported that they had grown closer to their wives, and had begun thinking about themselves and their spouse as a “we” entity and the illness as a shared relationship issue rather than one belonging to a single individual.

Even in couples with a shared identity personal identity is not extinguished, according to Swann et al. (2012), this being a feature of identity fusion theory. Spouses may differ in several ways apart from gender, such as status (Clarke & Critcher, 1985; Kang & Hsu, 2004), and income, and individual preferences (Berg, Trost, Schneider & Allison, 2001). According to researchers (see for example Berg et al., 2001; Dion & Dion, 1993; Fine & Holyfield, 1996) spouses may demonstrate their independence through retaining their personal goals. These differences may be highlighted when individuals seek to engage in behaviours that verify their distinct personality (Swann, Gómez, Seyle, Morales & Huici, 2009; Verkooijen, 2006). According to
Sharpley and Khan (1982) this verification of identity is important in sustaining not only one’s self but also relationships, including marriage (Sillars et al. 1997, p. 2).

According to Dion and Dion (1993), who analysed individualism and collectivism in several societies, the retention of a strong sense of personal autonomy and individualism may result in ambivalence about “emotional dependence” on a spouse, to the detriment of the relationship. Grunebaum (1979) in his review of case studies of middle-aged and senior couples with relationship difficulties found that levels of autonomy varied with gender and circumstances. Women, their children grown, became more independent with age, while their men, retiring from work, often sought to replace the companionship of colleagues with that of their spouses, thus suggesting a change in gender roles. Nonetheless spouses might not change their behaviour to the same degree; identity theory suggests that less committed and less salient identities would be more likely to change than more committed and important identities (Stets & Serpe, 2013).

In opposition to Grunebaum’s (1979) finding that men grew more dependent on their spouse, Acitelli et al. (1999) and Givertz and Segrin (2005) found that, generally, they invested less in the couple identity than women, an issue also mentioned by Dion and Dion (1993) in terms of gendered differences in feelings of dissatisfaction within North American society. Such lack of investment and perhaps a greater sense of autonomy (Dion & Dion, 1993) may explain Carstensen, Gottman and Levenson’s finding (1995) that women were more negative towards their spouse than men in middle age. However, their husbands may not know of their feelings; in a review of the literature on dyadic power Dunbar (2004, p. 241) reported that the less dominant partner was likely to “avoid confrontation” by not demonstrating that negativity openly (p. 235), instead expressing their feelings in verbal comments or nonverbal behaviour such as refusing to negotiate or attempting to control the outcome by other means.

Sharing a common goal may refute dyadic power theory (Dunbar, 2004, p. 235) in that partners collaborating on a goal may be dependent on each other in order to achieve that aim. Schindler, Berg, Butler, Fortenberry & Wiebe (2010) demonstrated Dunbar’s conclusion in their study of couples in their sixties and older, where the males suffered from prostate cancer. They found that couples collaborated on goals even if those goals were not common to both, and meant more to one than the other.

Yorgason (2003) concluded that shared humour played a role in his study of couples where one had experienced hearing loss. While for some it was an expression of tension or resentment
over a partners’ inability to hear, for others humour was shared in the form of stories and to “lighten conversation” (p. 58). While he did not mention whether empathy or its absence played a part in the responses of those he studied it is a key component in romantic and marital relationships according to Cohen, Schulz, Weiss and Waldinger (2012) who concluded from their study of heterosexual couples that empathy increased satisfaction and a sense of being understood. According to Cialdini, Brown, Lewis, Luce and Neuberg (1997, p. 491) empathy could foster “a sense of commonality and compassion” for the partner. This emphasis on commonality was demonstrated in Cramer and Jowett’s (2010) study of heterosexual couples where one spouse was a professional athlete. They found that the level of empathy depended on how alike the spouses were, suggesting that key differences might lessen empathy.

Social interdependence may occur without empathy, according to a finding from a study of neural responses in Chinese students by Meyer, Masten, Ma, Wang, Shi, Eisenberger, Liberman and Han (2014). Interdependency may be present between spouses even if there is a reduced or absent couple or third identity. Putnam (1995, p. 6) offered an example, writing of community groups that lack empathy that they “root for the same team and they share some of the same interests. Their ties, in short, are to common symbols, common leaders, and perhaps common ideals, but not to one another.” Scott and Godbey (1992; 1994) reported similar results for those contract bridge clubs that only existed for the game; members were interdependent only in that they needed others to play with.

Deutsch’s theory of cooperation and competition, first published in 1949 (2011) studied the goals of groups, finding that interdependence in a relationship existed when those involved were mutually reliant. Deutsch’s theory was further developed by others including Johnson (2003) who concluded that there were two types of interdependence, positive and negative. Positive interdependence resulted in “promotive interaction”, where individuals “encourage and facilitate each other’s efforts to reach a goal” (Johnson, 2003, p. 935) as did the participants in Schindler et al.’s study (2010). Negative interdependence existed where individuals attempted to discourage another. Schoebi et al. (2012, p. 741), in their survey of married US couples, stated that the desire for the relationship to continue was not enough, that commitment needed to translate into behaviour that aimed to maintain the relationship. Both spouses had to act to prioritise the relationship, and one partner’s failure to do so could “undermine” the relationship to the point of dissolution.
According to Levin and Rabrenovic (2012) interdependency may be instrumental, serving as a means to an end, or affective, that is, concerned with emotion. Instrumental interdependency occurred in their study where members of different groups relied on each other in order to achieve a shared goal, while affective interdependence prevailed where individuals from different backgrounds become dependent on each other, offering mutual emotional support and encouragement because they were friends. Levin and Rabrenovic gave examples of instrumental dependency between neighbours of Jewish, Christian and Muslim descent, African and white Americans, and between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland.

Instrumental interdependency may also exist within a couple. Beaujot and Ravanera (2003, p. 2) analysed data from the Canadian General Social Survey on “time-use”, and concluded that such interdependency brought about a “more stable” relationship than one without such a dependency. This finding was supported by Wolton, Yzerbyt, and Corneille (2011, p. 559) whose study of undergraduates found that an increase in interdependency might also increase empathy in that it conveyed a sense of “being similar to others”, when the wish for that comparison existed (though whether this finding holds for senior couples remains to be seen).

2.7 Couples at leisure and travel

The literature in this section concentrates firstly, on the few demographics available on couple travel, and their experiences, motivations, and aspects of travel, in this case birding. The literature on leisure is explored because of its relationship to travel, followed by the importance of shared travel. The issue of differences between spouses is investigated.

Hill’s 1988 study of data collected over the years 1975-1981 by the University of Michigan, found that shared leisure experiences, as well as duration of marriage, were essential to marital stability with the most important experiences being outdoor activities and holiday travel. Albers-Miller and Landers (2006) who studied 323, mostly male, individuals involved in extreme leisure activities found that those participants in a committed relationship (only about a third were married) participated in more than one sport. They concluded that this was a result of spouses sharing activities. According to Johnson (2005, p. 20) the quality of a couple’s leisure involvement was “the best predictor of marital satisfaction”.

A few researchers have examined happiness or satisfaction in travel (see for example, Liu, 2013; Nawijn, Marchand, Veenhoven, & Vingerhoets, 2010). According to researchers (Harrison, 2003; Meunier & Baker, 2012; Trauer & Ryan, 2005; Yoo, 2014) the presence of a
spouse improved the quality of the relationship and the experience. A number of factors may be responsible. For example, travelling with a spouse may lessen the sense of isolation in a foreign country, and subsequent separation from the familiarity of home (Harrison, 2003; Yoo, 2014). Such travel may also fulfil the desire to share the experience with a loved one (Hill, 1988, Yoo, 2014); Trauer and Ryan (2005, p. 4900 concluded that that holidays are “a time for togetherness with significant others”. Yoo (2014) found in her study of conference attendees and accompanying spouses, that the accompanying, non-working partner’s presence resulted in a strengthened pair bond, while Harrison (2003) noted that spouses also enjoyed reliving a trip on their return home through photographs and other souvenirs that prompted happy memories. Yet couples wish to travel together for other reasons; Wilson (2004) has shown that a woman may feel safer travelling with a partner.

Couples often travel together, judging by the few statistics available. Kerlinger (1995) found in a 1993/94 study of birders at eight Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuges that fifty percent travelled with a spouse, while a study of North American ecotourists found that 61% travelled with their spouse (Wight & Corvetto, 2003). Kwan, Eagles & Gebhardt (2008) in their study of 28 ecolodges in western Belize found that married couples constituted the largest cohort staying in the two most expensive types of accommodation, and an investigation of “long-distance” travellers to the Northwest Territories of Canada, revealed that 48.8% were couples (LaMondia & Bhat, 2010, p. 8). Blazey (1992), analysing a sample of 1350 individuals aged between 50 and 85, found that 52% of senior couples travelled together, and Patterson and Pan (2007) reported, in their much smaller sample of 14 adventure travellers aged 50 years and older, that 43% also travelled with their spouse.

While travel has been seen to be distinct from the routine of everyday life (Graburn, 2001; Patterson & Pan, 2007; Snepenger, King, Marshall & Uysal, 2006; Urry, 1990) it is not necessarily an escape from the concerns of ordinary life. Differences present at home may still be present in travel according to Rojek (1993, p.49) who stated, “It may appear facetious to observe that the sole and indispensable disadvantage of using travel and leisure as ways of escape is that you take yourself with you”. Several researchers (Ahlstrom, 2009; Berg et al., 2001; Butler, 2010; Hughes & Hogg, 2006; Kang & Hsu, 2004; Lamont, Kennelly, & Wilson, 2012; Kuentzel & Heberlain, 2008; Seong-Seop & Scott, 1997) noted that those concerns could be amplified and relationships adversely affected when couples differed drastically on their involvement in a leisure interest. Albers-Miller and Landers (2006) reported that only about a third of the extreme leisurists in their study were married, and Scott and Thigpen (2003, p. 206)
found that 24% of the “active” birders they surveyed were divorced compared with 6% of casual
birders (‘active’ in this paper meaning birders who travel more for birding, and spent more time
birding).

It follows that travel, particularly international travel, related to a serious leisure pursuit might
result in disagreement between spouses on the sorts of trips they like. David Sibley, in his
interview with Weeks (2001) mentioned that in 2000 a Green-breasted Mango Hummingbird,
a rare vagrant from Costa Rica, turned up in North Carolina and birders flew in from all over
the continent to see it. Sibley asked his wife, Joan Walsh, if she would be interested in
“chasing” the bird – this would constitute a round trip of over 2000 kms, for the one species.
She replied that she was not interested – she preferred to see the bird in its natural environment.
While there is no indication that their disparate attitudes had any effect on the Sibley’s
relationship, such a difference in type of leisure interests and degree of involvement, may
jeopardise a relationship (Ahlstrom, 2009; Butler, 2010; Kuentzel & Heberlein, 2008).

2.8 Gender and leisure

The literature in this section deals with gender, beginning with an exploration of the meaning
of the term, followed by the difference between men and women’s behaviour in general, and in
leisure and sporting activities. The literature then examines the literature on the invisibility of,
and constraints on women’s leisure, including the role played by male spouses and themselves
and other women, and the effect of discrimination on women.

The term ‘gender’ was rarely used in literature on marriage and family until 1972 when as a
result of his study of the psychology of hermaphroditism John Money (1987) proposed using
the term ‘sex’ to refer to physiological and morphological characteristics of male and female,
and ‘gender’ for the ways in which male and female behaviour differed. Following Money’s
proposal, Udry (1994) measured the prenatal and adult androgen levels of 350 women, then
through questionnaires obtained several components of gendered behaviour. Consequently
Udry defined gender as the relationship between biological sex and behaviour, findings further
supported by studies on the interplay of sex-related differences and gender differences in
children (for example McIntyre & Edwards, 2009).

To many feminist writers gender was a social construction (Wearing, 1998; Wintink, 2015);
Some focused on its flexibility. Henderson et al. (1989, p. 13) defined gender as “for the sexes
in a given society at a given time”, thus highlighting the changeable nature of gender roles while
Lorber (1993) reported that there was more diversity within the categories of sex – male/female, and gender – masculine/feminine – than between them. Johnson and Repta (2012, p. 26) argued that masculinity consisted of a “range of behaviors, practices, and characteristics that can be taken up by anyone”, and likewise femininity. Yet, dominating all was an overarching hegemonic masculinity that, according to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), emphasised virility, aggression, strength and independence, and therefore set the status quo for all men (Messerschmidt, 2015) and for women as well. Hegemony describes the authority that one group holds over another (Donaldson, 1993), and hegemonic masculinity is the dominant social position of men that renders women subordinate.

That overarching hegemony has affected leisure research resulting in a focus on activities of more interest to men (Pritchard & Morgan, 2000) and giving rise to ‘male knowledge’ to which women have been added (Wambui, 2013, p. 1). Yet researchers have found that men’s and women’s behaviour differ in a number of respects. For example, Eagly and Wood (1988), Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001) in a study of managers of both genders, found that, in general, women were more egalitarian than men as had Hui (1988) in an earlier study. They, and other researchers (for example Henderson et al., 1989), also found that women were more concerned with social relationships than men, in the areas of social interaction (Chodorow, 1994; Fiske et al., 2006; McFarlane, 1994; Williams et al., 2009), intimacy, self-disclosure (Brewer, Abell, & Lyons 2013), interdependency (Fiske et al. 2006), desire for companionship (Tannen, 1990), and communication skills (Maqubela, 2014).

Men were more task-oriented (although according to Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin [2006, p. 252], this depended on whether a task was considered “feminine” or “masculine”) and oriented towards competence, efficiency and respect. Huberman, Loch and Önçüler (2004, p. 111) and Williams et al. (2009) reported that women acted less aggressively than men. A number of studies also found that men were often more competitive than women (for example, Buss, 1988; Gill & Prowse, 2010; Niederle & Vesterlund, 2006, 2011); Niederle and Vesterlund (2006) found in their study of participants in both compensatory and competitive experiments that 73% of men chose to compete compared with only 35% of women. This conclusion of a gendered differential on competition was supported by their later (2011) review of the literature. Curry’s (1991, p. 119) study of male locker room talk found that competition was one of the ways that male footballers communicated closeness to each other, along with independence, activity, common goals, and boundaries in the form of regulations, and that competition also provided a rewarding and status-enhancing bond to other men. Status also appeared to be a more important
reason for men to become involved in leisure than for women, as has been noted by Clarke and Critcher (1985), Henderson et al. (1989), Katz-Gerro and Sullivan (2010), Moore et al. (2008), Thoits (1991) and Wearing (1998). Women sought status less “intensively” than men according to Huberman, Loch and Önçüler (2004, p. 111).

Women have been considered more empathic than men (Baron-Cohen, 2003; Levesque, Lafontaine, Caron, Flesch, and Bjornson, 2014), although according to Eisenberg and Lennon (1983) this may be because of the way that empathy was assessed; Davis’ (1983) quantitative study of both male and female university students found that men who were intellectual, emotional and somewhat ill at ease socially tended to be more empathic than others. Eisenberg and Lennon (1983) concluded in their review of the literature that both men and women were influenced by stereotypes that labelled women as more empathic and men less so. Yet comparisons of neural activity (Han, Fan & Mao, 2008) in healthy adults of both genders, found women felt more empathic concern for pain felt by others, than men.

Deutsch (2011 p. 33) and Bakker and Demerouti (p. 223) found that men and women could express different types of empathy, with perspective-taking, that is “seeking to understand another’s point of view” (non-emotional or “cognitive” empathy), more typical of men. Perspective-taking according to Cialdini, Brown, Lewis, Luce and Neuberg (1997, p. 491) “fosters both a sense of commonality and compassion” for the partner, but that the commonality generated the desire to help, not the compassion.

Thoits (1991, p. 107) found that men often viewed their roles predominantly in terms of activities that related to achievement such as being an athlete or member of a particular group, whereas women often considered themselves more in terms of “primary relationships”, such as family. Similar conclusions were reached by Huberman et al. (2004) in their investigation of game-playing behaviour across five countries including the USA. Eagly and Mladinic (1994, p. 23-25), in their studies of how university students viewed other social groups, found that women’s status was relatively higher than men’s in relation to the ascribed communal characteristics that form the female stereotype. That is, they were seen to be “warm, expressive, or feminine”, at least in domestic roles such as ‘mother’ or ‘sister’.

According to Baron-Cohen, (2003), Gilligan (1982) and McIntyre and Edwards (2009) gender differences are obvious from an early age, their research supported by that of Gleeson (2008, p. v) who reported in her study of South African adolescents that girls talked about “social/relatedness reasons” for being involved in sporting activities, while males talked more
about “challenge”. Further to Gleeson’s comments, Lagache (1993, p. 20), in his study of scuba divers, noted that men divers, more so than women, liked the “challenge” of the hunt and were also more likely to join a club that focused on hunting in the form of spearfishing. Conversely, women, according to Lagache (1993, p. 20), emphasised “a respect and compassion for the creatures that live (in the underwater world)”, and were more likely than men to join a diving club that focused on photography rather than spearfishing, and indeed some spearfishing clubs had no female members. Male divers also went to great trouble to record a successful hunt (Lagache does not specify how the prey was documented but probably meant that fish would be weighed and photographed) implying a parallel with the recording/listing of bird sightings, an activity more popular with men.

Historically, women’s leisure has been largely invisible, and for a number of reasons. Firstly, it was predominantly home-based (Deem, 1982; de Fontenelle & Zinkhan, 1993). Stalp’s 2001 study of American women quilters and Scott and Godbey’s (1992, 1994) research on contract bridge clubs dominated by women found the activities usually took place in their homes. By its very nature home-based women’s leisure may be relatively difficult to quantify, one reason being that it can function as a form of work. De Fontenelle and Zinkhan (1993) gave the example of cooking and Stalp (2001) did the same for quilting. Secondly, such leisure may be dispersed among work activities. Thirdly, home-based leisure occurs largely out of the public eye – such leisure has been described as “hidden” (Aitchison, 2003, p. 74), and “invisible” (Wearing, 1998, p. 83).

According to a number of studies (see for example Clarke & Critcher, 1985; Henderson et al., 1989; Wearing, 1998) women’s leisure was subject to many constraints which historically included a range of traditional beliefs underpinned by the cult of “true womanhood domesticity”, according to a 1966 study by Welter (p. 1) which equated homelife and housework with virtue and femininity. Henderson et al. (1989) mentioned another constraint, that women lacked a sense of entitlement which the authors attributed to their lower status, family responsibilities and lack of opportunity, among others.

Deem (1982) surveyed British women about their leisure, finding that male partners provided the most constraint particularly when leisure activities outside the home were involved, even when, according to Wearing (1998), women were fully employed outside the home. Later studies of American time-use surveys (Aguiar & Hurst, 2007; Friedberg & Webb, 2005) found that constraints still existed for women in the workforce although they had more time for
leisure. Clarke and Critcher (1985) cited women’s lack of choice over what leisure they could participate in and when as being defined by social divisions such as gender. A later study by Katz-Gerro and Sullivan (2010, (p. 201) of 1317 individuals and couples found that women’s gender combined with social status still dictated the degree of disadvantage when it came to out-of-home leisure. For example women ate out or went drinking, or watched live sport or played sport, or went walking for fitness less than men.

Aitchison (2003) described women’s leisure as largely normalised to be acted out away from public view, meaning that discrimination was largely hidden, a point made in earlier years by Henderson et al. (1989) who described gender discrimination as subtle, at least when compared with previous eras. Hunter (1992) referred to both gender and other types of bias as “indirect discrimination” in her book of the same name. More recently, Tanner (2011) has remarked on the lack of overt sexism within sport. Yet this apparent lack of discrimination may have been an extension of the ‘invisibility’ cloaking home-based leisure; Tanner’s (2011) study of social media, and commentators of a popular sports show, found that commentators rarely spoke of women athletes while male athletes were praised for their sporting prowess and strength. McDonald (2013, no page number given) in her blog, the Field Glass Ceiling, wrote that women birders were treated as if they were invisible even when they were leading a birding trip. However, overt discrimination still exists. Tanner’s (2011) study found that when commentators did mention female athletes it was to trivialise, and objectify them, particularly in ‘tweets’ (postings on the social media site, Twitter).

Researchers have found that discrimination has a range of adverse results for women. Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs and Tamkins (2004, (p. 426) reported that, in their experimental studies of undergraduates and employees of a large company, those who did not fit the gender stereotypes were viewed unfavourably, disliked and “personally” disparaged. They stated that this was particularly true of those women who succeeded in “traditionally male domains”. Garrod & Gössling (2008, p. 16) state that (scuba) diving is “traditionally ... a male-dominated sport” as is diving tourism. Lagache’s (1993) study of scuba diving culture (1993), found discrimination to be present. According to Garrod and Gössling (2008, p. 16), however, the “gender balance is evening out”. For example, women divers had trouble finding suitable diving equipment or even diving partners, an important issue considering that Cater (2008, p. 52) noted that the “social interaction of diving is a fundamental part of the attraction” and indeed is necessary for reasons of safety.
Another study, this time of work rather than leisure, highlighted another side to gender discrimination. Mayes and Pini (2010, 12-13), in their study of mining as portrayed through national business magazines, concluded that the social setting rendered it “illegitimate” for women to even speak of discrimination, and so those who wanted to be seen as “one of the guys”, did not speak out. Their silence meant the women could offer no foil to the “dominant storyline”, that the small number of women leaders/experts must be related to “female choice or a woman’s individual shortcomings”. Heilman et al. (2004, p. 426) reported that successful women in ‘male’ occupations were often disparaged. According to Ridgeway and Smith-Lovin (2006, p. 252) such treatment applied to any who stepped outside of “gender-typed” roles, such as women working in mining (Mayes & Pini, 2010) or the defence forces (Kidder & Park (2001).

According to Maqubela, (2014), the prevailing social milieu in western societies and others (Maqubela appears to be an indigenous South African name) is a masculine ideology, a view described by Spender (1980, p. 1) as “male-as-norm” and by others (Connell, 2005; Wearing 1998), as a hegemonic masculinity. According to researchers (Clark & Critcher, 1985; Gilligan, 1982; Henderson, et al., 1989, Shaw, 1994; Spender, 1980) hegemonic masculinity has shaped and controlled women’s leisure, and led to the ascendancy of a predominantly masculine perspective and the acceptance of a range of assumptions about women’s leisure as seen through a masculine lens. Wearing (1998, p. 66) wrote that “hegemonic masculinity” was characterised by a number of criteria including “competitiveness and achievement”, precisely those qualities that, according to Stebbins, characterised serious leisure. Yet there were other types of serious leisure where these particular criteria were relatively unimportant. Some were activities thought of as feminine, for example quilt-making (Stalp, 2001) or gourmet cooking (Hartel, 2006). Others were leisure activities carried out with men also enjoyed, such as contract bridge (Scott and Godbey, 1992, 1994), or shag dancing (Brown, 2007), and birding.

According to Wearing (1998, p. 70) the prejudice women face in non-related parts of society was related to sport, an argument later taken up by Pettersson (2007, p. 63) who stated that economics has taken the ‘male-as-norm’ approach as a fundamental, suggesting an “all-of-society” bias. Because they were deemed inferior in areas of sport of recreation, it was inferred that women were “less capable in other areas of life”. Such prejudice is not confined to gender. There are several other characteristics which affect status and therefore “individuals’ experiences and social identities” including “age, class, ethnicity, race and dis/ability (Pritchard et al., 2007, p. 5), and these will be discussed later..
As mentioned earlier, Deem (1982) stated that male partners were a significant constraint to women’s leisure outside the home. However, beliefs about the place of women were not only be held by men, but by women too who constrained themselves and each other. Williams et al. (2009, p. 720) found that women gamers under-reported their playing time, one reason being the “masculine culture” that surrounded gaming, and the other because it took them away from housework for which they were “still expected to contribute the greater share”. The wider society also acted to enforce the status quo (Clarke & Critcher, 1985; Henderson et al., 1989; Gilbert & Hudson, 2000), the pressure for conformity coming from those “in a position to enforce their expectations” (Wearing, 1998, p. 83), including prominent women. For example, journalist Nigella Lawson once noted that a female mountaineer, Alison Hargreaves, represented “me-first mountaineering” (Gilchrist, 2007, p. 10), by “selfishly” putting her own desires ahead of those of her family. She made no such criticism of male mountaineers. In these ways women, according to Messerschmidt (2015, p. 21), often “sustain, justify, and preserve hegemonic masculinity”. They not only placed pressure on others to conform, but also on themselves as mentioned earlier.

The economy (Pettersson, 2007) also worked against women’s freedom of choice in leisure, one example being that women divers often could not find diving equipment to suit their smaller frames (Lagache, 1993). Hunt (2008) argued that as the partitions between masculine and feminine were challenged old barriers were reconstructed through serious leisure in attempt to maintain the boundaries between the genders.

Despite the constraints women rebelled against gender bias. Wearing, Wearing and Kelly (1994, p. 631) reported, in their study of adolescent girls, that participants resisted the view of femininity as “passive” and “submissive” and the “good girl image” through the defiant act of smoking. According to Hall (1985) and Wearing et al. (1994) sport, too, provided an area of resistance, particularly for young women.

2.8.1 Birding and gender: “Little old ladies in tennis shoes”

The literature on birders and birding has largely been confined to a narrow spectrum arranged around the pursuit of birds, identification and listing, subjects of more interest to men than women. At the same time studies have largely ignored bird-related leisure and travel that holds

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2 A quote by John Madson, that according to Seideman (2004), appeared in an article “The Audubon Image”, in the 75 anniversary issue of the Audubon journal.
more attraction to women. This section explores the literature on the role of gender in US birding beginning with that on the formation of the two largest birding organisations, and their gendered membership. This investigation leads to the topic of gendered classification of birders based on the definition of what constitutes a ‘serious’ birder. An exploration of listing follows which examines the reasons why women list less than men, and then the examination of literature that exposes the discrimination against women.

According to the Audubon magazine archives (Price, 2004), the National Audubon Society in its present form began in Boston, in 1896, when two socialites, Minna Halland and Harriet Hemenway, convened a meeting at which the men and women present formed the Massachusetts Audubon Society. They later went on to found chapters of the Audubon in other states, and in a few decades the number of chapters grew to number over 500. The Audubon did not appeal to a group of birders who in the late 1960s, formed the ABA (Wilds, 1994). According to Weidensaul (2008, p. 269) a founder, Jim Tucker, saw no reason for the ABA to focus on conservation as the Audubon had done. Instead, as Ted Floyd (2006, p. 20), editor of the ABA’s journal *Birding*, wrote, the “major foci” identified in the first edition of the ABA journal, was the “competitive and sporting aspects of birding”, with listing as the “main thrust”. The ABA limited participation of non-listers by regulation as well, as Wilds (1994, p. 1) wrote in her history of the early years of the organisation wrote:

To be nominated or to nominate oneself as an elective member, a regular member had to have an ABA Area list of 500 or at least one state or province list with 70 percent or more of the official total, and then be elected to the roster by current elective members. Only elective members could become directors. This arrangement lasted twenty years.

Not long after the formation of the ABA the organisation adopted the term ‘birder’ (Weidensaul, 2008, p. 268), it being thought better than ‘birdwatcher’ to describe those who actively sought new birds, and were serious about listing. As described in Section 2.1.1 ‘birdwatching’ lost status, becoming a term used to denote non-listing or casual activities dominated by women (Cooper & Smith, 2010).

Although more than half of US birders are women (US Fish & Wildlife surveys, 2011), researchers have generally found that they constitute a minority of those categorised as ‘serious’ or experienced (see Hvenegaard, 2002; McFarlane, 1994; McFarlane & Boxall, 1996; Moore et al., 2008; Scott et al., 1999; Scott et al., 2005a; Scott & Lee, 2003). The ABA, described as the “standard-bearer” for ‘serious’ birders (Weidensaul 2008, p. 262) has lower female
membership than the National Audubon Society (NAS). According to Cooper and Smith, (2010) membership of the NAS was 63% female and the ABA List Report only 20%. Scott and Lee (2003, p. 8) in a study of the ABA reported that membership was “disproportionately male” at 64.5%. In a later study (Scott et al., 2009) it was reported that the percentage of women members of the ABA had only risen from 35.6% in 1997 to 36% in 2009.

Instead women birders have generally been classified (or classified themselves) as beginners, novices (McFarlane 1994), casual (Boxall & McFarlane, 1993; Cole & Scott, 1997; Eubanks et al. 2004; Kellert, 1985; Kellert & Berry, 1987; McFarlane 1994; McFarlane & Boxall, 1996; Scott & Thigpen, 2003; Scott, 1997; Scott, 2000), or as birdwatchers (Cooper & Smith, 2010). McFarlane and Boxall (1996) stated that women constituted 60% of casual birders but only 37% of serious birders. By comparison Scott et al. (1999, p. 65) reported that 85% of participants in the annual Great Texas Birding Classic, an event attracting self-described “highly skilled” birders, were male. Similarly, ABA studies (Scott et al., 2005b; Scott, Lee & Lee, 2009; Scott, 2013) found that up to 90% of ‘skilled’ birders/listers were male as were 80% of those Hvenegaard (2002a) classified as ‘advanced’; only 39% of Hvenegaard’s ‘novice’ birders were male.

Scott et al. (2005b) concluded that male ABA members reported an average of 1447 species on their world list compared with 815 for women. Listing, according to several researchers (for example Cooper & Smith, 2010; Eubanks et al., 2004; Harrington, 2002; Hvenegaard, 2002; McFarlane, 1994, 1996; Moore et al., 2008; Sali & Kuehn 2007; Scott et al., 2005b; Scott et al. 2010), is a predominantly male interest. Lee et al. (2014, p. 60) explained that listing was the reason why men were more likely to take trips, buy equipment and perfect identification skills. Their relative lack of interest in pursuing, identifying and listing birds is one reason why female birders are considered less than serious about the activity than men, according to Cordell et al. (2008).

Lee et al.’s 2014 (p. 14) follow-up study of ABA members examined both male and female motivations for watching birds, finding that more men stated that birding offered them abilities to demonstrate their skills in identifying birds and listing while female birders rated “personal enrichment”, satisfaction, and conservation more highly. Lee et al. (2014, p 14), acknowledged that skill development and “meeting challenges”, was more important to men, concluding that, “listing is more central to males’ participation (in birding) than it is for females”.

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Scott et al. (2005b, p. 3) found that male birders reported “superior identification skills (to) females”. By contrast Moore et al. (2008, p. 93) posited that women might have felt bird identification skills (and therefore listing) were “not particularly relevant” to how they watched birds after 14% of the women they surveyed chose not to answer a question on such skills; by contrast, “all but one of the 324 men provided skill information”. Consequently, female birders, according to Lee et al. (2014) might eschew performance standards so important to some males.

The different characteristics researchers have labelled as ‘feminine’ or ‘masculine’ traits are listed in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Reasons for birding: Assumptions of ‘Feminine’ and ‘Masculine’ traits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Masculine</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of the leisure experience, and social and cooperative interactions (Henderson et al. (1989, p. 53)).</td>
<td>Focus on “quantity, activity, achievement/skill development and competition” Henderson et al. 1989, p. 53; Scott &amp; Lee, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Greater humanistic and moralistic sentiments” (Kellert, 1996, p. 66); beauty of the natural world (Scott, 2000, p. 6).</td>
<td>Greater “intellectual orientation to the natural world” or scientific knowledge Kellert, 1996, p. 51-52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation (Czech, Devers, &amp; Krausman, 2001; Scott et al., 2005b). Less active support for consumptive/utilitarian activities such as hunting and fishing (Kellert, 1996, p. 66)</td>
<td>Utilitarian values, that is listing (Miller and McGee, 2000; Moore et al., 2008; Scott, 2013)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apart from listing being more important to more men than women, there are other reasons why female birders tend to list less than males. These include the design and cost of birding optics, the relative difference in the height of men and women affording them different views of a bird, reluctance to be involved in male-dominated activities and to take risks just to see a new bird, less involvement than men in the bird listing social world and different attitudes towards birds.

Many binoculars are too heavy (Salzman, 2006) or too large for women’s hands. According to David Sibley (Weeks, 2001, p. 1), one of the US’s best known birders, “… men carry bigger - and more powerful – binoculars while women tend to use smaller, lighter and less powerful binoculars”. Another reason is that eyepieces may be set too far apart for women’s relatively small interpupillary distances (that is the distance from the middle of one pupil to the other).
These issues have been somewhat rectified with a range of binoculars produced for smaller people (BR, 2015), and yet even the range of equipment designed for smaller people does not help in some respects. According to several researchers (see McFarlane, 1994; Moore et al., 2008; Sali & Kuehn 2007) men’s higher average earnings (Cordell & Herbert, 2002) enable them to own very good optics (a pair of one of the top brands, Swarovski, may cost AUD$2000, or more).

When men and women watch birds together their relative height differential might affect the way they watch birds. Men being generally taller than women will have a different view of a bird in a tree than a woman of average height and therefore the telescope will be set too high. That being said men also demonstrate physical features that impede their birding. For example they suffer more than women from the most common type of colour-blindness – red/green – which can make birding difficult, although certainly not impossible; Romy Ocon (Ocon, 2015), a famous Filipino bird photographer, is colour blind.

Women birders may be more reluctant to participate in activities they believed are more appropriate for men, or male-dominated, as reported by Moore et al. (2008), Lagache (1993) and Hudson & Gilbert (2000), in their respective studies of birders, scuba divers and snow skiers. According to Nelson (2012, p.28) “exaggerated masculine-associated behaviour may be most pronounced in all-male groups”, as in the intense competition at birding events that, according to Moore et al. (2008) women birders found intimidating.

Women may also be less likely than men to put up with discomfort and risk in the quest to list as many species as possible, even those that are rare or difficult to see (Kellert & Berry, 1987; Moore et al., 2008; Scott et al., 2005b; Seong-Seop & Scott; 1997) and are the exception rather than the rule in such activities. Willig’s (2008) sample of eight extreme sports-people included only two women. According to Nelson (2012, p. 28) greater risk-taking by men is a result of a stereotype based on “cultural norms”, thus making it more socially acceptable for men. Indeed the literature on serious, hardcore or extreme leisure demonstrates that risk-taking can be viewed in a positive light (Kusz, 2004, Willig, 2008), at least for men. To Nelson (2012, p. 26), another reason why women are less interested in potentially risky activities is that they face “elevated” risks in other areas of life that men do not. Furthermore, their unwillingness may modify the behaviour of male companions. Ronay & Kim (2006, p. 398) found in their study of students that although the willingness of the youths to take risks, was “socially facilitated”
by the presence of other males, such behaviour was mitigated when a female student was present.

Sibley (Weeks, 2001) stated that men and women may use different binoculars by choice because they often watch birds differently. Less powerful binoculars are suitable for watching birds nearby, while more powerful optics are needed for distance viewing, and the women birders accompanying Sibley when he was interviewed (Weeks, 2001), demonstrated that difference. They watched a pair of common redwings mating nearby, while the men, not interested in this common species, were busily searching the skies for rare Mississippi kites (Weeks, 2001). Women’s less heavy reliance on optics (and field guides as well) may be of benefit because they then rely on different points of identification. Binoculars, telescopes and field guides are used to identify birds, by the user focussing on field marks, and this may result in them missing important behavioural cues as to the identity of a species (Eubanks, 2007; Schaffner, 2011). Thus they support a quote from Denzin (1995, p. 217, in Pritchard and Morgan, 2000, p. 134) that “the feminine, gay and ethnic gaze ... hears and see things that escape the white, masculine eye”. Eubanks (2007) reported that experts should not always need binoculars to identify a bird. Bryan (1977) made a similar argument on the use of nets for landing fish, stating that expert fishers could be differentiated from the less skilled by their lack of equipment. Thus the ownership of certain types of optics does not necessarily indicate expertise or indeed level of seriousness about the activity.

More women than men are committed to a leisure pursuit because of the attached social relationships (Scott & Godbey, 1992; 1994; Lee et al. 2014), and this appears to hold for those serious about the activity as well. Scott, et al. (2005b, p. 3) reported that “by comparison (to male members of the ABA) women’s involvement appears to be much more expressive and oriented to developing relationships”. Thus they support similar findings on gender by a number of studies mentioned earlier in this thesis (for example Chodorow, 1994; Fiske et al., 2006; Henderson et al., 1989; Williams et al., 2009). Bryan (1977) reported that specialists tended to participate in their chosen activity with peers, as did more serious (advanced) birders according to McFarlane (1996), whereas those less specialised (Bryan, 1977) or casual about the activity (who were mostly women), participated with family members, or friends (McFarlane, 1994; 1996; Scott et al., 2005a).

The high status of the ABA is obvious in the literature (for example, Weidensaul, 2008). Cooper and Smith (2010, pp. 4-5) have described the organisation as providing “leadership to
birders by increasing their knowledge, skills, and enjoyment of birding (and compiling) all record birding achievements.” According to the literature the Audubon and its members do not appear to garner the same level of respect. Seideman (2004, p. 1) wrote that the NAS had been described as “a circle of dowager dicky-birders” (that epitomised) "the 'little old ladies in tennis shoes syndrome”.

Women were not only more likely to be considered non-serious about birding, they were also stereotyped as less capable, even when their abilities and interests resembled those of men. Paulson (2003, p. 10, in Scott et al., 2005 b) demonstrated the attitude to those who watched birds around the home:

To call people “birders” because they feed birds and occasionally look at their feeder while out in the yard is to me quite misleading. My wife and I have many neighbors who feed birds, and none of them is a birder. For the most part, they don’t know the identity of the birds, even some of the most common ones ..., most of them don’t own binoculars or bird books, and none of them would dream of going on an outing just to look at birds (Paulson, 2003, p. 10).

Brooke McDonald, a US birder writing for the ABA blog (June, 2013, no page number given) mentioned that even women serious about birding (meaning identification and listing) “were dismissed as kitchen window birders”, in other words passive, and probably birdwatchers, that is, not ‘true’ birders. McDonald (2013, no page number given) reported that some male birders attempted to de-emphasise the abilities of competent women birders by attributing their success in listing to their association with other men, and that a “top ABA” lister told an experienced woman birder that she only had a large birding list because she “hung out with the big boys”. Furthermore, according to McDonald, women in relationships with birders were treated as the “lesser half” … coasting on their partners’ superior ability and only faintly reflecting their partner’s superior skills”, even when that woman was an experienced birder prior to the relationship. Other male birders, according to McDonald (2013, no page number given), “either ignore women entirely or are crushingly dismissive, patronizing, or condescending towards them”. Salzman (2006, no page number given), past editor of American Birds, journal of the National Audubon Society, went even further in expressing her view of the way that women birders were treated, writing that a woman who sighted an unusual bird might find themselves subject to the equivalent of a “kneecapping”, whether the report was correct or not, whereas a man who made a false report of a rare bird sighting, would be let off more lightly by the male birders Ms Salzman referred to as the “B3 (Black Belt Birders, the avian equivalent of the Mafia)”.

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Male birders also reported on the denigration of women birders. Moss (2003, p. 321) mentioned a term in “twitchers’ slang” that trivialised the capabilities of female birders, by labelling their sightings of colourful birds as “‘tarts’ ticks”. In his book, *Tales of a Low-Rent Birder* (1994, p. 83) Peter Dunne, a renowned US birder, repeated the remarks of another man in relation to a rare sighting made by an experienced woman birder, stating she was a mad “dicky-birder”, and that she had probably confused it with a more common species. These comments encourage a comparison with Pratt (1992, p. 219) who commented on Theroux’s (1978, p. 123) remark about Patagonians, who, in not looking out of the windows of their trains at the passing countryside, did not travel “correctly”.

McDonald (2013, no page number given) stated in her blog that women were stymied by, what she called the “Field Glass” ceiling. She quoted another birder, Susan Myers, who said that male birders did not take women seriously even when they were leading a trip, “I get it all the time—people walk right past me. I’m the only one carrying a scope and I’m standing out front calling the birds and I’m magically invisible.” Literature on the invisibility of women at leisure was explored in Section 2.8, (Aitchison, 2003; Deem, 1982; de Fontenelle & Zinkhan, 1993; Tanner, 2011).

Williams et al. (2009, p. 269) stated that men and women who might formally be equals elsewhere, for example within their family or circle of friends, were treated unequally by the “social structures” of organisations. A study of birding organisations by Cooper and Smith (2010) found that women were poorly represented in listing organisations such as the Christmas Bird Count with 63% male membership and the ABA. Only 7% of eBird state editors were female. According to Scott (2009) female membership of the ABA was 36%. That invisibility is also a feature of the research on birders with women’s and social voices being hardly represented at all. Pritchard, Morgan, Ateljevic and Harris (2007, p. 3-4) pointed to fundamental reasons for women’s invisibilty in this area, including their underrepresentation “in academia” and the “reluctance among the wider tourism community” to tackle “the politics of tourism reseach”, its “academic gatekeepers”, and “their influence on the production of tourism knowledge”.

Yet women can be serious about birding as well and in similar ways to men (Lee et al., 2014; McDonald, 2013; Scott et al., 2005b) in their focus on identification and listing, Phoebe Snetsinger who once had the world’s longest bird list, being one. Floyd in his editorial on the history of birding within the ABA, Part 1, 1968-1974 (2006, p. 21) mentioned another, quoting
a letter from Maggie Bowman who stated that her main interest in the ABA journal, *Birding*, “is the hope that you will publish articles on the fine, fine points of field identification”. In their study of ABA members, Scott et al. (2005b) reported that about 60% of men and women kept a world list; 84% of men compared with 76% of women listed North American birds, and 62% of men compared with 43% of women listed birds in their home state. Maple et al. (2010), in a survey of birders visiting Point Pelee National Park, Canada, asked respondents to self-identify their level of expertise ranging from beginner to expert, and then categorised these based on years birding and level of expertise. They found that the majority in all groups were female.

According to researchers (for example, Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003; Lorber, 1994; Ritzer, 2011), gender distinctions are also used to organise the social world, and they mostly affect, often adversely, women. Lorber (1994, p. 5) stated that clothing offered a way of circumventing this problem, stating that a woman dressed as a man or vice versa would “quite literally, have changed places in their social world” because one’s attire, “paradoxically, often hides the sex but displays the gender”. Yet Lagache (1993) revealed that there was discrimination against female divers even though they would have worn similar wetsuits to male divers. Ritzer concluded (2011, p. 270) that discrimination would still remain even if there were “great similarities” between the genders. The difficulty of bringing about change to such attitudes is underscored by Ridgeway and Correll (2004, p. 528) who stated that the “core structure of the beliefs are not easy to erode”.

Discrimination also exists in relation to a number of other groups as Pritchard et al. (2007) noted. Bo Beolens (2013, p, 1, 2) has pointed out the bias of birding guides, the mostly “fit, young tall blokes” who design tours, not for the “unfit, elderly, young, females, and disabled birders, but trips that they and people who resemble them would like, which “tend to be rugged, rarity-chasing glimpses of the icons of the avian world”. According to Pritchard and Morgan (2000, p. 118) “male tourism landscapes … are constructed to celebrate masculinity and …. exclude women”. As also noted by Beolens (2013) and Pritchard and Morgan (2000, p. 122), many others are excluded as well.

The literature indicates that change is occurring. Studies by Scott et al. (2005b) of gender differences in ABA members and then Moore et al. (2008) and Lee et al. (2014) made a break from the ‘serious birder as male’ train of research. These papers followed in the footsteps of Scott and Godbey’s seminal studies on contract bridge clubs (1992; 1994) that found that both
genders could be equally committed to the game albeit it different ways. Scott et al. (2005b) and Moore et al. (2008) found that male and female members of the ABA were “equally committed” (p. 3) to birding but in different ways, with women more involved in bird-related activities other than listing and identification. Moore et al. (2008) queried whether the questions asked by researchers about listing, identification skills and equipment owned, and trips taken for the purpose of birding, were relevant to women who watched birds. The study by Lee et al. (2014) also questioned what it meant to be a serious birder, stating that the indicators used in their (and other) studies “may have given primacy to listing as a style of participation”, and were not particularly useful in assessing other forms of bird observation such as “backyard birding”. McFarlane and Boxall (1996) recognised early on the value of birdwatchers, stating that those mainly confined to home or local areas could contribute with census data or by improving habitat in their gardens. A similar point was made by Cooper and Smith (201) and Lee et al. (2014) on the value of nest-monitoring.

To recapitulate, research on birders has largely been confined to bird identification and listing, areas of more interest to men that have been accepted as the legitimate way to watch birds by virtue of the strength of the formal birding social world. Women were dismissed as ‘birdwatchers’, and made invisible, even those who were competent birders and listers. Other, less utilitarian ways of relating to avifauna that were more common to women, were also dismissed. More recent research recognises the value of non-listing activities.

2.8.2 Conservation and gender

This section examines the literature in relation to conservation and male and female birders and the different ways they relate to wildlife. It draws a link between birding as listing, an activity more popular with men and hunting, and explores the literature on the attitude of serious birders to conservation and the welfare of birds.

Human relationships to wildlife differ widely, from the utilitarian aspects of the hunter/fisher/lister (Kellert, 1996; Miller & McGee, 2000; Moore et al., 2008; Scott, 2013), and respect (Floyd, 2006; Wilds, 1994), to feelings of love (Moore et al., 2008) compassion (Lagache, 1993, p. 20), the appreciation of avian beauty and aesthetics (Kellert, 1985; McFarlane, 1994; Prior & Schaffner, 2011, p. 55), and identifying and connecting with wildlife, as mentioned by Miller and McGee (2000).
According to the literature (for example Deruiter & Donnelly, 2002; Lee et al., 2014) men and women have different value systems towards birds and wildlife. Several studies (Kellert and Berry, 1987; Kellert, 1996; Herzog, 2007; Liep, 2001; Moore et al., 2008; Scott et al., 2005b) have found that men demonstrated higher rates of utilitarian and dominionistic (that is, the tendency to feel personal satisfaction from controlling and dominating animals) attitudes, than women. A link between hunting and the listing of birds has been drawn in studies of birders by Moore et al. (2008) and Sheard (1999), Moore et al. (2008, p. 97) referred to listing as a “man’s activity and “essentially a form of hunting” where the game is “bagged” in non-lethal ways. Sheard (1999) drew a similar link between birding and hunting. Kellert (1996) also argued that women were more likely than men to demonstrate anthropomorphism towards particular animals, and that they registered significantly higher scores on moralistic issues, for example in opposition to hunting. Miller & McGee (2000) noted that women might be committed to outdoor activities as a way of connecting with wildlife.

Watson (2010, p. 195) found that his participants “recognized” their backyard birds or were rescuers (of injured or ill birds or orphaned nestlings) and believed them to have value in their own right, as opposed to an instrumental value, such as a tick on someone’s bird list. Watson (2010, p. 228) further suggested that they might consider the birds they knew as part of their social world and that for some participants of his study (p. 221-222) a “blurring” of the “separation between the sphere of human and others” occurred, as does with anthropomorphism. Anthropomorphism is the ascribing of human characteristics to nonhuman beings (Root-Bernstein, Douglas, Smith & Veríssimo, 2012; Serpell, 2003), and the feeling of empathy with those beings (Straffon, 2012). Anthropomorphism, according to Epley, Waytz, Akalis and Cacioppo (2008, p. 153), is determined in part by social motivations, a point noted by Watson (2010, p. 195) who noted that “backyard birders” who feed birds, include these creatures in their “social sphere”. Although Watson did not specify the gender of these participants in his study, those he referred to specifically were women, and Kellert (1996) had earlier stated that anthropomorphism was more common to women than men. Cooper and Smith (2010) reported that a higher percentage of women compared with men joined organisations such as Garden BirdWatch. According to the US Fish and Wildlife Service research (2011), 88% of birders watched birds in their homes or gardens.

The Audubon and ABA represent two different approaches to birds with the former focussing on conservation and connection to wildlife and the latter on identification and listing, although conservation is now part of the ABA’s platform (Richard Payne, 2008a, pers. comm) and listing
part of the Audubon’s. The Audubon highlights relatedness and the ABA the scientific objectivity needed to accurately identify and list species and the fun and sport of competition.

Cooper and Smith (2010, pp. 4-5) have described the mission of the NAS to “conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the Earth's biological diversity”. The ABA had a very different beginning. The men who founded it (Donnelly, 1994; Scott & Lee, 2003; Wilds, 1994) wanted an organisation that would treat birding as a competitive sport (Moore, Scott & Moore, 2008; Sheard, 1999) and leave conservation to other bodies (Wild, 1994). While conservation is now part of its brief authors such as McFarlane (1994) have noted that serious birders/listers are less interested in conservation, a concern even now in regard to avitourism (Steven et al., 2014).

The importance of listing is reflected in the transformation evident in field guides from presenting birds within their “environmental and cultural contexts” (Schaffner, 2011, p. 54) to uni-dimensional illustrations accompanied by sparse detail, and with an emphasis on the marks of identification necessary for listing species (Scott et al., 2005a). Until the 1930s, field guides presented information in ways that were often anthropomorphic, emotive and “couched in narrative’ (Schaffner, p. 54). Schaffner (p. 17), in his mention of two 19th century field guides, Florence Merriam’s *Birds through an Opera Glass* (1889) and Mabel Osgood Wright’s *Birdcraft: A field book of two hundred song, game, and water birds with full-page plates containing 128 birds in the natural colours and other illustrations* (1895) stated that these publications tried to, “infect a readership with an infatuation for birds that would transform consumers of birds and bird feathers into their caretakers”. Merriam and Wright, like the women founders of the Audubon, were attempting to stop the slaughter of birds occurring at that time for fashion. They not only humanised birds but in the case of Merriam (1889, (p. 4), presented them as fellow Americans comparing the American Robin with the “self-respecting American citizen”, with his “calm, dignified air”.

As with these older field guides, the NAS and chapters did not shy away from anthropomorphism, and at times has promoted such feelings of connection between its members and wildlife (Cudmore, 2015). For example, to celebrate Valentine’s Day, 2013 (editor, 2013), the website ran a slideshow on courting birds in a “light-hearted celebration of all the love in the air”. Audubon also published an article in support of a book on anthropomorphism, *Beyond Words: What Animals Think and Feel* (Cudmore, 2015).
Anthropomorphism appears to be antithetical to the ABA’s more objective and utilitarian approach to birding (Floyd, 2006; Wilds, 1994) expressed in the focus on bird identification and listing. Scott et al. (2010) reported that 87% of ABA members keep life lists. A more recent indication of the importance of listing comes from the ABA website. As of Sept 3, 2015 it highlighted "Milestones," a feature from the ABA journal Birding where members “reminisce about recent listing and other birding achievements”, as well as an article on the “rules” of birding, meaning what birds one can count for a life list. According to Schaffner (2011, p. 29), serious birders (such as ABA members) would be “shocked” to find birds anthropomorphised in their field guides as they were in books published before the 1930s.

Men’s and women’s level of knowledge of the natural world and wildlife also differs, according to the literature. Kellert and Berry (1987), in personal interviews with 2455 men and women, found that men had more knowledge of wildlife, particularly of rare and endangered species, than women, and in a later paper (Kellert, 1996, 51-52) argued that men had a greater “intellectual orientation to the natural world” and scientific knowledge than women. However, Miller and McGee (2000), in their study of men and women in Victorian parks (Australia) found that women wanted to learn, a finding not inconsistent with the research of Cooper and Smith (2010), nor the Audubon approach which combines connectivity and scientific education. Yet the type of knowledge of interest to women may differ from that of men, as demonstrated in Sibley’s interview (Weeks, 2001), where women were more interested in mating birds than in searching the skies for rare raptors, and by Cooper & Smith (2010) and Watson (2010).

Kellert and Berry (1987) reported that male birders were less oriented towards protection of the natural environment as did Scott et al. (2005b, p. 3) who found that more female ABA birders tended to focus on the conservation of birds and bird habitats (in comparison (to male members). McFarlane (1994) stated that more serious birders in her study (most of whom were male) tended to be less interested in conservation. Yet Herzog’s (2007) meta-analysis of trends found that both genders were concerned about wildlife, although women expressed more feelings for the welfare of individual animals, and men were more interested in species preservation and habitat conservation. Another study by Stoll, Ditton and Eubank (2006) found a more complex picture. Their study of visitors to see the tens of thousands of Sandhill Cranes migrating through the Platte River, found that interest in conservation could differ depending on the visitor’s focus. Connell (2009) had reported that non-listers preferred attractive species, and in particular flocks of birds, while serious birders wanted a variety of birds that they could list. Stoll et al.’s study (2006) found that visitors to Platte River, 53% of whom were women,
were mostly there to see the spectacle of thousands of beautiful, graceful birds while serious birders were not particularly interested in the area because of its low avifaunal diversity, cranes being only one tick on a bird list. Stoll et al. (2006) also discovered that the non-listers were only interested in the conservation of the cranes, with the result that no group focused on conservation of the overall biodiversity of the area.

Another example of gender and the conservation/caring paradox is found in the survey by Peterson, Hartis, Rodriguez, Greens and Lepczyk (2012), of people who feed and care for free-roaming cats, and bird conservationists. They reported that 92% of carers were women, and that most opposed treating feral cats as pests or euthanising them despite the millions of birds (and other wildlife) these animals kill each year. Like the Platte River visitors, the cat lovers focused their attention on one group of animals, and were less caring about others.

The focus on the utilitarian and objective approach to birds and birding as expressed in the dominance of listing in research on birders (Hvenegaard, 2002; McFarlane, 1994; Scott et al., 2005b), and the focus on individual activity and achievement through the list (for example Scott, Lee & Lee, 2009), appears to have drowned out the voices of others. A similar concern in regard to ecotourism was noted by Cater (2006, p. 36) who highlighted the need to listen to those “different, distant, distanced, voices”. While he was specifically referring to indigenous peoples, his words could also apply to women.

### 2.9 The social worlds of birding

This section examines the literature on the social worlds of the serious birder/lister and the birdwatcher. The literature highlights the differences between them but also the linkages through their commonalities, and explores the argument as to whether serious and casual leisure represent a dichotomy or a continuum.

According to a number of authors (for example Kaufman, 1997; Scott et al., 2005a; Wilds, 1994) serious birders have a distinct sense of personal identity, like the serious recreationists described by Stebbins (2004). Personal identity evolves from characteristics and roles that amalgamate during one’s lifetime, with the result that individuals are distinct beings (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012). Individuals are also defined by a social identity (Reicher et al., 2010) based on the groups to which they belong or have belonged (Turner et al., 1987). Social identity links individuals to a social world, that is, a community of those with whom they share culture, interests, values, resources, beliefs and language (Reicher et al., 2010; Stebbins,
1996, Vasconcelos, 2007), obligations, and a sense of morality (Pearce, 1999). According to Jost and Elsbach (2001) social identity theory maintains that group memberships are an important constituent in the way that people evaluate themselves, in comparison with others.

Scott et al. (2005a, p. 3), in a paper on ABA membership, pointed out that birders with “a fixation on listing” belonged to a unique social birding world in which they differentiated themselves from those apparently less skilled or less interested in identification, as had happened in the ABA from its inception (Wilds, 1994). The pronounced social identity of serious birders/listers, as typified by Connell (2009) and Kaufmann (1997), brings with it the qualities and status of serious leisure, as outlined by Stebbins (2004), resulting in a portrait of leisure as having more in common with work. By contrast the identity of ‘birdwatcher’ is more nebulous; they are rarely as clearly delineated in the literature as birders. The public configuration of ‘birdwatchers’ is of a group, probably nonserious about the activity of watching, identifying and listing birds thus fitting Stebbins’ (1982) description of casual leisure that, because of its diffusion might not give rise to a social world, like serious leisure. The term ‘birdwatcher’ also appears to be a ‘catch-all’, not only of those casual about watching birds, but also for those serious about bird-related activities in ways that do not involve listing.

Other research presents arguments against the stance that ‘birdwatching’ is firstly, relatively unimportant, and secondly, is equated with nonseriousness. As previously outlined, researchers have found that casual leisure is important in its ability to build community (Arai & Pedlar; 2003; Kelly (2012) and therefore social worlds. As well, some of that which is labelled nonserious or casual leisure may very well be serious leisure; Cooper and Smith (2010) considered the monitoring of bird nesting to be serious, as did Watson (2010). Thirdly, according to Scott and Godbey (1992; 1994), members of a social world with friendship and camaraderie at its heart could be just as committed as a social world based on regulation and formality.

Social worlds and the groups therein “maintain or enhance (the) self-image” of members (Jones, 2000, p. 284), in part by excluding or limiting the involvement of those who do not belong (Lorber, 1994; Ritzer, 2011; Stebbins, 1996; Unruh, 1979).

Fiske et al. (2006, p. 82), and Cuddy, Fiske, Kwan, Glick, Demoulin, Leyens, and Ziegler (2009) surveyed 988 undergraduates, 69% of them female, from 19 nations, including both European and Asian countries. They found that both individuals and groups judged others on whether they were seen to be warm (that is, communal, trustworthy, sincere, moral and helpful)
or competent (meaning skilled, agentic, independent and efficient). These qualities equated to the gendere values mentioned by researchers in Section 2.8. Fiske et al. (2006) declared that participants differentiated both individuals and groups into those they liked and those they respected, considering the latter group more competent and of higher status. Allman (2013) noted that high status groups were more likely to discriminate against those they perceived to be of lower status than the reverse. These studies suggest that differences between the ABA and the Audubon might explain the name-calling directed in the past at the NAS membership reported by Seideman (2004).

Scott and Godbey (1992) demonstrated that prejudice does not flow one way with their conclusion that members of both social and formal worlds of contract bridge were biased against each other. The prejudice in the birding world is demonstrated in this light-hearted exchange between interviewees in a Louisiana Birding Festival discussing what it means to be a birder or a birdwatcher:

‘Birder’ means you go find the bird,” said one male participant. ‘Birdwatcher’ means you want the bird to come to you. Or ‘birder’ means your binoculars cost at least $500,” quipped a female respondent. “Birdwatching” means you’re still in control of your life,” joked another female participant (Isaacs & Chi, 2005, p. 6).

The different social worlds of birding as typified by listers and birdwatchers, are also expressed in the types of trust common to each. Schoder and Haenlein (2004, p. 50) referred to trust that depends on a “regulatory framework” as institutional, compared with relational, the trust between those who know each other. An example of the former is the documentation of new and rare birds listers are required to submit if they wish to have their sightings of new and rare birds recognised.. Donnelly (1994, p. 237) gave a number of examples of birders making false claims about seeing certain birds, stating that the need for such documentation, is necessary.

Despite their differences both the ABA and the Audubon also have much in common; for example, they both have Rare Bird Alert systems in place. As well the ABA website (2015) includes the Audubon chapters on a page of all North America bird clubs while one Audubon article suggests readers subscribe to the ABA journal, stating that, “initially, you may feel like the content is over your head, before long you will appreciate the quality of this national birdwatching publication” (Askildsen, 2013, no page number given).
In one of their papers on contract bridge clubs, Scott and Godbey (1994) questioned whether social worlds that involved the same leisure pursuit, but differed in function, priorities and values, were better represented as dichotomy or a continuum. A dichotomy by definition is either one thing or the other whereas a continuum allows for degrees of differences. For example, masculine and feminine characteristics are located along a continuum (Johnson & Repta, 2012) whereas sex is usually represented as a dichotomy (there are arguments that sex too, forms a continuum – see Wintink, 2015). Historically, as mentioned previously, there was a line drawn between birders/listers and birdwatchers analogous to that Stebbins (1982) drew between serious and casual recreationists, suggesting that a dichotomy existed. Treated as a dichotomy, serious and casual leisure discount other types of leisure experiences that may fall in between. Stebbins (1992, p. 6) recognised this issue, stating that serious and casual leisure were “merely the poles of a complicated dimension along which individuals may be ranked by their degrees of involvement in a particular activity”. Shen and Yarnal (2010, p. 177), stating that a continuum could “bridge” the dichotomy, proposed a casual/serious leisure continuum (CL-SL Continuum), a stance later backed by Stebbins (2012).

There appears to be a need for such a continuum to explain gendered behaviour as well. In the context of leisure, gender as a dichotomy would exclude those men who do not fit the prevailing view of masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Correll & Ridgeway; 2006; Ridgeway and Correll; 2004); Peters et al. (2007, p. 374) pointed out that men often did not conform to social stereotypes and yet were pressured to “prove their manliness”. Pritchard et al. (2007, p. 9) stated that the way forward was “not to replace one ‘archy’ (patriarchy) with another (matriarchy) but to move from either/or to embrace both. As the literature shows (for example Buss, 1985; Eika et al., 2014; Kalmijn, 1994) gender divisions can shrink between men and women those in long-term relationships (Levenson et al., 1993) and that ‘embrace(ment) may occur in the shape of a couple identity.

2.10 Couples dealing with difference

Sections 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7 explored the literature dealing with theories potentially relevant to couples, their characteristics, leisure and travel. Section 2.8 covered gender and leisure, and Section 2.9 examined the literature pertaining to the social world of birding highlighting gendered and other potential differences between spouses, and between the couple and the formal social world of birding. The literature demonstrates that spouses in a long term relationship form a shared identity or interdependency, and yet their personal identities remain
intact as expressed in birding through their different priorities and interests. The literature in this section, 2.10, examines how couples deal with differences that may affect their travel experience, with a focus on negotiation.

According to the literature spouses handle differences and disagreements in a number of ways including negotiation, compromise, avoidance and accommodation (Evertsson & Nyman, 2011; Hughes & Hogg, 2006,) and cooperation (Kozak 2010). Negotiation, compromise and accommodation mean different things. “Negotiation” comes from Latin meaning ‘to bargain’ as one would in business, while compromise means an agreement made through mutual concessions or changes in opinion, by both parties (Cambridge Dictionary, 2015); in other words, compromise is reached through negotiation. To accommodate means to fit in with others’ wishes or needs, or to adapt (Oxford Dictionaries, 2015).

Wilkes and Laverie (2007, p.71) concluded from their study of lesbian couples’ decision-making that, unlike many heterosexual couples, they managed conflict “through negotiation rather than confrontation”. Evertsson and Nyman (2011) studied negotiation in a series of interviews with eleven Swedish couples, first interviewing both separately and then together. They found that negotiation was often subtle; spouses worked differences out in the course of normal daily conversation. That was how two people living together coordinated “everyday life” (Evertsson & Nyman, 2011, p, 70). This ability to negotiate, they stated, came about because “most” couples established rituals and routines over time, enabling them to understand each other, sometimes without dialogue (2011, p. 71). Therefore, Evertsson and Nyman concluded, overt intra-couple negotiation might be “exceptional”. However, according to Johansson (as cited in Evertsson and Nyman, 2011, p. 75) explicit negotiation was necessary where spouses had a vested interest in agreeing but differed from their partners in terms of opinions, or when they sought different outcomes, or had different priorities and interests. Evertsson and Nyman asserted that accommodation like negotiation might “just happen” within a couple without a need for much dialogue.

2.11 Conclusion

This chapter has brought together the literature on the key concepts as to what constitutes a birder, and in doing so outlined the contradictions and differential status between many of the terms used. The literature on the demographics of US birders demonstrated that most were well-educated, married seniors, and that more than half were women. The literature also disclosed that the focus of research has generally represented a narrow perspective of birding
as serious pursuit, identification and listing erected on an individualistic platform consisting of criteria of more interest to men than women. Demographics and behavioural profiles on women and in particular couples who watch birds and travel internationally for that purpose, were limited due to the lack of existing research. Importantly, the Literature Review has highlighted the relative neglect of a feminine and a social perspective of the activity.

Couples’ characteristics were explored, through the lens of identity, empathy and interdependency, and commitment, with much of that research carried out within the area of health studies. That literature combined with the birding studies has woven a tapestry of spousal relationships, albeit an incomplete one in the context of both leisure and travel. Studies of the differences between couples’ interests and levels of dedication were explored in the context of gender and the role of status and social worlds. Birding as a feminine-oriented activity and social leisure as being a serious leisure pursuit was also explored, and existing plausible theories were posited to explain various facets of the issues raised. The theories explored present plausible perspectives of a couple relationship in a social world skewed towards one version of birding whether for leisure or travel.
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

Due to the gaps in research on couples who watch birds and travel for that purpose, a mixed methods approach was utilised, using both qualitative and quantitative methods, and in particular a research approach “grounded in the voices of participants and their experiences” (Hesse-Biber & Piatelli, 2011, p. 176). This, I believed, would enable readers to view the world of birding through the lens of participants’ diverse experiences, thus broadening the picture already drawn by past research on individual birders. Section 3.1 describes the historical and philosophical background to the mixed methods used in this study, both quantitative and qualitative, the strengths, weaknesses and criticisms of such methods, and why such an approach was preferred. The researcher’s place in the study is explored in Section 3.2, followed by a section on the design of the research (Section 3.3), and then a description of firstly, the questionnaire (3.4) and secondly the interviews involved (3.5). The section on the questionnaire deals with data collection, the design of questions, and data analysis. The second covers the couple interviews, and follows the pattern of the sections on the questionnaire, that is, data collection and analysis. Lastly, a section on limitations (3.6) to the surveys is included.

3.1 A mixed methods approach

To use mixed methods, one must first be familiar with the concept of two separate and distinct research paradigms: qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative research focuses on understanding the world through the people who live in it, while quantitative research is concerned with measuring and manipulating variables in a controlled setting. A mixed methods approach allows researchers to draw on the strengths of both paradigms to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the research question.

As an organizer I start from where the world is, as it is, not as I would like it to be. (Alinsky 1971, p. xix).

A mixed methods approach was employed to guide the empirical research that forms the basis of this thesis. Some research exists on couples and leisure, but little on couple travel, and apparently none on couples who travel together with birding being all or part of the reason. According to Peters et al. (2007, p. 373), in his study of nurses interacting with couples, “most literature addressing partner issues”, was largely quantitative, and what was qualitative often involved only one spouse. Similarly, research on birders has focused on the individual, and mostly the sort of birding activity that is more common among men. A study was needed that explored the demographics of those in a committed relationship, and provided both a feminine and a social voice. A mixed methods approach was considered the most appropriate for this purpose. The research for this study was a two-stage process, consisting of quantitative research in the form of a questionnaire and qualitative research in the form of interviews. The quantitative survey filled in some demographic gaps left by existing research, and also presented an opportunity for respondents to add individual information in the form of answers to open-ended questions, away from the presence of a spouse. The interviews not only provided
qualitative data but also presented an opportunity in many (but not all) cases to observe spousal interaction in answering questions.

Quantitative and qualitative research methods spring from two major philosophical positions, namely positivism and interpretivism, each distinguished by their ontology or worldview - the philosophical study of what one holds to be real (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Positivist ontology originated in the natural sciences, and tends to be quantitative and linear and focused on a single view of reality, while the interpretivist ontology acknowledges multiple realities. Ontological views shape one’s epistemology; that is, how one acquires and constructs knowledge. The epistemology of positivist ontology is usually deductive - it starts with the general, and moves to the specific, a ‘top-down’ approach (Trochim, 2006).

The ontological view of positivist researchers is ‘realistic’ in that they assume there is an objective reality; their epistemological stance is that ‘reality’ – observable data - could be known, explained, and verified by a systematic approach to research, that is, a use of research methods that explain phenomena through the collection and analysis of numerical or quantitative data. Methods such as experimentation (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), standardised observation and statistics are used to produce repeatable valid, reliable, objective results (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Willig, 2001), and may therefore be used to verify an a priori theory, that is an existing hypothesis (Tuli, 2010).

According to Pimbert and Pretty (1995) and Campbell (2003) conservation research has been dominated historically by a positivist paradigm, an approach in which there is a strong tendency to rely on quantitative data. Campbell stated that this paradigm included a “reductionist” approach. Reductionism is a perspective that regards one phenomenon as entirely explainable by the properties of another; the first can be said to be reducible to the second, or that examination of the components of an entity can explain the whole. While Pimbert and Pretty’s (1995) and Campbell’s (2003) research is relatively old, their statements apply to newer research on birders. Such research is still mainly quantitative, and largely reductionist in its acceptance that findings on male birders could be used to deduce understandings about those whose priority was other than listing birds, also women, and couples. Campbell (2003, p. 28) stated that “using reductionist principles associated with positivism, traditional western science separated humans from nature”, a tradition that still exists in the differing voices of those who promote listing of birds and reject what they see as a desire for connection. Yet, according to Schaffner (2011, p. 54) this is a relatively modern approach to birding, that early field guides
presented birds in ways that were often anthropomorphic, as does the Audubon to present times. The dominance of listing, a pastime enjoyed more by men than women in research on birders (Hvenegaard, 2002; McFarlane, 1994; Scott et al., 2005b), and the focus on individual activity (for example Scott, Lee & Lee, 2009) have rarely captured the voices of all those who seek a connection with nature. Of particular relevance to the present study, women’s and social voices, namely that of the couple, have been notably silent. Winter (2000) reported that a limitation of quantitative research was the assumption that all members of society perceived reality in a similar way and that the gamut of human experience could be fitted into a limited number of closed categories.

The limitations of this approach are demonstrated by the focus of most birding research on a particular category of birder, namely individuals who pursue, identify and list birds. Consequently, a diversity of views and an in-depth, holistic perspective are not apparent. Hartono (2008, p. 63) stressed similar limitations when arguing that an interpretivist approach would be more appropriate in constructing organisational theories for an Indonesian setting, than a “positivism-quantitative approach born in western society and culture”. Still, quantitative methods do have flexibility for non-numerical data; for example, the frequency of particular opinions can be converted into quantitative data for statistical analysis.

Interpretive reasoning is linked to the concept of the sociologist Max Weber’s verstehen (1922) or of seeing the world through another’s eyes - in other words, empathy. Research based on this paradigm is inductive, sometimes known as the “bottom up” approach (Trochim, 2006). Interpretive reasoning is seen to require “observations of the ‘real world’ before hypotheses can be deduced about that world” (Bryan, 1979, p. 56). Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 17) defined the qualitative research that arose from this concept, as “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification”. Interpretivism rejects the concept of a single, objective, unchanging truth by examining the how and why of human behaviour (Tuli 2010) through the meanings and personal experience of individuals and groups (Winter, 2000). There is potential for multiple truths to exist in birding, but like women’s and social voices in much of the research of leisure, particular serious leisure, they have been largely silent. Qualitative methods in the form of interviews were used in this thesis to highlight those voices.

Simon (2011, p. 1) described the researcher’s role in quantitative research as “being theoretically non-existent” whereas in qualitative research the researcher is the primary
instrument for data collection and analysis (see also McCaslin & Scott, 2003; Merriam, 2002). Yet inherent problems lie in such an approach. Denzin and Lincoln (2011, p. 11) noted that behind every facet of a piece of qualitative research, stands an obvious researcher acting from “a particular class, gender, racial, cultural, and ethnic community perspective”, indicating the possibility of bias on the part of that researcher. Kirk and Miller (1986, p. 10) stated that methods used in qualitative research aimed to collect an unbroken chain of evidence which allowed researchers to conclude, as a detective might, that “it must have been the butler”, or a scientist to infer “the existence of atoms and subatomic particles” (Harman, 1965, p. 89).

Aitchison (2003, p. 12) stated that qualitative methods have lacked the “respectability” of quantitative methods, the latter being regarded as objective or unbiased, and verifiable, and, according to scientists following the positivist tradition came to be regarded as seriously professional and of high status. Yet while it was believed that such research was value-free, it was not necessarily the case that scientists were ‘detach(ed)’ from their studies (Tuli, 2010, p. 101). One example is that of the resistance of prominent geoscientists to continental drift theory between 1907 and 1950, despite evidence that rendered the theory plausible (Stewart, 1986). Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 5) and Lacey (2005, p. 2) pointed out that there is no “value-free” research, and Giroday (2003, p. 3) stated that positivism might well be described as “a belief system, a leap of faith”.

The result of the belief in the scientific method, according to Aitchison (2001, p. 12), was polarisation of the paradigms in the 1960s, with “respectable” science gaining ascendancy over social science. With it came pressure on social science to use scientific method in an attempt to improve its credibility by using methods provided for physics and other sciences, the aim being to prove scientific laws for social science through the use of empirical data, “iron laws of history” that held just as well as they did for the pure sciences such as mathematics (Clarke & Critcher, 1985, pp. 212-213). There was much criticism. Denzin and Giardina (2009, p. 8) postulated that the positivist approach to social science research was “methodological fundamentalism” (p. 28), used to enforce only one particular view of research quality. Kaplan (1964, p. 60) compared the approach to the drunk who searches for his lost keys under a streetlamp because the lighting is better there. Donnelly (1994, p. 223) supported such statements stating that the accomplishments claimed for the positivist approach might not be trustworthy, and here one only needs to refer to the stance against continental drift theory by renowned scientists as mentioned by Steward (1986).
Another issue with the unequivocal support for the positivist approach is what quantitative research actually measures. To underline the point, Feilzer (2010, p. 12) provided the example of two responses to a Likert scale question on whether prisons reduced an offender’s likelihood of reconviction. Although the respondents answered similarly, their accompanying comments demonstrated that both proposed completely opposing solutions. Feilzer (2010, p. 12) stated that respondents to her survey “felt the need to comment on some aspect”, thereby “qualifying” their answers. Similarly, respondents to my survey responded to the requests for comment which accompanied most questions, and often qualified the quantitative data therein. A positivist approach would have seen those remarks as “unwanted noise” rather than as data according to Feilzer (2010, p. 10). Winter (2000) stated that quantitative research was restricted to measuring only common phenomena, thus raising the question of what it cost to exchange accuracy for results that can be generally applied. Related is the difficulty of ascribing all members of society to closed categories, as the definitions of groups and subgroups of birders/birdwatchers in Chapter Two demonstrate.

US researchers of birding have generally used quantitative methods in the form of questionnaires (for example Eubanks et al., 2004; Lee et al., 2014; Moore, et al., 2008). Scott’s series of papers on the ABA membership, carried out over several years with a range of co-authors, involved only questionnaires (for example Scott et al., 1997; Scott & Thigpen, 2003; Seong-Seop & Scott, 1997). Hvenegaard (2002a) interviewed birders in his Thailand study, while questionnaires were distributed through a birding centre. Curtin and Wilkes (2005) used both quantitative and qualitative methods in their study of bird tour operators, as did Wight and Corvetto (2003) who interviewed a panel of ecotourism experts as well as submitting a survey to ecolodge operators.

One criticism of qualitative methods, as with quantitative, is that researchers may be biased ( McCaslin & Scott, 2003), that this type of research is too ‘subjective’ and ‘irrational’ (the rationality does exist, but is derived, from the life experiences/culture of those involved [Lincoln, 2011, p. 6]), and that qualitative research cannot be exactly reproduced – a different researcher might reach other conclusions, leading to the labelling of qualitative research as unscientific. Therefore, the qualitative stance must involve continuous reflection by the researcher on their studies, assumptions and preconceptions, and relationship to interviewees, and a realisation that their approach is shaped by personal history, “gender, social class, race and ethnicity, and those of people in the setting” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 3).
Winter (2000, p. 11) wrote: “one’s notion of truth determines one’s definition of accurate representation, reliability and trustworthiness”. Whatever one’s concept of truth it needs to be justifiable (Johnson & Christensen, 2013), and thus there is a need for qualitative (and quantitative) researchers to measure, recognise and tackle personal biases (McCaslin & Scott, 2003), a never-ending battle according to Jamal & Hollinshead (2001). In the case of qualitative research, trustworthiness/credibility/truth can be provided if researchers gather data in ways that encourage interviewees to “speak freely” (Tuli, 2010, p. 100), for example using techniques such as interviews, focus group discussions or participant observation.

Still, other issues may arise as I found in interviews for this study - one couple said that they were much happier with a private interview, as in a focus group they would have been unwilling to speak freely. Here also, is where the questionnaire was an aid; some interviewees made critical statements concerning their spouse or relationship in the survey that they did not make during the interview, an indication of the value of the more private approach that the survey offered. Lastly, qualitative research is criticised because such methods often generate large amounts of detailed information about a small number of settings (the opposite criticism is made of quantitative research), and so its findings may not apply generally (Mays & Pope, 1995). This issue was addressed in the present study by also administering a questionnaire, which covered many of the same areas addressed in the interviews but in a slightly different way. For example questions were framed differently (see Appendices A and C).

There are several schools of thought on the combined use of the two major paradigms. One group have maintained that paradigms cannot be combined and indeed are “incompatible” (Smith & Heshusius, 1986). Others such as Creswell and Garrett (2008) argued that the methods should be complementary rather than combined, while Howe (1988, p. 10) argued that the methods were compatible, and thus there were “no good reasons … to fear forging ahead with ‘what works’”. Howe asks of the two methods:

Does changing from a pass-fail to an A-F grading scale, for instance, imply that some new, ontologically different performance is being described and evaluated? If not, then why should the case be different when researchers move from speaking of things like critical thinking skills and cooperativeness in terms of present and absent, high and low, or good and bad to speaking of them in terms of −100? (Howe, 1988, p. 11).

Here Howe appeared to agree with Feilzer (2010, p. 8) that there was little difference between the paradigms at “an epistemological or ontological level”, while Bazeley (2013, p. 10)
suggested that researchers “be informed by methodology, but not a slave to it”. Others believed that the two approaches could be combined because they shared the goal of understanding the world in which we live (see for example Sale, Lohfeld & Brazil, 2002). Indeed some called the combination of paradigms necessary; quantitative research could confirm hypotheses generated by qualitative data and, conversely, qualitative research explained quantitative results (Bryman, 2006). Also qualitative methods helped expose data hidden or distorted by the simplification and reductionism of quantitative methods as demonstrated in the example given earlier of the Likert scale, and also by Datta’s (1997) example of foreign farmworkers where ethnographic studies found a program that was not working as well as quantitative studies had demonstrated.

Lincoln (2011, 5-6) described quantitative research as resembling the building of a wall, whereupon qualitative research lacks the organisation of “bricks”, more closely resembling a “bouillabaisse”, thus corresponding to life experiences. This is the bricoleur concept, the bricoleur being one who “understands that research is an interactive process shaped by his or her personal history, biography, gender, social class, race and ethnicity and those of people in the setting” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 5). What strengthen Lincoln’s argument is that the division between what constitutes quantitative data and qualitative data is not always clear, as mentioned earlier. Quantitative data (Creswell & Garrett, 2008, p. 326 gave the example of scales on an attitudinal instrument) is often collected via closed questions, while qualitative data (for example that taken from focus-group discussion) comes from open-ended questions. However, Creswell and Garrett (2008, p. 327) also gave the example of student records at a school, which may be treated as either quantitative or qualitative data. Whatever the arguments, as Lincoln stated (2011), if used together both investigative methods can capture complexity from a range of perspectives; the synergistic interaction of data thus providing results greater than that by either approach alone (Hall & Howard, 2008). Together they yield “complementary strengths” (Denzin & Giardina, 2009, p. 21).

During the 1980s the values of quantitative and qualitative research were hotly debated. A group known as the “pragmatists” advocated that both paradigms be combined in a third methodological approach, ‘mixed methods’, using whatever best suits the research question rather than being tied to one orthodoxy or the other. According to Pansiri (2005, p. 191) pragmatism “has been hailed as the foundation of mixed methods” in that it “embraces the two extremes normally espoused” by positivist and interpretive researchers. Emerging in the 1980s, mixed method approaches rejected the dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative research (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003, p. 697) while respecting and involving diverse paradigms and
methodology according to Denzin and Giardina (2009). Unlike the other two “monolithic methodological … movements” this new approach appeared to mimic the way that people generally dealt with everyday life issues, and provided “a core” of common and cohesive ideas (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010, p. 272-3). The mixed methods approach integrates quantitative and qualitative research in a single study (Creswell & Garrett, 2008), and the respective strengths of this combined approach may offset the weaknesses or limitations of both approaches alone (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2007), and enhance the integrity of the findings (although as mentioned in the previous section, not all agree).

3.2 The researcher’s place: The emic/etic distinction

To be a sociologist is often to engage in, implicitly or explicitly, a more or less immense, more or less manic denial of the internal world ‘in an attempt to avoid reality’ Craib (1989, p.196, as cited in Sayer, 1999).

Craib’s statement appears to be out of date given the moves toward methods of research that include both the internal world of the researcher and that of the participant. But perhaps it was prompted by Schütz (1967), who assessed the participant’s point of view as paramount while warning that it might be over-ridden by the researcher’s perspective. Sayer (1999) compared academics attached to their disciplines to other professionals, for example accountants and chemists, who may identify so strongly with their own profession that they find it difficult to consider perspectives provided by other institutions. Yet the converse may also occur in that the researcher’s self is ignored.

‘Emic’ and ‘etic’ are terms used to describe the difference between the “detached observer” and the involved insider (Franklin, 2009, p. 1). According to Headland, Pike and Harris (1990) the emic/etic distinction, which arose in anthropology, was fundamental to the ability to understand and interpret the experience of people of other cultures. The goal of the qualitative researcher should be to “attain an insider’s (or emic) view” of the group being studied (Tuli, 2010, p. 102). An etic or outsider approach is also important in that it allows for wider comparison and relative objectivity (Morris, Leung, Ames & Lickel, 1999), through, for example, representative and statistically significant samples as are provided by quantitative research. According to Headland (1990 no page number given) this dichotomy was often the subject of extreme views. For example, he stated that ‘emic’ could be seen to equal ‘sloppy’ while ‘etic’ corresponded with ‘precise’, thus representing a basic misunderstanding of the concept reminiscent of earlier attitudes to the social sciences. Jamal and Hollinshead (2001) stated that acknowledging both
the emic and etic could link the intricacies of the micro and macro levels, the quantitative and qualitative paradigms, of research.

My interest in the subject of this thesis sprang from a number of sources – a love of learning, of birds and other wildlife, and of hearing all sides of an argument, sparked by my involvement since the age of eight, with Aboriginal people. On coming to the Top End (the top third region of Australia’s Northern Territory) to live in 1975 I was elected a committee member of the Aboriginal Women’s Resource Centre. My time in that role was built upon perspectives of society and wildlife I had gained from Aboriginal friends and along with my study of community work (where I became familiar with the work of the US community organiser, Saul Alinsky [1971]) contributed to our attempts to break down cultural barriers. In 1981, when Darwin mangroves were threatened with destruction, I stood for Darwin City Council and was elected. My push for evidence-based policy was not welcome. But there were other supporters, including Larrakia and Kunwinjku people, and Phil Purich, a member of the Legislative Council, and PR person for ERA, the company that ran the uranium mine in Kakadu. The lesson I took from all was that one could not easily “pigeon-hole” people.

In 1983 I began guiding with Hilary Thompson. Hilary was respected worldwide for his bird guiding skills, and acknowledged by Top End birders to be the only “professional” birding guide here. Most clients were from the USA and many were couples. Spouses often had different levels of interest in birds, or even different interests; Hilary and I would be “twitching” for birds while also identifying butterflies, amphibians or interesting plants, or discussing Aboriginal art. Field guides (bird book used for bird identification) mostly contained only the information needed to identify a species – illustration, description, similar species, call, range, and occasionally something of the bird’s habits. Still, clients (and locals) wanted more. Women in particular wanted to feel a connection to the birds and nature in general, and yet the pressure was, and is still on, them and other birders just to list - recently a visiting professor and his wife told how a bird tour guide down south showed them 150 birds in a day, leaving them with ticks on their lists but little knowledge of the species they had seen. They said they would have been happy to see that number of birds in a week. Therefore, when I began writing bird and other fauna books, I included information of interest to serious birders, as well as anecdotes, humour and other information I thought would engage those interested in more than just listing birds as well as the general public (see Appendix E). My books were well received, the only dissenters being two male birders who stated that my last publication, Birds of Australia’s Top End, was “not a true birders’ book” because of all the “extraneous” information (personal
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comments made to author). In other words they believed I had not written about birds in the ‘correct manner’, paraphrasing Pratt (1992).

I can engage with ‘emic’ status in a number of ways. I birded with a spouse, both locally and internationally, and as birding guides my ex-husband and I worked together and separately. My present husband is good at spotting birds and occasionally accompanies me on personal birding trips (I am largely retired). Having been a female guide in a largely man’s world (my experience is that most birding guides are men, an observance backed by Beolens, 2013), I can also claim to have a perspective different from that of the male-dominated birding world and yet be familiar with aspects of that perspective, as a guide. One male-dominated aspect of serious leisure is risk, and here I can also claim emic status as well, having been a buffalo shooter and biological consultant often working alone in the remote bush. On one job that required waterside surveys I was required to carry a weapon, a .357 Magnum, because of the number of large crocodiles inhabiting that stretch of the river. The etic perspective comes from my being Australian rather than an American citizen, a woman guide in an industry where most guides are men, and generally a non-twitcher!

I can also understand the desire of people to feel a connection with nature, not only as a birder and a biological consultant (I worked in this field from 1984 – 2005), but as an adopted member of an Aboriginal clan. I have a spiritual and familial relationship (dreaming) with Ginga, estuarine crocodile (Goodfellow, 2007) and therefore am expected to care for this animal and its habitat as if it were a relative.

This study and research have given me much satisfaction, one reason being that I believe it may be of help to those women and men who do not just see birding as a series of conquests. Secondly, seeing patterns emerge from analysis of various papers covered in the Literature Review and my data has been, dare I say it, fun, as well as providing a sense of achievement. Yet at the same time I hope I have been able to separate myself sufficiently from the data in order to account for other perspectives, for example, regarding listing. I know something of the feeling that comes with seeing a new bird, although unlike some participants in this study, I was never particularly interested in putting myself at risk or great discomfort to do so.

Positionality, aspects of our identities such as gender and class, mark our position in relation to others (Maher & Tetreault, 1993), and therefore may reflect one’s choice of methods. My position is that apart from the factors mentioned above, I am heterosexual and a woman. I do acknowledge prejudice in that I prefer not to guide people who simply see birds as a series of
new conquests. There are reasons of self-preservation in this – to see new birds some take risks such as getting too close to waterways where estuarine crocodiles reside. I also dislike the actions of those who only care about that new tick, and not the environment nor the target bird. I also dislike people who mistreat others because ‘they can’, behaviour I had observed in other guides occasionally.

One respondent to the survey accused me of not making the questions more inclusive of same-sex and transgender couples. I did attempt to involve same-sex couples with the help of Noel Tovey AM, Dr Jo Harrison, gerontologist, and the US’s Old Lesbian community, but only succeeded in attracting two couples and two individuals. Since my teens I have associated with gay and transgender people. I was a member of a lesbian rock band (later asked to leave by other members who thought that being straight I ruined their image). Mr. Tovey, a renowned activist and performer, is a close friend, and I am the adopted mother of a transgender person. However, I cannot claim perfect knowledge, even of myself. I hope that a mixed methods approach will circumvent any personal bias inadvertently missing from the statements above that might otherwise have affected this study.

3.3 Research design

As outlined above, and given the lack of research on birding couples, and the criticism aimed at both paradigms – that no methodological approach is completely free of limitations – it was appropriate to employ a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods in the form of a questionnaire and interviews, and a verifying triangulation of bricolage as advocated by Neuman (2006) mainly in the form of photographs and personal information (included in the text). I provide quantitative data through the questionnaire (Appendix A), and qualitative data through semi-structured interviews (Appendix B). My research began with a pilot study on which I based the research design, illustrated in Figure 3.1. The pilot study consisted of a questionnaire (including interview questions) sent to seven US contacts, including two ex-clients and their partners, the office-bearer of an Audubon chapter, and friends who were generally interested in wildlife, one a psychologist. They suggested a few changes to the order of the questions, to spelling (US spelling differs in some respects to that used in Australia), and to grammar, mainly to clarify wording. In addition, I pre-tested the questionnaire and interview questions by asking them of US clients in 2008. This was done in the course of general conversation, and was not a formal approach. For example I would ask clients what were their favourite countries. After making the suggested changes I then began to distribute the
questionnaires. The target audience for both questionnaire and interview consisted of people who fulfilled the following criteria. They were US citizens who:

- Were married or in a similar long-term relationship;
- Had watched birds with their spouse or partner; and,
- Had travelled internationally with each other with one reason being to watch birds.

Figure 3.1 Research Design of PhD (based on Berbaño, 2013, p. 189).

As Fig. 3.1 shows, my research began with a pilot study and progressed to the PhD. The research consisted of a seven-section questionnaire (see Appendix A) and an interview schedule (see Appendix C). The questionnaire consisted of a combination of closed and open-ended questions, 53 in all, covering demographics, dedication to birding, type of birding, other hobbies, travel, couple behaviour, spouse assessment, and expectations of a guide (although guiding is explored little in this study, it was important in assessing spousal differences in regard to avitourism). The interviews were semi-structured and consisted of seventeen questions in six sections (see Appendix C). The first page of the questionnaire outlined the project and procedures to help potential participants make informed decisions about participating and for anyone wishing to raise issues about the credibility of the research. A consent form was given to potential participants to be interviewed in person, and sent to those interviewed by email, assuring them of anonymity and confidentiality. Pseudonyms were used for interviewees, and
where I quoted from the open-ended answers given in the questionnaire I did not use respondents’ names.

Timing of the major components of mixed methods research can be either concurrent or sequential or a combination (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). I began to collect quantitative data first, and then concurrently with qualitative. Many interviews were carried out on a trip to the USA that covered 13 states. However, data collection was also opportunistic, for example when birding clients visited the Northern Territory’s Top End.

3.3 Stage 1: Survey of birders

3.3.1 Data collection

A subset of purposive sampling, snowball/respondent-driven sampling, was used to reach US birders. The questionnaire (Appendix A) was distributed in the following ways:

- By members of birding clubs within the USA who passed it on to others;
- Through birders and wildlife enthusiasts I had guided in Australia, and friends;
- Through other birders I met while lecturing in the US in early 2009.

Throughout this thesis I have used the term ‘survey’ to mean the questionnaire distributed to US birders. Those who answered I labelled survey respondents. I have used ‘survey’ instead of ‘questionnaire’ because that is the term most commonly used in the literature using quantitative data that I have examined for this thesis whereas it is largely missing from that research using qualitative methods. For example, SurveyMonkey’s URL is www.surveymonkey.com/survey. There is also the US Fish and Wildlife Survey (2006, 2011). Burr and Scott (2004, p. 30) state that their method of acquiring data for a particular bird festival involved “both a visitor intercept survey and a mail-back survey”. Both consisted of questions designed to gather demographics, “visitor motivations, satisfaction, spending, and economic impact”. Eubanks, Stoll and Ditton (2004) utilised the term ‘survey questions’ to describe how they collected data for their study of different groups of birders. Stoll et al. (2006, p. 244) also used ‘survey’ to describe the questionnaire they mailed to birders for their Platte River study. On occasion I have used ‘survey questionnaire’ throughout the thesis where needed for clarification.

The survey was also distributed through other contacts in the USA, and distribution began to snowball as they sent it to others. Then between June 2009 and October 2010, I contacted over
METHODOLOGY

one hundred USA birding clubs seeking more respondents. In 2011 I also contacted respondents who then contacted others whom they felt might be interested. The 359 respondents to the questionnaire fitted my criteria, as did the 25 couples who were interviewed, some of whom also filled in the questionnaire. According to the US Fish and Wildlife Survey (2011, p. 36) 17.8 million US citizens travelled away from home to watch birds of whom thirty percent travelled further afield, but there was no indication as to what percentage travelled internationally although many did as mentioned by other researchers, for example in Scott et al.’s (2009) paper on ABA members. There was also no data available on the international travel of married birders as such data was not collected by airlines or available anywhere else that I could find.

From an estimated population of 47 million birders (US Fish & Wildlife Survey, 2011) there were 428 responses giving a margin of error of 5%. Sixty-eight of the responses did not meet the criteria or were incomplete. Fourteen were birding couples from other countries (including Canada); 27 were US birding couples who did not travel or did not travel together; sixteen were single US birders, and 359 were US birding couples who had travelled internationally together. Only the last group was included in the analysis.

The questions constructed for the survey and interview were based on the existing literature on birding, leisure, ecotourism, adventure and sightseeing tourism, and couples’ leisure, and my experience of (then) 25 years as a birding guide, and as a married birder. I used a range of question types, for example dichotomous, multi-option, and Likert scales, often with the option of an unstructured response. I used Likert scales in order to measure the range of responses to a question, for example on the importance or otherwise of various reasons for watching birds.

A number of other factors need to be addressed as noted by Bradburn, Sudman and Wansink (2004). For example, questions need to:

- Avoid over-taxing the respondent’s memory;
- Use language that is easily understood;
- Only ask for information the respondent is likely to have;
- Make the question as specific as possible

Questions were worded to be as understandable (Bradburn et al., 2004) and unambiguous as possible. This was not always achieved as demonstrated by the response to the question on lists
in my study. For example, respondents were asked to note the number of birds on their longest list - generally that would be their life or world list. Some respondents noted their life lists, as I wanted, while others simply sent in their longest trip list, thus underlying one of the weaknesses of the quantitative method, that it could be difficult to explain in text exactly what was needed. Due to the possibility of an acquiescent bias (Krosnick, 1999, p. 42) I asked for qualification of many dichotomous questions, thus requiring respondents to express more than a “single point of view”. Likert scale points were used, on a scale of 1 (not important) to 5 (extremely important).

With some questions I provided a ‘don’t know’ option (Section 2, Questions 2 and 3). According to McClendon and Alwin, (1993, p. 438) there was no evidence that questions filtered in this way “improve reliability”, and Krosnick (1999, p. 44) suggested it might even be a “wise” decision to avoid this particular response alternative. However, I believe that in hindsight I should have added a “don’t know” or other option, for example “no difference” to the following question, Section 4, Question 5, despite Krosnick’s (1994) finding:

Is your spouse/partner:

- Less interested in birding than you?
- More interested in birding than you?

A few respondents did not answer this question possibly their interest in birding was similar to that of their spouse; others added a comment to that effect at the end of the survey. However, other questions, for example on whether the respondent kept a list, generally enabled this particular question to be answered one way or the other.

Although demographic questions are usually asked toward the end of questionnaires I asked about gender and marriage status relatively early, thus following the rule that “relevant and salient questions … should be placed close to the front of the questionnaire” (Meadows, 2003, p. 566). The questions were ordered so that ones deemed more sensitive were asked later, an example in the questionnaire, being Section 5, Question 11. “Is there any country you didn’t visit because your spouse or partner did not want to go?” Following Berg (2007, p. 75) I included questions that could be classified as essential, extra, “throwaway” and probing, and included different categories in multiple-choice questions. For example, Section 1, Question 8: “How important to you are the following reasons for watching birds?” contains essential, extra and throwaway questions.
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Throw-away questions may be essential demographic questions or general questions used to develop rapport between interviewers and subjects. You may also find certain throw-aways sprinkled throughout a survey to set the interviewing pace or to allow a change in focus in the interview. Throw-away questions, as the term implies, are incidental or unnecessary for gathering the important information being examined in the study. Nonetheless, these throw-away questions may be invaluable for drawing out a complete story from a respondent. (Berg 2007, p. 75).

Beam 2012 (p. 272) stated that “throwaway questions” helped to gain further insight into the respondent, or to “change focus” in an interview from a sensitive subject. Other researchers have used the terms “prompts” or “probes”, for example Leech (2002) and Willis (1999).

My reasons for asking such questions were to learn more about the respondent, the reason being I could find no research on birding couples in 2009 when I was formulating the questionnaire. Another reason, as Beam (2012) stated, was to change the subject in a sensitive area. Here I was guided by my background and experience as a guide and in my community and welfare work as well. I had studied both at Darwin Community College (the forerunner of Charles Darwin University) in the late 1970s and worked as a replacement social worker in what was then the Department of Social Security (now CentreLink).

There were also potential for personal comments attached to structured questions. These types of questions dealt with individual choice and behaviour. For example, below Q. 13 “If you watch birds with your spouse/partner do you ever change your behaviour to fit in with him/her?” is another question, “If yes, how do you change your behaviour?” This type of question enabled respondents to answer a question in their own words. Meadows (2003, p. 565) stated that this was of use “when trying to identify in more depth the respondent’s thoughts, feelings and experiences”, although such questions do require more effort to answer, and are more difficult to analyse.

The survey was administered by email at first, from March to early April 2009. At the time I was in the USA. Telstra, my Australian server, crashed in April and I was unable to fix the problem while in the States. Consequently, I began to use SurveyMonkey on the advice of a friend, a scientific writer whose firm used the program, until I finished collecting data in 2011 (month not recorded). By the time I closed the collection of responses, 359 complete questionnaires were received from respondents who fitted the inclusion criteria.

The success or otherwise of this sampling method depends on the quality of the initial contacts and connections (Heckathorn 1997). As Liamputtong (2008, p. 66) wrote, potential
interviewees in a research project often want to identify a person that they and the researcher know in order “to check the researcher’s credibility and trustworthiness”. While birders are not the usual sort of hidden population reached by this method – Heckathorn mentioned drug users (1997) – there may be other sorts of hidden populations, for example, businessmen (Dupeleva, 2011, p. 9) and the wealthy (Marpsat & Razafindratsima, 2010), as Chapter Two shows, there are also ‘hidden’ populations among those who watch birds, namely those with a perspective other than listing, and couples. Yet even good quality contacts do not always work – only a few LGBT birders responded to the survey, namely two same-sex couples (both women) and a single gay man.

Ethical issues were also important, and in more ways than one; some participants were friends while others were colleagues. Firstly, all names were changed. Where participants expressed concern that a particular criticism might reach the ears of those they were complaining about, either spouses or other birders, I did not report the comment or reported it anonymously.

From an estimated population of 47 million birders (US Fish & Wildlife Survey, 2011) there were 428 responses giving a margin of error of 5%. Sixty-eight of the responses did not meet the criteria or were incomplete. Fourteen were birding couples from other countries (including Canada); 27 were US birding couples who did not travel or did not travel together; sixteen were single US birders, and 359 were US birding couples who had travelled internationally together. Only the last group was included in the analysis.

3.3.2 Data analysis

Data analysis is the “process of reducing large amounts of collected data to make sense of them” (Kawulich, 2004, p. 97). My plan was to explore, describe and compare related data as suggested by Namey, Guest, Thairu and Johnson (2007) in a search for possible and relevant ideas from which to augment, or assess established theory. This needs to be done carefully and thoroughly for similarly to a criminal investigation “interpretive research requires an unbroken chain of evidence” (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane 2006, p. 3). The survey data mostly came from individuals and as they were all married or in similar committed relationships, I wished to compare paired cohorts (for example, male and female) for potential spousal differences.

Survey data were entered into SurveyMonkey (www.surveymonkey.com/survey), a program I began to use in 2009 while carrying out surveys in the US. Initially the only disadvantage to using SurveyMonkey was the lack of basic statistical tools such as mean, median and standard
deviation and an indication of where a difference was statistically significant. These have been added in recent years, thus enabling me to crosscheck with my results in Excel. The advantages of Survey Monkey were ease of use, and in conjunction with Excel offered different ways of perusing data. This was most important in that columns in Excel would sometimes disappear from my peripheral vision.

Because SurveyMonkey supports Microsoft Excel, I could export the data directly into that program, also avoiding the possibility of errors of transcription. As a remote area student I did not have direct access to SPSS. Professor Jim Spickard, the author of a book of statistics, then advised me that Excel was suitable for the statistics I needed.

According to SurveyMonkey (https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/policy/security) the company provides user security (for example data encryption), physical security within data centres which are SOC 2 (Security Operations Center) accredited, network security (firewalls and encryption during transit of communication with respondents), and continuous scanning for breeches of security. Both employees and service providers are screened and access to sensitive data is set on a “need-to-know” basis.

I cross-tabulated within SurveyMonkey to explore tendencies within pairs of cohorts, such as male and female, and then exported the data to Microsoft Excel for ‘cleaning’ - the process of removing invalid characters and numerals. For example, many respondents when supplying their ages, added ‘years’ or ‘yrs’, and these terms needed to be removed. Where data were missing - one respondent did not give his age, but remarked that he was “as old as dirt” - I emailed respondents who had given contact details for more concise information.

Microsoft Excel was chosen firstly because of ease of access through SurveyMonkey; secondly because it was relatively easy to use, and thirdly because Chi-square and t-tests, the tests that were most appropriate to use for the data collected, are both available through Microsoft Excel. These tests, the use of which is detailed in Spickard (2005), enabled me to compare two different cohorts in order to determine statistically significant differences. Chi-square was utilised to determine the relationship between gender or identity (‘birder’ or ‘birdwatcher’), or whether respondents kept a bird list or not, and variables including the types of birds respondents liked to watch, which organisations they belonged to, and whether they felt at risk while birding. Where there was ordinal data (as in the Likert scales), I constructed a spreadsheet of raw data within Microsoft Excel, and used t-tests to compare the means and standard
deviations in order to identify significance or otherwise, using a probability of difference of 0.05.

3.4 Stage 2: Couple interviews

3.4.1 Data Collection

Interviews took place with 25 US couples who watched birds and travelled internationally for the purpose of birding. Spouses were interviewed together, a major reason being to see how they interacted with each other. By contrast, the questionnaire could be answered in private. Thus the use of these two methods of gathering information gave me access to both the shared and the personal identity of participants.

The number of interviewees is similar to that of two PhD theses quoted in the present study, both of which use qualitative methods. Watson (2010) interviewed 50 participants and Yoo (2014) 30. Greater numbers could have lead to the researcher finding it difficult to pay adequate attention to every participant (Smith, 2004). The interviews also served a different purpose to the questionnaire. Firstly, they gave a ‘we’ voice compared with that of the ‘I’ of the questionnaire. Secondly, they sought richer, more subtle or even invisible experiences from couples, that could not be sourced through the questionnaire itself.

Interview questions covered titles they preferred (‘birdwatcher’, ‘birder’ or whatever other term they used, giving the example of ‘birder’s companion’) and any perceived differences between the first two terms. Some questions were aimed at ascertaining how serious they were about the activity. For example, did they have any other hobbies? Other questions covered dislikes of certain birding behaviour or people they disliked, perceived gender and age differences, attitudes towards their spouse re birding, and international travel and use of guides. Interviewees were asked some questions identical to those on the questionnaire, for example whether they preferred to be called birdwatchers or birdwatchers (an essential question that aimed to establish how they classified themselves).

One reason for answering such questions in both questionnaires and interviews was for completeness of data. Not all interviewee spouses answered the questionnaire, and so their self-categorisation would have been missing had not the question also been asked in the interview. Two interviews were not used, one because the consent form was not returned and the other because the spouses did not identify their individual voices, leaving 25. The demographics of couples are presented in Table 3.1. Only pseudonyms were used in this thesis.
### Table 3.1 Demographic information on couples interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participantaliases</th>
<th>Yearsmarried</th>
<th>Yearborn</th>
<th>Education/workstatus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Searle</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Searle</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Bowe</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>College/semi-retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Bowe</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>College/retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Busad</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Doctorate/retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Busad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Coul</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>College/employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Menzies</td>
<td>50+</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Master’s degree/semi-employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>55</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>College/retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Gowen</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Masters/semi-retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Gowen</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Masters/semi-retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Weines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Weines</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Doctorate/employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Hamit</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Masters/employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Hamit</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Masters/semi-retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. West</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Masters/semi-retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. West</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Masters/semi-retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Hove</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Masters/semi-retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Hove</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Masters/semi-retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Lorde</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Masters degree Employed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Moore</td>
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<td>1958</td>
<td>Masters degree/employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>37</td>
<td>1950</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Peris</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>College/semi-retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Prior</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Prior</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Master’s degree/semi-employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Cheams</td>
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<td>1952</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Cheams</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>B. Sc./retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Jeffs</td>
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<td>1949</td>
<td>Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>36</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1959</td>
<td>Masters/employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Tang</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>BA/retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Gayer</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Masters/retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Gayer</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Masters/retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. (Mrs.) Shell</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Doctorate/retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. (Mr.) Shell</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Doctorate/retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Stellar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Doctorate/employed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Stellar</td>
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<td>Ms. Strickland</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>College/retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Strickland</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>College/retired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Vine</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Retired</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Respondents were asked about other hobbies (an essential question exploring their depth of commitment to birding; that is, whether birding to them was serious leisure or casual leisure) and questions about the dynamics of the couple relationship. For example, did they prefer to watch birds together? What about their best and worst birding experiences? What were their attitudes and response to birders or photographers who behaved badly, for example disturbing a nesting bird? Did they differ on any issues regarding birding and travel, and if so, how did they resolve any differences? Meadows (2003, p. 12) noted that questions should not be asked that are considered to “lead” the respondent. However, one question that could be considered leading was asked in the interview: Should one try to involve an unwilling spouse/partner/friend in birdwatching (Spouse/partner effect [5], Question a)? If so, how? This was asked well into the interview when interviewees and I were comfortable with each other, and also of respondents, and for a specific reason: Hudson and Gilbert’s (2000) finding that spouses who were skiers tried to involve unwilling partners in the activity. I asked this question a different way in the questionnaire:

6. If your spouse/partner is reluctant to watch birds do you try to persuade him/her to join in?

Interviews were conducted in person, by Skype or by email. Six interviews conducted in person took place in the homes of interviewees while I was visiting the USA in 2009. One took place in my Northern Territory home in 2010, with clients with whom I had been camping for some days. Most discussions were relatively informal, and conducted from lounge chairs or around a dining table with drinks and food usually available. While this thesis did not engage with observation or discourse analysis directly as methodological tools (and certainly there would be scope for this in future research on couples at leisure), there was an observational ‘component’ that I wanted to capture in interviews. These couples’ interactions, looks, body language and tones of voice – as much as I could observe them - will be represented where appropriate in the couples’ dialogues in Chapter 5. Such interactions helped to bring the interpretive approach ‘to life’. For example, the five Skype interviews were mostly conducted with respondents sitting in their lounge room or home office. Some of the couples sipped wine
or coffee as we spoke. For those couples who I interviewed in person, they often exhibited their relationship with each other through their body language, such as smiling at each other, looking at each other either for inspiration or support of a statement, leaning towards each other, or touching. Ascertaining body language was somewhat more difficult when interviewing by Skype, as often I could only see heads and hands of interviewees (one couple wished to remain unseen and so I only have audio for them).

The five Skype interviews were mostly conducted with respondents sitting in their lounge room or home office. Some of the couples sipped wine or coffee as we spoke. Thus there was an observation component to both the personal and Skype interviews. Most couples were interviewed as a single dyad although in the USA I interviewed two couples together at their request, all being close friends. Interviewees were aged from 61 to 85 and all were active travellers. The age range of participants, skewed as it is towards a senior demographic, may be the result of the semi-retired and retired having more time and funds to travel widely than younger people. A high proportion were tertiary-educated, and most were well-travelled, one couple having visited over sixty countries.

There were two series of interviews. The first were conducted while I was a doctoral student at Charles Darwin University, and the second after I had moved to Southern Cross University, where it became clear that I needed to carry out more interviews with couples. For this second group of interviewees I contacted about a hundred respondents to the questionnaire and received 35 responses. Some were travelling and could not be contacted in time by Skype or email. Ten did not sign consent forms sent to them and did not respond to follow up emails. A further 21 interviews were undertaken, and were recorded on a program called Call Record. Of the 16 who responded by email two could not be used, as the couples did not identify their respective voices. Five that were suitable were Skype interviews, and one was audio only (another couple agreed to a Skype interview but then withheld permission to record, and this interview did not proceed). Email interviews were more acceptable to many interviewees than Skype, to which few respondents had access. Few were interested in phone interviews, for various reasons, for example, one participant was deaf, and another had severe emphysema and could not talk (and passed away not long after). Another participant said that they “hated” phones. As mentioned previously, others were travelling and only had access to email (and that was sporadic). One couple sent their responses by snail mail. Each Skype or in-person interview lasted between half an hour and three hours, and was recorded using the call record function attached to Skype.
The interviewer aims to build trust and understanding, avoid control, and encourage respondents to “express themselves in ways they are most comfortable – for example, by telling stories or following digressions” (Neuman, 2006, p. 350). In this way, the interviewer differs from a moderator of focus groups who instead encourages interviewees to ask each other questions and exchange stories, while having “minimal” input (Rothwell, 2010, p. 176). According to Harrell and Bradley (2009, p. 71), the interviewer should “profess ignorance” about cultural matters” while expressing interest “the importance of the respondent’s comments”. However, ignorance was hard for me to profess, with most interviewees knowing of my background in birding.

Building rapport can be difficult. For example, Hausmann-Stabile, Zayas, Runes, Abeniscintron and Calzada (2011) were confronted with a largely silent focus group in their research on Mexican mothers and had to establish relationships with the women in order for them to feel they could talk freely. One of the couples interviewed for this study, both spouses Chinese-American, said they would have probably been largely silent had I interviewed them as part of a focus group. Poland and Pederson (1998) raised another issue regarding the silence of respondents, that is, the difficulty of interpreting such silences, again highlighting the importance of rapport and the knowledge that comes through establishing such a relationship.

Qualitative interviews are often used in research on women, by women and for women, because of their emphasis on “experience and subjectivity, on close personal interaction, and on reciprocity of researcher and the researched” (Kvale, 2006, p. 482). Feminist researchers have argued that positivist, quantitative research is associated largely with a masculine perspective (see for example Oakley, 1998), of “adding women to male knowledge” (Wambui, 2013, p. 1-2), of being hierarchical, and of stripping out social context, thus leaving the individual isolated from interactions and relationships with other people. This perspective may be one reason why so much US research was carried out using quantitative methods only. Yet according to Wambui (p. 2), “the use of statistics does not violate any feminist principles”. What is important is how methods are used.

As mentioned previously, the research interview, whether it is structured or unstructured, still involves a “hierarchical relationship with an asymmetrical power distribution…where the interviewer monopolises interpretation” (Kvale, 2006, p. 484). I used humour and talked of birding or other shared interests in an effort to increase trust (Fraley & Aron, 2004) and rapport (Sharma, Bottom & Elfenbein, 2013). As a birder and birding guide, and the author of bird
books recognised and reviewed by US birding journals I considered myself to be, in relative terms, an ‘insider’, and that helped overcome another difficulty of surveys, that of gaining trust in the birding world. Many interviewees and I chatted about Australian birds while other interviewees and I talked of hunting and fishing and some of the risks one faced when birding. When a respondent confided a disability I offered to put them in touch with Bo Beolens, a friend, who leads birding tours for disabled people. Hausmann-Stabile et al. (2011, p. 7) took a similar trust-building approach with their focus groups, socialising and sending greeting cards and swapping recipes thus “enhancing the mothers’ own investment in the groups”. However, I was aware of the need to use what Patton (2002, p. 40) describes as “empathic neutrality”, the importance of understanding without judging either for or against.

Within the thesis the data from interviews and questionnaire are enriched by bricolage (Neuman, 2013, p. 179) – in this case photographs of both clients and birds in situations that demonstrate terms about birds used by respondents and interviewees, a page of text from Birds of Australia’s Top End to demonstrate parallels with the Audubon Society approach mentioned in Chapter Three, the Literature Review, and also my attempts to inform a range of birders’ interests. The goal was to provide a verifying triangulation of data as advocated by Neuman (2006). This is important given the limitations of some of the interviews, for example those conducted by email. Here, personal knowledge of some of the interviewees and respondents proved valuable - some of their responses could have been misinterpreted had I not known them personally and spent time either guiding them in Australia or staying with them while in the US. Emailed interviews were particularly difficult in that I had no chance to observe interviewees’ behaviour. For example, one respondent made remarks about her spouse that I wondered whether I should construe as cynical. When guiding this couple a couple of years later I asked the respondent about her comments. She and her spouse both laughed, and she joked that she must have had too much wine. It seemed they had a close relationship as well as a sense of humour I could appreciate. Other interviewees I had guided or stayed with enabled me to develop a much more holistic perspective about them than I would have otherwise in the shortness of an interview.

Those interviewees I interviewed in person often exhibited their relationship with each other through their body language, for example, smiling at each other, looking at each other either for inspiration or support of a statement, or leaning towards each other, or touching. Ascertaining body language was more difficult when interviewing by Skype as often I could
only see heads and hands of interviewees (one couple wished to remain unseen and so I only have audio for them).

**3.4.2 Data Analysis**

The process for analysing qualitative data had four components, namely, data collection; data reduction, that is reducing the raw data by “selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming”; data display, and conclusion (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 27).

I revisited the components repeatedly, the purpose here being to familiarise myself with the data enough to reach a conclusion. I transcribed the Skype and videoed interviews using HyperTranscribe, a software program that transcribes audio and video, which I then entered into HyperResearch, a qualitative data analysis program, that I found an appropriate and rigorous program for handling my data (email interviews were entered directly into HyperResearch). Staller (2002, p. 484) compared HyperResearch with Microsoft Word stating that “the cut, copy, paste, save, save as, etc. commands operate exactly as a Microsoft user would expect”, and that its case-based design made coding and comparing cases relatively simple.

Since 2009, when the bulk of the interviews were collected, I have read and re-read each interview or parts of interviews, dozens of times, comparing comments to that of a participant’s spouse, and then organising the information by coding (the first stage of providing some logical structure to the data), setting aside data I thought irrelevant to this particular study, writing summaries of the responses, and searching for patterns or emergent themes. In HyperResearch I coded by opening an interview transcript (in HyperResearch each participant’s transcript is labelled a “case”), and deciding on a word or phrase that best fitted the data I was seeking, for example did interviewees label themselves a birder or birdwatcher? After registering that code and attaching a definition I progressively opened their spouse’s transcript seeking similar information before moving on to others and adding their responses to the code. For example, I looked for information that supported a participant’s contention that they were a birder or birdwatcher, and compared it with that of their spouse. The code links the text to a particular case. If a particular remark did not fit any of my categories either directly or indirectly, then after much scrutiny, I simply left it uncoded to revisit later.

I used a number of approaches including discourse (Clarke, 2004) and narrative analysis (Merriam, 2002; Richmond, 2002; Sillars, Shellen, McIntosh and Pomegranate, 1997), and
examined language usage, for example whether it was descriptive or emotive. I also looked for data units that illustrated or described situations pertinent to this research. This whole process was quite difficult because of the conflicts within the data. For example, while gender appeared to be an important influence, so was the degree of difference in levels of interest and even interests and employment status between spouses. Yet these findings supported my initial ontological assumption that a mixed methods approach was the way to proceed. Conclusions were based on my interpretation of results supported by direct quotes, the value of which is made explicit in a paper by Corden and Sainsbury (2006). Their study of quotes included analysis of styles of reporting in social research, in-depth interview with both researchers and those who used their research and the empirical evaluation of people who participated in the interview and of those who read the report that eventuated.

3.5 Limitations

The sample size of the survey questionnaire (n=359) was large enough to allow for the types of statistical analyses required to meet the study’s aims, such as t-tests and cross-tabulations. It should be noted, however, that the purposive, ‘snowball’ sampling technique used – which allowed for access to a niche, connected group such as US birders – also had its limitations in that respondents self-selected and as such, it was non-random (Neuman, 2013). Thus, the resulting sample attained cannot claim to be representative of the birding population, nor of the US birding population in particular. Questionnaires do not allow for direct interaction with or observation of participants, and neither do interviews unless conducted in person or by Skype. Data collected in such a way only tells the researcher of intended or reported behaviour. My insider knowledge of the couples helped; several I knew personally, having guided or stayed with them while in the USA. Also, being a married birder, with decades of guiding couples behind me, I had insight into the actual behaviour of those interviewed.

The interviews presented a different set of problems. There were difficulties in finding enough people to agree to an interview, mainly because of the limitations mentioned earlier, for example, that of potential interviewees not being available because they were travelling or unable to use a phone because they had hearing difficulties. Some agreed to an interview but then did not sign or return a consent form. The decision to interview couples together was not a limiting factor. Although it only uncovered the ‘we’ identity it also allowed, at least with those done in person or on Skype, for the observation of interaction. The survey gave opportunity for the individual spouse to express their personal identity.
Other limitations involved the actual questions. The desire to agree or to answer “yes” regardless of the question asked, has been a concern of researchers, for example Van de Mortel (2008) studied questionnaires dealing with health and nursing and found such biases. A questionnaire is a self-report study and as such may be influenced by, for example, social desirability bias, that is the wish to answer questions in a way that avoid criticism, and social approval bias, the tendency to seek approval and the desire to be polite (Bradburn et al., 2004), or to please the researcher (Birks, Chapman, & Francis, 2007). There is a gender difference in such responses with women underestimating or seeking to avoid criticism and men overestimating or seeking approval (Hebert, Ma, Clemow, Ockene, Saperia, Stanek III, Merriam & Ockene, 1997), although this can depend on the subject of the study. Also, according to Vigil-Colet, Morales-Vives and Lorenzo-Seva (2013) these types of responses may increase with age. Most participants in my study were seniors and nearly half were women, and hence I made an effort to encourage people to be as open as possible. That a Chinese-American couple felt they could confide in me about their reservations regarding speaking in a focus group, led me to believe that I might have succeeded at least in face-to-face and Skype interviews.

At least one spouse of each couple interviewed answered the survey, thus giving some individual identity. Requests to those who did not answer the survey went either unanswered or were met with refusal. Further, given the subject of my study, it seems unlikely that either bias would be substantial. In any case the number of open-ended questions plus the use of interviews may act to reduce such biases. Email interviews were quite limiting in that they were one-dimensional, and often I could not gauge how respondents really felt about issues.

It was important to me that participants’ anonymity be assured, not only for the usual ethical reasons but also because some participants were friends while others were colleagues. Some, I thought, were quite vulnerable. Therefore all names were changed and where they made comments that might have affected them adversely I omitted those remarks. Where participants expressed concern that a particular criticism might reach the ears of those they were complaining about, either spouses or other birders, I did not report the comment or reported it anonymously. While limiting such moves were necessary, in my opinion.
CHAPTER 4. SURVEY RESULTS

As outlined in Chapter 3, a survey in the form of a questionnaire was distributed to birders throughout the USA. The goal of the survey phase was to address the following research objectives: namely to explore the demographics of those who watch birds for recreation, in a committed relationship; to examine the couple relationship through the lens of bird-related leisure and travel, including spousal differences that might affect such activities; and to discover if and how respondents changed their behaviour to fit in with a spouse while birding. While the survey results provide insights into the demographic profile of this sample of birders (using the term generically), further testing was undertaken to determine reported differences and similarities between respondents and their spouses. However, given that both spouses answered in only 25 instances, this survey analyses the responses of individuals, not dyads. I have named participants to the survey where they had also been interviewed, to give a more rounded picture of these particular participants and to personalise them for readers.

Cross-tabulations in SurveyMonkey and t-tests and chi-square in Microsoft Excel revealed differences between certain cohorts, according to variables including gender, self-identification as birdwatchers or birders; list-keeping, employment status, and spousal differences in birding interests. Chi-square was used for most statistical tests except for Table 4.10 (Question 8), Table 16 and 17 (Q 49), Table 4.24 (Q. 26) 4.25 (Q. 36), for which t-tests were applied.

4.1 Demographic profile of respondents

Of the total sample, an overall demographic profile reveals that respondents were predominantly male and tertiary-educated. They were older than those in other studies (for example Cole & Scott, 1999; Lee et al., 2014). Survey respondents lived in fifty US states with most residing in the Western region (32%), followed by the Northeast (28%), the South (24%), and the Midwest (16%). Western region states were coded to include: Arizona, California and Hawaii whereas the Northeast: included the states of Connecticut, New York and New Hampshire. Southern states comprised Florida, North Carolina and Texas, and the Midwest: Michigan, Iowa and Minnesota. In terms of gender 55% of birders surveyed were male and the remainder (45%) were female. Table 4.1 indicates ages of all respondents. The modal age group was 55-64 years (34%) followed by 65 - 74 years (31%). The ten-year groupings follow that used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (March 2014), and begin at the age of the youngest respondent. The ABS also uses five-year groupings and the US Census
(2012) four-year, both of which I considered too unwieldy for this study because of the number of categories that would have been involved. Consolidated, the 45-54 year cohort is 14% of the US population, the 55-64 year cohort is 12%, and the 65-74 year cohort is 8% (US Census, 2012). Thus the respondents in this survey were generally older than the US population.

Table 4.1 Profile of respondents’ age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age category</th>
<th>% (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>9 (31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>18.6 (64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>34 (117)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>31 (107)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 or older</td>
<td>1.7 (6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q 51. What year were you born?

As a condition of survey participation all respondents were married or in a similarly committed relationship (for example defacto partnership). As shown in Table 4.2 the modal length of marriage was 30-39 years (22%) followed by 40-49 years (21%). The Australian Bureau of Statistics (March 2014) used five-year groupings, but as with the data on age, I decided a table that long would be unwieldy.

Table 4.2 Respondents: Years married

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years married</th>
<th>% (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-9</td>
<td>14 (48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19</td>
<td>19 (65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>17 (58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>23 (76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>21 (70)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;50</td>
<td>6 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. 18. How many years have you been married?

The demographic profile of the US birders reveals a very highly educated sample; 92% of survey respondents reported that they were tertiary-educated. Of those, 34% had attended
college while 55% had completed masters or doctorate degrees. Table 4.3 displays the reported educational backgrounds of respondents by gender.

### Table 4.3 Respondents’ education: Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary/ Secondary school % (n)</th>
<th>College % (n)</th>
<th>Master’s degree % (n)</th>
<th>Doctorate % (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2 (4)</td>
<td>42 (71)</td>
<td>35 (59)</td>
<td>14 (24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3 (6)</td>
<td>31 (64)</td>
<td>31 (64)</td>
<td>31 (63)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SQ. 52. What is the highest level of education you completed?

Two results in Table 4.3 were statistically significant. Forty-two percent of female respondents had attended college compared with 31% of male (p = 0.0173), and 31% of male respondents had doctorates compared with 14% for female (p = 0.0002).

### Table 4.4 Respondents’ employment status: Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Employed % (n)</th>
<th>Homemaker % (n)</th>
<th>Semi-retired % (n)</th>
<th>Retired % (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39 (60)</td>
<td>5 (8)</td>
<td>11 (17)</td>
<td>48 (73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>49 (95)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>12 (23)</td>
<td>39 (75)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SQ. 53. Are you (employed, a homemaker, semi-retired or retired)?

As shown in Table 4.4, 54% of all respondents reported that they were retired or semi-retired, 43% were currently employed, and 2% were homemakers or in a combination of these situations. There were no significant differences within any of the paired cohorts. In the open-ended section of the question relating to employment, eight respondents (six female respondents and two males) stated that they were self-employed. A question was not asked about type of employment, but some volunteered the information in the open-ended section. They included an animal illustrator, biological consultant, travel agent, composer, environmental activist, an aeronautical engineer, and some pharmacists, medical specialists, teachers, and several academics.

### 4.2 Respondents’ behavioural characteristics

This section deals with respondents’ behavioural characteristics, for example whether they identified as birders or birdwatchers or kept a bird list, and how serious they were about the activity in relation to the criteria used, and the role of gender.
4.2.1 Birder or birdwatcher?

The reason for including a question on how respondents identified themselves, as birders or birdwatchers, was that those serious about watching birds tended to be called, or to refer to themselves as birders. It was only in the 1970s that ‘birder’ began to be supplant the older ‘birdwatcher’, and that term is still used in both birding research, in Audubon articles, and among members of the birding public although those less serious about the activity also use the term ‘birder’, it appearing to be more socially acceptable than ‘birdwatcher’ as discussed in the Literature Review (Cooper & Smith, 2010; Wilds, 1994). Given that many birding studies categorised participants as ‘serious’ on the degree to which they listed birds, listers (those who kept lists of birds) and non-listers (those who did not keep bird lists) were also compared.

Some variables used by researchers to clarify levels of dedication to birding were also applied to respondents to this survey (see for example, 2009; Hvenegaard, 2002; McFarlane, 1994; 1996), Scott et al 1999; Wright, 2004) and by well-known birders like Oddie (1995) and Kaufman (1997). These variables include listing behaviour; membership of birding organisations; the types of birds respondents preferred to watch; behaviour when a new bird appeared in a respondent’s state; the reasons as to why respondents watched birds; whether respondents had ever felt in danger while birding; if they took specific birding holidays, and what qualities they required in a guide. Gender was scrutinised in order to confirm or otherwise the link drawn by researchers such as Cooper and Smith (2010) and Moore et al. (2008) between women and non-listing behaviour.

Eighty-five percent of respondents identified as birders and 15% as birdwatchers. As shown in Table 4.5 there were significant differences between female (20%) and male respondents (11%) who referred to themselves as birdwatchers (p = 0.251) and those who of both genders who identified as birders (female [80%] and male [89%], p = 0.251).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Birdwatcher % (n)</th>
<th>Birder % (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Female</strong></td>
<td>20 (31)</td>
<td>80 (124)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Male</strong></td>
<td>11 (22)</td>
<td>89 (172)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>53</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 ‘Birder’ or ‘birdwatcher’: Gender

Q. 1 Do you call yourself: - birdwatcher, birder?
Forty-four percent of respondents reported that they had been watching birds for 10-29 years, followed by 30-39 years (19%) with nine percent having watched birds for less than a decade. Eighty percent of all respondents kept a bird list. As shown in Table 4.6 there was a statistically significant difference between male (72%) and female respondents (86%) who listed (p = 0.0013). There was also a significant difference between those who identified as birders (86%) and birdwatchers (51%) in terms of keeping bird lists.

Table 4.6 Bird listing: Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No bird list % (n)</th>
<th>Bird list % (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>28 (43)</td>
<td>72 (113)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>14 (27)</td>
<td>86 (168)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q.3. Do you keep a bird list?

Survey respondents were asked how many birds were on their longest list. Generally, the longest list would be a person’s life or world list. However, some respondents posted their state or North American list, making it difficult to establish an accurate mean. Sixty-two percent of respondents’ bird lists contained between 500 and 2,000 birds and 8% of respondents had lists of 5000 - 8000. Thirty-one percent of those who kept lists had bird lists of less than 1000+ species. Only two female respondents had more than 6000 birds on their list compared with seven males. One of two respondents with over 8000 species on their list (both male) identified as a birdwatcher. While some survey respondents knew exactly how many birds were on their longest list, others, some with quite substantial lists were not sure as is demonstrated by the comments below:

*I have no idea b/c I’ve never totalled them. Probably 1500-2000*

*I haven’t compiled it, but 2-3 thousand*

*Over 8000*

*Both of us are around 6,000*

One respondent with a bird list of 8000+ did not specify an exact total. The two with lists of 7000+ specified exact totals. Of the six respondents with 6000+ three did not specify an exact total.

Some respondents in this survey kept more than one bird list as the following comment from a male respondent demonstrates:
I enjoy increasing 37 different bird lists which cover areas ranging from our 2.9 acre personal property to the entire world, and view this as a lifelong “work in progress”.

Ninety-one percent of respondents reported that they belonged to a bird-related or conservation organisation. Seventy-six percent were members of the National Audubon Society and chapters while 48% were members of the ABA (11% belonged to scientific birding bodies such as the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology or the Western Bird Banding Association). Sixty percent of respondents were also members of conservation organisations such as the Sierra Club or other bird-oriented organisations, the Cape May Bird Observatory being one. Many respondents belonged to several organisations, sometimes as many as eight or nine. Seventy-seven percent of respondents reported that they belonged to the Audubon and chapters while 48% belonged to the ABA. ‘Birdwatchers’ (9%) and ‘birders’ (54%) showed a significant difference only in their membership of the ABA (p = 0.0000), as did non-listers (24%) and listers (54%) (p = 0.0000).

In answer to the question as to why they joined birding or conservation organisations, 73% of survey respondents stated that they joined because of an organisation’s policy on conservation and 72% because it concentrated on birds. While genders differed little in their reasons for joining such organisations, other paired cohorts did show such differences. For both non-listers and listers (Table 4.7), the two most important reasons for joining an organisation were policy on conservation and concentration on birds, with ‘friends and family are members’ as the least important. The most significant differences were between non-listers (28%) and listers (12%) on ‘friends and family’ (p = 0.00204) and ‘concentration on birds’ with non-listers at 57% and listers 77% (p = 0.00203). ‘Birdwatchers’ and ‘birders’ differed significantly on these items as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.7 Reasons for joining an organisation: Non-lister/lister</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friends and family are members % (n)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-lister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level of Difference (*= p &lt;0.05)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. 5. Why did you join this/these groups?
Respondents were asked which birds they liked to watch in a multiple-choice question based on US taxa (parrots were excluded, the only endemic US species, the Carolina Parakeet, being extinct). The aim was to establish what cohorts focused on new or rare birds, or on colourful birds, suggested by some as being more of interest to non-listers (Connell, 2009; Moss, 2003). Eighty percent of respondents reported that they watched ‘all birds’ then ‘new birds’ (34%), ‘songbirds’ (30%), ‘raptors’ (27%), and ‘rare birds’ (27%). The least popular were ‘shorebirds’, a difficult group to identify. Table 4.8 shows the birds that female and male respondents liked to watch.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.8 The most popular birds watched by respondents: Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female % (n)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Songbirds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raptors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colourful birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rare birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorebirds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. 6. What types of birds do you particularly like to watch?

In general, the order of popularity and the mean scores differed for women and men, but they did not differ significantly on the sorts of birds they liked to watch. Conversely, there was a significant difference on ‘rare birds’ between ‘birdwatchers’ (15%) and ‘birders’ (29%) (p = 0.0276), and non-listers (39%) and listers (22%) on colourful birds (p = 0.0020). The most popular birds mentioned in the open-ended part of this question relating to what birds respondents like to watch, were cranes, herons and waterfowl, followed by garden birds and aesthetically-pleasing birds, for example those that were pretty. Listers liked to watch “all birds as part of an entire ecosystem” and “majestic birds e.g. cranes”, and “woodpeckers”, as well as difficult-to-identify birds such as “warblers”, “pelagic (ocean-going) birds”; and “empids” (type of American flycatcher). Both respondents with lists of 8000 birds or more preferred to watch ‘all birds’ rather than focussing on just rare or new species, as did the two with 7000 birds or more, and two with 6000+. Three with 6000+ specified rare and new birds, and one, new birds.
To further determine enthusiasm for serious birding, respondents were asked about their behaviour in response to the sighting of a new bird in their state of residence. Four possible responses were given: a) go immediately to find the bird no matter how far away it is; 2) only go after the bird if it is within a few hours’ drive; 3) fit going after the bird around my work and/or family, and 4) ignore it. While states vary considerably in size, this question was asked in light of the lengths to which some will go to see a new bird. Ninety-three percent of respondents stated that they would try to see a new bird although only 13% reported that they would chase it immediately, while 55% stated that they would fit the bird around work and family responsibilities. Only non-listers and listers showed a significant difference on any of the items (Table 4.9), for example 2% of non-listers and 16% of listers would go ‘immediately to find the bird’ (p = 0.0027). On this item more listers than respondents in any other cohort reported that they would immediately set out after the bird, and yet, as with other cohorts, a majority (53%) of all listers still reported that they fitted chasing a new bird around their work and family responsibilities.

Table 4.9 Behaviour when a new bird is reported: Non-lister/lister

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Non-lister % (n)</th>
<th>Lister % (n)</th>
<th>Level of Difference (*= p&lt;0.05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fit going after the bird around work and/or family</td>
<td>61 (38)</td>
<td>53 (138)</td>
<td>0.2675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only go after the bird if it is within a few hours’ drive</td>
<td>21 (13)</td>
<td>35 (91)</td>
<td>0.0308*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignore it</td>
<td>19 (12)</td>
<td>3 (9)</td>
<td>0.0000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go immediately to find the bird</td>
<td>2 (1)</td>
<td>16 (41)</td>
<td>0.0027*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. 7. What would you do if a bird never recorded before turned up in your state?

Of twenty respondents with 5000+ – 8000+ birds on their list, only four reported that they would go immediately to find a new bird while one of the two with 8000+ would ‘ignore it’ (as would the two with 6000+).

Survey respondents were asked to rate the importance of eleven reasons or motives for watching birds. Both female and male respondents (Table 4.10) rated their motivations in a similar order, although the individual mean scores differed on some items. For both women and men surveyed, the most important reasons for watching birds were ‘to feel a special connection with nature’, ‘to see new birds’, and ‘to improve birding skills’. The two least important reasons for both were ‘to experience risk’ and ‘to compete with other birders’.
The most significant gender difference was in the item, ‘to compete with other birders’ which was more important for male survey respondents than female (mean = 1.52 for men and 1.28 for women, \( p = 0.0029 \)) as was ‘to teach others’ (mean = 2.68 for women and 2.98 for men, \( p = 0.0124 \)). ‘To be in a spiritual place’ was more important for female respondents (mean = 2.69 for women and 2.35 for men, \( p = 0.0239 \)). ‘To feel a special connection with nature was also more important for female survey respondents (mean = 4.34 for women and 4.13 for men, \( p = 0.0206 \)). One female respondent wrote:

(Birding is) a way of Being - in a place, in a moment, in a relationship with the whole natural setting, in a relationship with others whose lives are linked with that place. Note: Although I am more passionate about birding, my reasons for watching birds are exactly the same as my reasons for watching butterflies, and other insects, wildflowers, fungi, and even rocks and fossils.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Female Mean (Stand. Dev.)</th>
<th>Male Mean (Stand. Dev.)</th>
<th>Level of Difference (* = ( p &lt; 0.05 ))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To feel a special connection with nature</td>
<td>4.34 (0.8)</td>
<td>4.13 (0.8)</td>
<td>0.0206*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To see new birds</td>
<td>3.83 (1.0)</td>
<td>3.96 (0.8)</td>
<td>0.1662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To improve birthing skills</td>
<td>3.76 (1.0)</td>
<td>3.68 (1.0)</td>
<td>0.4280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To share experiences with those I care for</td>
<td>3.52 (1.0)</td>
<td>3.40 (1.0)</td>
<td>0.2569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be away from crowds</td>
<td>3.24 (1.2)</td>
<td>3.37 (1.2)</td>
<td>0.7733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To teach others</td>
<td>2.68 (1.0)</td>
<td>2.98 (1.0)</td>
<td>0.0124*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To test myself</td>
<td>2.74 (1.1)</td>
<td>2.82 (1.2)</td>
<td>0.5584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To photograph birds</td>
<td>2.35 (1.0)</td>
<td>2.49 (1.0)</td>
<td>0.3656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be in a spiritual place</td>
<td>2.69 (1.4)</td>
<td>2.35 (1.3)</td>
<td>0.0239*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To experience risk</td>
<td>1.51 (0.8)</td>
<td>1.47 (0.8)</td>
<td>0.9170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To compete with other birders</td>
<td>1.28 (0.6)</td>
<td>1.52 (0.8)</td>
<td>0.0029*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q 8. How important to you are the following reasons for watching birds? Five point scale: Not important (1); Slightly important (2); Moderately important (3); Very important (4); Extremely important (5).

For both ‘birdwatchers’ and ‘birders’, the most important and the least important reasons for watching birds were the same as those given by male and female respondents although they differed significantly on a number of other items. Seeing ‘new birds’ was less important for ‘birdwatchers’ (mean = 3.41 for ‘birdwatcher’ and 3.98 for ‘birder’, \( p = 0.00001 \), as was ‘to test
myself’ (mean = 2.06 for ‘birdwatcher’ and 3.98 for ‘birder’, p = 0.0000001). Non-listers and listers differed on seven variables, more than the either of the two previous paired cohorts, the additional item being ‘to share an experience with those I care for’ (mean = 3.71 for non-lister and 3.40 for lister, p = 0.02773). Like male and female participants, non-listers and listers also differed on the motivation to ‘compete with other birders’ (mean = 1.072 for non-lister and 1.503 for lister; p = 0.0002).

Survey respondents were asked if they had ever felt in danger while birding. The reason for this question lay in Stebbins’ (2004a) statement that perseverance as a criterion for serious leisure could entail risk-taking, and comments from researchers that risk was a characteristic of serious birding (see, for example, Scott et al., 2005a; Seong-Seop & Scott, 1997). There was a significant difference between genders with 38% of female survey respondents reporting that they felt at risk compared with 50% of male respondents (p = 0.0208) (Table 4.11). There were also significant differences between ‘birdwatchers’ (31%) and ‘birders’, (47%) (p = 0.0330), and non-listers (31%) and listers (48%) (p = 0.0120).

### Table 4.11 Perceived danger: Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No % (n)</th>
<th>Yes % (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Female</strong></td>
<td>64 (101)</td>
<td>38 (60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Male</strong></td>
<td>50 (98)</td>
<td>50 (98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level of Difference (*= p&lt;0.05)</strong></td>
<td>0.0472*</td>
<td>0.0208*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. 9. Have you ever felt in danger while birding?

In added comments to the question of whether respondents had ever felt in danger, one man wrote: “shot at and robbed by bandits in Mexico... Robbed in Quito, Ecuador that what you mean :-()”, adding that for most of his birding group “going down to Mexico has become quite risky, but we do it anyway”. Another male respondent wrote of falling “through mud-skins and ice into the lakes below and stuff like that”. A third male respondent “ran out of water on a particularly long and difficult trek in southern Ecuador and became dangerously dehydrated”, and a fourth reported that he had “been kidnapped by indigenous people twice. Lost after dark in tropical forest at least once. Been in a failing airplane once. Stuck in mudflats up to my thighs alone once”. A female respondent reported that she had been “held up at gunpoint while birdwatching in Mexico” while others wrote of friends threatened or arrested for trespassing, or robbed, kidnapped or hurt or killed, one falling down a cliff doing a bird survey, and another killed by a wild animal. Several of both genders wrote of guides whose behaviour could have
led to injury or death; one overestimated his group’s abilities and led them up a steep hill whereupon one lady fell; another wanted to take a group into a canyon against the instructions of a park ranger. Some female respondents had felt uncomfortable or at risk while birding with their husbands:

*I have been afraid of the mountain roads and the wild animals. I broke my ankle and dislocated my elbow while birding, but I was not in danger then. I have had to walk over some very scary bridges and walkways. I was scared when I flew over lions in Kenya in a small plane and waded in a river with schistosomiasis.*

Another female respondent noted that her husband would, “wander off from a group to find a new bird. Not always a safe thing to do”. One male respondent stated that women did not appear to want to make “birding a risky adventure” while another man commented on his wife taking risks in going to a location in South Africa “known to have incidents on violence”. Another male respondent commented on birders who missed flights because they were out watching birds, and yet of those respondents who had reported feeling in danger while birding, 56% stated that they fitted chasing a new species around work and family, thus indicating a difference between the way they behaved on trips and at home.

To recapitulate, most respondents were male, aged between 55 and 74, and had been married or in a similar committed relationship between 30 and 49 years. Most were tertiary-educated and either employed or retired, and most identified as birders and kept bird lists. Those who referred to themselves as birdwatchers and/or did not keep lists were mostly female participants. Most participants belonged to a birding organisation, in particular the Audubon Society or its chapters while more ‘birders’ and ‘listers’ belonged to the ABA than ‘birdwatchers and non-listers. Most in all cohorts examined joined because of the organisation’s policy on conservation or concentration on birds. Most liked to watch ‘all birds’ with only a few significant differences within paired cohorts; proportionally more birders liked to watch ‘rare’ birds than did ‘birdwatchers’, and non-listers colourful birds more than listers. Very few participants were interested in immediately going after new birds that turned up in their states, no matter what their gender or how interested they were in listing, instead fitting it around their work and family responsibilities.

While both genders were equally interested in seeing new birds, some motivations for watching birds differed with proportionally more male respondents interested in competing with other birders, while more females wanted to feel they were in a ‘spiritual place’, and that birding
helped them feel a ‘special connection with nature’. Seeing new birds was less important for ‘birdwatchers’ than for ‘birders’. More male respondents, ‘birders’ and listers found themselves in danger while birding than females, ‘birdwatchers’ and non-listers.

4.2.2 Perceptions of gender differences in attitudes to birding

Survey respondents were asked if they thought men and women had different attitudes towards birding. The reason for this question was to explore the findings of researchers such as Kellert and Berry (1987) who reported that men demonstrated significantly higher rates of utilitarian and dominionistic attitudes towards wildlife than women, attitudes that according to other researchers (for example Moore et al., 2008; Scott et al., 2005b), were expressed through competitive listing. While there was no significant difference in the responses of men and women, ‘birdwatchers’ and ‘birders’ and non-listers and listers, respondents did give a number of examples of gender difference in the open-ended part of this question.

Comments from female respondents:

*Generally, more male birders I have known tend to be highly competitive to the point of not wishing to share information. Women, generally, tend to share directions, help with i.d., etc. That said, there are notable exceptions.*

*There are no absolutes. I’ve seen men cry at the sight of a beautiful bird, for example. Yet overall women tend to be more sentimental.*

*More men … see wildlife as something to be conquered and/or acquired and gravitate toward large and/or potentially dangerous species (Steve Irwin being a prime example).*

*I hate it when the men seem to be there just to get pictures with their expensive equipment. They seem to be oblivious of others and take up a lot of space with their voices as well as their bodies.*

One female respondent referred to men as demonstrating their “competitive natures” during bird counts, referring to their behaviour as “combat birding”.

Comments from male interviewees:

*Men are more into “dick waving”*;

*Men are from Life-lister, women are from Experiential*;
Men (want) to conquer nature and (are) more willing (to) break ethical rules;

I think there tends to be more sympathy among women that stops them disturbing birds that are nesting, or roosting, etc. in order to see them better, get a definitive ID etc.

Women are more often concerned about hygiene and safety. I think they prefer more creature comforts than some men do. As for caring for wildlife, women may be more empathic whereas for me it may be a more cerebral concern.

As laypersons, not trained in the sciences, women see nature and wildlife in terms of 'cute', 'good vs evil', or 'icky vs not icky'. Men seem to take an interest in charismatic megafauna and be bored with the less spectacular creatures. These are, of course, huge stereotypes, and there are many people who don’t fit these descriptions.

Of the comments in the open-ended part of this question, 54% stated that men were more competitive, and 24% that more men listed, some stating that to men “the list (was) all important” and they were “list-competitive”. Others remarked that men took a more ‘scientific’ approach to birding than women. Thirteen percent commented that women tended to regard birding as a social activity (whereas men did not). Another comment was that women were more concerned with aesthetics and conservation or connecting with nature than men, a statement backed by the finding noted in Table 4.10 that proportionally more female respondents used birding as to fulfil their wish to connect with nature.

4.3 Respondents’ travel

This section examines survey respondents’ travel that involved birding, their favourite countries and those they wanted to visit and why, and why they had not visited particular countries.

Most respondents reported that they took a combined holiday with bird festivals being the least popular. While there were no significant differences between female and male respondents there were between ‘birdwatchers’ and ‘birders’ as shown in Table 4.12, and non-listers and listers. ‘Birdwatchers’ and ‘birders’ rated the importance of the trips in a similar order, although the individual mean scores differed on one item.
Table 4.12 Type of vacation: Birdwatcher/Birder

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vacation type</th>
<th>Birdwatcher Mean (Stand. Dev.)</th>
<th>Birder Mean (Stand. Dev.)</th>
<th>Level of Difference (* = p&lt;0.05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Combine birding with business or pleasure travel</td>
<td>3.15 (0.92)</td>
<td>3.23 (0.74)</td>
<td>0.3412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take specific birding holidays</td>
<td>2.33 (0.80)</td>
<td>2.92 (0.73)</td>
<td>0.0000001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird festivals</td>
<td>1.38 (0.52)</td>
<td>1.64 (0.52)</td>
<td>0.0015*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. 36. When you take vacations, do you? Four point scale: Never (1); Sometimes (2); Usually (3); Always (4).

The most significant difference for ‘birdwatchers’ (mean 2.33) and ‘birders’ (mean = 2.92) was in taking ‘specific birding holidays’ (p = 0.0000001), followed by ‘travel to birding festivals’ (mean = 1.38 for ‘birdwatchers’ and 1.64 for ‘birders’, p = 0.0015). Listers preferred both ‘specific birding holidays’ (mean = 2.57 for non-listers and 2.89 for listers, p = 0.0017) and ‘birding when on vacation or travelling for business’ (mean = 2.95 for non-listers and 3.27 for listers’, p = 0.0018). The test used for this question was a t-test. These results show that ‘birders’ and listers took specific birding holidays while more ‘birdwatchers’ and non-listers visited bird festivals.

Survey respondents were asked about their favourite countries of those they had visited, and which ones to which they would like to travel. Of the 349 who answered 60% (194) had named countries in Central or South America, as their favourites, with Costa Rica (17% [59] being the most popular and then Ecuador (14% [50]) (not all respondents named particular countries). Twenty-one percent (73) liked Australia and/or New Zealand and 15% (51) Africa. The most popular African countries were Kenya (4% [15]) and South Africa (3% [12]). There were no statistically significant gender differences in favourite countries where numbers were high enough to be analysed, nor between birdwatchers and birders.

Respondents were also asked what countries they would most like to visit for birding. Of the 353 who answered, 42% (149) named the regions of Central and South America, with 7% (26) nominating Brazil, 8% (29) naming Ecuador, and 7%, Costa Rica (24). Nineteen percent (68) wanted to visit Australia and/or New Zealand, 18% (63), Africa, and 9% (30) PNG/Pacific region. The African country most wanted to visit (4% [14]) was Madagascar. There was no statistically significant difference between male and female participants, on those destinations where numbers were high enough to be analysed. Five female respondents reported that Brazil
was their favourite country compared with twelve males. Only one female respondent expressed a desire to visit Colombia whereas ten males wanted to go.

Survey respondents were also asked why they had not visited a particular favoured country. Most (73%; 232) reported that they simply had not “got around to it yet, but plan to do so”. One respondent had friends in a particular South American destination that he wanted to visit, but his wife was more interested in another country. A female respondent reported that she was “a worrier” but her husband could “talk (her) around” (into going to a particular destination). Another simply mentioned that his wife “won’t go” while a female respondent, ruled out visiting any country that “requires a 15 hour airplane flight”. Poor health, work and money constraints, the difficulty of travel (at airports), safety, and weather concerns were mentioned by others. A question was also asked of survey respondents whether there was a country they would have liked to visit but did not because their spouse did not wish to go. Of the 352 who answered, 20% (70) agreed there was. A few respondents ventured a reason why. They included health reasons on the part of one spouse. One man reported that tours that were too long for his wife, with:

*too much driving time, and would offer few opportunities for her to take off on her own. I much prefer to travel with my wife, but I did go on a Philippines tour without her because it was a long, grueling tour with very early hours, a lot of travel time, and little opportunity for her to explore on her own.*

Survey respondents were asked to choose their reasons for wanting to visit a particular country from a list of seven items, in order to ascertain what interested respondents, apart from birds, and also to determine if there was a difference between paired cohorts. Table 4.13 shows that both male and female cohorts gave ‘new birds’, ‘interesting birds’ and ‘other interesting fauna’ as their most important reasons for visiting a particular country and ‘safety’ and ‘people speak my language’ as the least common reasons. As shown in Table 4.13 there were significant differences between female (93%) and male (98%) respondents on two items: ‘new birds’ (p = 0.02272) and ‘it is a safe country’ (women [24%] and men [34%], p = 0.0367). The only other significant statistical difference between male and female respondents on wildlife was an interest in flora; 87% of women and 78% of men liked to see plants (p = 0.03473).
Table 4.13 Reasons for visiting a particular country: Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Female % (n)</th>
<th>Male % (n)</th>
<th>Level of Difference (*=p&lt;0.05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New birds</td>
<td>93 (142)</td>
<td>98 (185)</td>
<td>0.0227*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting birds</td>
<td>86 (131)</td>
<td>89 (169)</td>
<td>0.2874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other interesting fauna</td>
<td>80 (122)</td>
<td>79 (149)</td>
<td>0.8378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancient cultures</td>
<td>37 (56)</td>
<td>33 (63)</td>
<td>0.5281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous people I would like to meet</td>
<td>36 (55)</td>
<td>30 (57)</td>
<td>0.2566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is a safe country</td>
<td>24 (36)</td>
<td>34 (64)</td>
<td>0.0367*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People speak my language</td>
<td>14 (22)</td>
<td>18 (34)</td>
<td>0.3696</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. 40. Why would you like to visit this country (check all that apply)?

There were also significant differences between ‘birdwatchers’ and ‘birders’, as shown in Table 4.14. ‘Birdwatchers’ and ‘birders’ differed from female and male respondents on the order in which they placed their three top items, with ‘other interesting fauna placed first, as shown in Table 4.14. There was a significant difference, firstly between ‘birdwatchers’ (86%) and ‘birders’ (98%) on interest in ‘new birds’ (p = 0.0001), and secondly on the wish to meet indigenous people (‘birdwatchers’ [48%] and ‘birders’ [30%], p = 0.0141). There was also a significant difference between non-listers (53%) and listers (28%) on the wish to meet indigenous people (p = 0.0001).

Table 4.14. Reasons for visiting a particular country: Birder/birdwatcher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Birdwatcher % (n)</th>
<th>Birder % (n)</th>
<th>Level of Difference (*=p&lt;0.05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other interesting fauna</td>
<td>88 (44)</td>
<td>77 (224)</td>
<td>0.0854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New birds</td>
<td>86 (43)</td>
<td>98 (283)</td>
<td>0.0001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting birds</td>
<td>86 (43)</td>
<td>88 (255)</td>
<td>0.7015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous people I would like to meet</td>
<td>48 (24)</td>
<td>30 (88)</td>
<td>0.0141*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancient cultures</td>
<td>44 (22)</td>
<td>33 (95)</td>
<td>0.1222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is a safe country</td>
<td>38 (19)</td>
<td>28 (82)</td>
<td>0.1646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People speak my language</td>
<td>22 (11)</td>
<td>16 (45)</td>
<td>0.2537</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q40. Why would you like to visit this country (check all that apply)?
These results indicate that the two cohorts most likely to be focused on seeing birds – ‘birders’ and listers, were less interested in meeting indigenous people than ‘birdwatchers’ and non-listers. Yet 19% of the 324 respondents who commented stated that a country was a favourite because the people were ‘nice’, ‘friendly’ or ‘wonderful’ with the only statistically significant difference between listers and non-listers (21% and 10%, respectively; p = 0.0361).

To recapitulate, respondents, both female and male, preferred combined birding/pleasure/business trips, as did those who identified as birdwatchers or birders. Favourite countries and those respondents liked to visit were mostly in Central and South America followed by Australia/New Zealand. Some survey respondents did not visit a country because their spouse did not wish to accompany them. Cohorts differed on the importance of birds as a reason for visiting a country, with female respondents and ‘birdwatchers’ being less interested than male respondents and ‘birders’ although most were also interested in other fauna. Another finding was respondents’ relative lack of interest in indigenous people, while giving ‘friendly people’ as a reason for declaring a country their favourite.

**4.4 Respondents’ use of bird tour guides and operators**

Survey respondents who were asked to rate the importance of four types of travelling companions preferred to travel independently rather than as part of an organised tour group. Most respondents reported that they travelled alone or with their spouse or partner and independently of an organised tour group. Male and female respondents (Table 4.15) rated the importance of the four items in a similar order and with similar individual mean scores. There was no significant difference between the response of male and female participants or any other pairs of cohorts. The test used for this question was a t-test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you travel …</th>
<th>Female Mean (Stand. Dev.)</th>
<th>Male Mean (Stand. Dev.)</th>
<th>Level of Difference (* = p&lt;0.05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As part of an organised tour group?</td>
<td>2.13 (0.6)</td>
<td>2.17 (0.7)</td>
<td>0.6136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independently, that is, not with an organised tour group</td>
<td>2.66 (0.7)</td>
<td>2.64 (0.7)</td>
<td>0.8670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With friends or colleagues?</td>
<td>2.09 (0.6)</td>
<td>2.09 (0.6)</td>
<td>0.9627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone or with a spouse or partner?</td>
<td>2.96 (0.8)</td>
<td>2.83 (0.8)</td>
<td>0.1211</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. 44. When you take vacations do you travel? Four point scale: Never (1); Sometimes (2); Usually (3); Always (4);
Some female respondents (though not male) gave reasons for not preferring organised tours. One commented that although she participated in “more difficult and intensive days/efforts than I like, on a bird tour”, she preferred “less intensity, blending other types of sight seeing”. Another female respondent stated that she had been “reluctant to go on longer trips thinking I would get bored or would be intimidated by aggressive birders” while a third suggested that there was little point to travelling with a guide or operator:

*I think foreign birding is rather spoon fed, a person doesn’t have to know the birds, id (identify) them, or find them. To me listing them doesn’t really matter because of this. If you have enough money and time (and motivation), you have a huge list.*

While independent travel was more popular in this survey than travel with a guide or operator 92% of all respondents reported that they had used guides and operators in foreign countries, mostly a combination of local and international tour operators or guides (55%) followed by local operators or guides (35%).

Survey respondents were asked to rate the importance of 17 qualities that they sought in a guide. For the 354 who answered, the top three most important guide qualities were ‘knowledge of birds, followed in order by a guide who ‘freely shares knowledge’, and ‘who treats the country with respect’”. Table 4.16 gives male and female respondents’ responses to 12 of the most important items and Table 17, the responses of ‘birdbathers’ and ‘birders’ to 14 items. Both genders rated the importance of the features in a similar order, although their individual mean scores differed on most items. For both women and men, the top three most important qualities they sought in a guide were those given for all respondents.

The two least important were guide accreditation and a guide who focuses on ‘hardcore’ birders. The most significant differences between the genders were found in the items, ‘a guide who relates to wildlife’ (mean = 3.9 for women and 3.5 for men, p = 0.0003), ‘a guide who focuses on “hardcore” birders’ (mean = 1.87 for women and 2.32 for men, p = 0.0003), and ‘a guide who is accredited’ (mean = 2.6 for women and 2.1 for men, p = 0.0008). The least significant differences were ‘a guide who shows you beautiful scenery (mean = 3.1 for women and 3.0 for men, p = 1.0016) and ‘a guide with whom you feel safe (mean = 4.2 for women and 4.1 for men, p = 0.4001). Female respondents were also more interested in a guide with scientific knowledge than male respondents (mean = 3.5 for women and 3.2 for men, p = 0.0099). A t-test was used to calculate statistics for this question (see both Table 4.16 and 4.17).
Table 4.16 Qualities in a guide sought by respondents: Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guide Qualities</th>
<th>Female Mean (Stand. Dev.)</th>
<th>Male Mean (Stand. Dev.)</th>
<th>Level of Difference (*= p&lt;0.05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A guide who has knowledge of birds</td>
<td>4.8 (0.5)</td>
<td>4.7 (0.5)</td>
<td>0.1205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A guide who freely shares knowledge</td>
<td>4.6 (0.6)</td>
<td>4.3 (0.8)</td>
<td>0.0083*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A guide who treats the country with respect</td>
<td>4.5 (0.7)</td>
<td>4.3 (0.7)</td>
<td>0.0011*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A guide with whom you feel safe</td>
<td>4.2 (1.0)</td>
<td>4.1 (0.9)</td>
<td>0.4001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A guide who relates to wildlife</td>
<td>3.9 (1.0)</td>
<td>3.5 (1.1)</td>
<td>0.0003*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A guide who has fauna knowledge</td>
<td>3.8 (0.9)</td>
<td>3.5 (0.9)</td>
<td>0.0046*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A guide who treats you like an equal</td>
<td>3.6 (1.1)</td>
<td>3.4 (1.1)</td>
<td>0.0583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A guide who has scientific knowledge</td>
<td>3.5 (0.8)</td>
<td>3.2 (0.9)</td>
<td>0.0099*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A guide who helps you “connect” to the natural environment</td>
<td>3.4 (1.2)</td>
<td>3.0 (1.3)</td>
<td>0.0011*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A guide who shows you beautiful scenery</td>
<td>3.1 (1.2)</td>
<td>3.0 (1.3)</td>
<td>1.0016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A guide who is accredited</td>
<td>2.6 (1.3)</td>
<td>2.1 (1.1)</td>
<td>0.0008*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A guide who focuses on ‘hardcore’ birders</td>
<td>1.87 (1.1)</td>
<td>2.32 (1.2)</td>
<td>0.0003*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. 49. How important to you are the following qualities in a guide? Five point scale: Not important (1); Slightly important (2); Moderately important (3); Very important (4); Extremely important (5).

Table 4.17 gives the responses of ‘birdwatchers’ and ‘birders’ to the question of qualities they sought in a guide. Thirteen items were examined in order of importance to reach ‘a guide who focuses on “hardcore” birders’, the lowest item recorded in Table 4.16. For ‘birdwatchers’ and ‘birders’ the most significant differences included a guide who ‘helps you “connect” to the natural environment’ (mean = 3.8 for ‘birdwatchers’ and 3.1 for ‘birders’, p = 0.0002), a guide who ‘focuses on “hardcore” birders’ (mean = 1.8 for ‘birdwatchers’ and 2.3 for ‘birders’, p = 0.0003), and a guide ‘shows you “beautiful scenery”’ (mean = 0.58 for ‘birdwatchers’ and 1.3 for ‘birders’, p = 0.0016). The least significant differences were ‘a guide who is accredited (mean = 0.2 for ‘birdwatchers’ and 1.1 for ‘birders’, p = 0.6783), an item that was most different between female and male respondents. Female and male respondents diverged statistically on seven items while ‘birdwatchers’ and ‘birders’ only diverged on two. Ninety-one percent (252) of listers regarded it as very or extremely important to have a guide who respected the country.
Q. 49. How important to you are the following qualities in a guide? Q. 49. How important to you are the following qualities in a guide? Five point scale: Not important (1); Slightly important (2); Moderately important (3); Very important (4); Extremely important (5).

Respondents added more information on what qualities they sought in a guide in the open-ended section of this particular question. Female respondents:

- *a guide not intimidated by good women birders;*

- *geography/roads/lodging (seems elementary, but some don’t [know]);*

- *attention to the “hardcore” birders is especially annoying;*

- *one who treats all clients equally (no “favourites”).*

- *(a guide who) can respond to group dynamics” … (and who has) a plan B when necessary;*

- *(a guide with) knowledge of the PLACE, environmental issues, community problems, the land/water/people and ecosystem (very important).*
(a guide with) knowledge about a) “environmental issues”; b) (who was) able to “respond to group dynamics”; c) (who had) “a plan B when necessary”. (A guide) should have no “favourites”, … and needs “good judgement”.

(of a female guide) we are soul sisters.

Male respondents commented that:

(a guide should be) enthusiastic about and likes wildlife, knows the country and good birding spots … treats all people with respect;

(a guide should be) someone who lives in the area and benefits from the eco-tourism dollars, and is thus invested in protecting the environment, is important to us;

must know calls and have bird calls on iPod or tapes;

just good company who knows and respects the people and the culture of the country we’re in – and who can find good and local food;

a guide who can control the group and handle difficult people so that I don’t have to.

We became good on the trip. I’d love to return and introduce him to my wife and have him guide us.

In these comments respondents raised three important issues. Firstly, some decried the attitude of guides to different clients (women and hardcore birders are mentioned), and the need for a guide with social skills. Secondly they wanted a guide wider knowledge than just birds and who was concerned about protection of the environment. In guide qualities proportionally more female participants wanted a guide with both knowledge of fauna (other than birds) and scientific knowledge. Thirdly, while some respondents appeared to have a fairly utilitarian view of guides, others, both male and female, liked them and considered them friends.

In summary, this section examined the surveyed respondents’ use of guides and operators. Most cohorts travelled independently of organised tours, but also reported that they used a mix of local and international guides and operators in foreign countries. All respondents prioritised a guide with ‘knowledge of birds, followed in order by a guide who ‘freely shares knowledge’, ‘who treats the country with respect’, and a guide ‘with whom you feel safe’. However, cohorts most likely to be serious about the activity (male respondents, ‘birders’ and listers), differed on
the order of importance and significance of some of the other qualities they wanted in a guide, from female respondents, ‘birdwatchers’ and non-listers.

4.5 Birding with others

Many studies have found that women place more emphasis on relationships than men (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Fiske et al. 2006; Williams et al., 2009), and that their leisure activities are more social than those of men (Henderson et al., 1989; Scott & Godbey, 1992; 1994). Some birding studies (for example McFarlane, 1994; Hvenegaard, 2002; Scott et al., 2005b) reported that those categorised as most serious about the activity (who were mostly male) were less sociable than those less serious who were mostly women. To determine respondents’ sociability they were asked if they watched birds with others, and with whom, from a list of four types of companions. Ninety-nine percent watched birds with others. For both women and men surveyed, the preferred companions were spouses followed by friends, as shown in Table 4.18. The biggest differences were found in the items, ‘friends’; 45% of female respondents and 59% of males watched birds with friends (p = 0.0182), followed by ‘guides’ (27% of female respondents watched birds with guides compared with 16% of males, p = 0.0092) and spouse or partner (91% of female respondents and 82% of males watched birds with their spouse, p = 0.0182). The paired cohorts of ‘birders’ and ‘birdwatchers’ and non-listers and listers showed no significant difference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spouse/partner % (n)</th>
<th>Friends % (n)</th>
<th>Other relatives % (n)</th>
<th>Guides % (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>91 (193)</td>
<td>45 (69)</td>
<td>3 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>82 (159)</td>
<td>59 (115)</td>
<td>4 (8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of Difference (*= p<0.05) 0.0182* 0.0085* 0.6768 0.0092*

Q15. If you watch birds with other(s), who do you most watch birds with?

Survey respondents were also asked the reasons why they watched birds with others. Eleven possible answers were given. Some are not reported in Table 4.19 because the numbers who responded were low (below 20 for example). For both women and men surveyed, the three most important reasons for watching birds with others were ‘companionship’, ‘my spouse/friend and I find birding exciting’, and ‘we have fun together’. Except for the second and third items female and male respondents rated the items in a similar order. The most significant differences were in ‘we have fun together’ (66% of female respondents and 80% of
males, p = 0.0029) and ‘my spouse/friend and I find birding exciting’ (73% of female respondents and 59% of males, p = 0.0061). The least important differences were safety (p = 0.5473) and ‘friends and I discuss our problems’ (p = 0.6379).

Table 4.19 Birding companions: Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Female % (n)</th>
<th>Male % (n)</th>
<th>Level of Difference (*=p&lt;0.05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Companionship</td>
<td>75 (115)</td>
<td>73 (140)</td>
<td>0.6541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My spouse/friend and I find birding exciting</td>
<td>73 (112)</td>
<td>59 (113)</td>
<td>0.0061*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have fun together</td>
<td>66 (101)</td>
<td>80 (154)</td>
<td>0.0029*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birding brings my spouse and me closer together</td>
<td>53 (82)</td>
<td>59 (113)</td>
<td>0.3226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find birding exciting and want my companions to feel the same way</td>
<td>38 (58)</td>
<td>46 (88)</td>
<td>0.1369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>30 (46)</td>
<td>17 (32)</td>
<td>0.5473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends and I discuss our problems</td>
<td>19 (15)</td>
<td>8 (16)</td>
<td>0.6379</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q16. If you watch birds with other people, what are the reasons?

Survey respondents were also asked about the skill level of those with whom they preferred to watch birds: Someone with the same birding skills (1); Someone more experienced (2); Someone less experienced (3); Skill level does not matter (4). The reason for asking this question was firstly, Bryan’s (1977) report that specialists tended to participate in their chosen activity with peers while those less specialised participated with family members, and secondly other studies showing that more serious birders preferred to watch birds with their peers (McFarlane, 1994; McFarlane, 1996; Scott et al. 2005a).

Female and male respondents, ‘birdwatchers’ and ‘birders’ and non-listers and listers all rated the importance of the four variables in similar order. The top two most important items were ‘Skill level does not matter’ followed by ‘Someone more experienced’. The only significant difference found in this study was between ‘birdwatchers’ (50%) and ‘birders’ (33%) on the variable ‘someone more experienced than you’ (p = 0.0253).
4.6 Birding with a spouse

Respondents mostly watched birds with their spouse. To analyse individual spousal relationships more fully another pair of cohorts were added to those of gender, identity and listing, that of respondents who reported similar or dissimilar birding interests to their partner. Just over half (56%) of all survey respondents noted that they and their spouse or partner had similar interests while 44% presented an opposite view. Female and male respondents as shown in Table 4.20 did not differ significantly on this question of similarity/dissimilarity and neither did any of the other paired cohorts.

Table 4.20 Similarity or otherwise of spousal birding interests: Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you and your spouse have similar birding interests?</th>
<th>Female % (n)</th>
<th>Male % (n)</th>
<th>Level of Difference (*= p &lt; 0.05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>61 (92)</td>
<td>52 (101)</td>
<td>0.0954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>40 (61)</td>
<td>48 (194)</td>
<td>0.1648</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q.21. If you watch birds with your spouse/partner do you have similar interests e.g. do you both list new birds?

To examine whether actual couples surveyed differed in the way they identified themselves the dyads where both spouses responded were analysed. In 60% of these 25 couples both identified themselves as either birders or birdwatchers, while 40% referred to themselves as birder/birdwatcher or birder/no identity given, as shown in Table 4.21 (two respondents did not identify their status, but their answers in both the survey and the interviews in which both had participated indicated that they did not list or prioritise seeing or pursuing new birds). Non-listers and listers were also analysed (Table 4.22), and 44% differed, the same result as for all respondents. Only one respondent in the non-lister/lister couples (Table 4.22) did not answer the question on whether they kept a bird list and that couple was omitted.

Table 4.21 Identification of couples where both answered the questionnaire: Birdwatcher/birder

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Couples</th>
<th>Both birdwatchers % (n)</th>
<th>Both birders % (n)</th>
<th>Birdwatchers/birders, or no identity given) % (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>12(3)</td>
<td>48(12)</td>
<td>40(10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q 1. Do you call yourself a:- birdwatcher, birder?
Table 4.22 Identification of couples where both answered the questionnaire: Non-lister/lister

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Couples</th>
<th>Both non-listers % (n)</th>
<th>Both listers % (n)</th>
<th>Non-lister/lister couples, % (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>12 (3)</td>
<td>40(10)</td>
<td>44(11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q 3. Do you keep a bird list?

Of the 155 survey respondents who commented, 65% stated that the dissimilarity between them and their spouse involved listing, for example, male responses:

*I'm more into listing, behavior, photography. She likes to see the colors;*

*I list, she enjoys seeing new birds if they are pretty;*

*She will ‘occasionally’ come with me if she has nothing else to do and expects a good show;*

*She doesn't keep lists, but enjoys going to new places, meeting new people, and seeing colourful or unusual birds;*

*I am interested in all species, but my wife likes colourful memorable birds and is less interested in “little brown birds” that are hard to identify.*

*My wife sometimes birds with me near home, but she is not a lister at all and is more interested in landscape/wildlife photography, foreign cultures, and general sightseeing. She does join me for roughly two major birding tours a year, usually out of the country, and she enjoys the birding and group camaraderie, but about every fourth day or so, she’ll take off on her own to explore and photograph, and we’ll usually spend a few days on our own that are not focused exclusively on birding.*

Female responses:

*Husband photographs. Wife observes and maintains a joint list;*

*I like to keep lists and learn bird calls. My partner is not interested in either one of those activities. He enjoys being outside;*

*I leave the listing and photography up to my husband. Before he was a birder I kept a list for my own education;*

*He lists, I photograph;*
These comments demonstrate that although both female and male respondents listed they differed a little in context. For example, only male respondents remarked that their spouse liked colourful or pretty birds. Despite respondents citing listing as the most common dissimilarity between them and their spouse, there was not a statistically significant difference on the keeping of bird lists between this pair of cohorts. However, there was such a difference in response to the question of whether they had ever felt in danger while birding; 39% of the dissimilar group stated that they had felt at risk compared with 51% of those who reported similar interests to their spouse (p = 0.02126).

Female and male respondents, those who identified as birdwatchers or birders, and those with similar and dissimilar interests, rated their spouses’ level of interest in birding differently from their own. As shown in Table 4.23 there was a significant difference between female (59%) and male respondents (34%) who regarded their spouse as a serious birder (p=0.000004), followed by those who considered their spouse to be a casual birder (female [25%] and male respondents [38%], p=0.0087). There were also significant differences between those who reported similar and dissimilar interests to their spouse and between birders and birdwatchers (although not between non-listers and listers).

**Table 4.23 Categories for spouses’ birding interests: Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Interest</th>
<th>Female % (n)</th>
<th>Male % (n)</th>
<th>Level of Difference (*=p&lt;0.05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serious birder</td>
<td>59 (89)</td>
<td>34 (66)</td>
<td>0.000004*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual birder</td>
<td>25 (37)</td>
<td>38 (73)</td>
<td>0.0087*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very interested in birding</td>
<td>2 (3)</td>
<td>7 (13)</td>
<td>0.0381*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q22. If you watch birds with your spouse/partner, are they:- ?

Seventy-five percent of respondents reported their spouse as being less serious than they about birding. That figure rose to 85% for male respondents (p = 0.0000006) and 87% for those who reported that they and their spouse had dissimilar birding interests (p = 0.000004). Despite those differences, and as reported earlier, spouses were the most common birding companions for all cohorts (86%), although significance within paired cohorts differed with 91% of women and 82% of men (p = 0.0182) reporting that they watched birds with their spouse (see Table 4.18). Those who reported similar and dissimilar birding interests to their partners also showed
a significant difference in watching birds with their spouse (p = 0.0000) with 95% of those with similar interests and 79% with dissimilar interests watching birds with their spouse.

Respondents were asked the reasons why they watched birds with someone else; responses for female and male respondents are shown in Table 4.19. Those respondents who reported that their spouses had either similar or dissimilar birding interests to themselves were the only paired cohort to differ significantly on the item of whether birding brought themselves and their spouses closer together, with 66% of those who reported similar interests reporting that it brought them closer compared with 46% of those with dissimilar interests (p = 0.0001). This result was supported by these cohorts’ responses to Question 8, on their motives for watching birds. There was a significant difference on the item of sharing ‘an experience with those I care for’ (mean = 3.70 for those reporting similar interests to their spouse and 3.21 for those with dissimilar interests, p = 0.000006).

Fifty-six percent of survey respondents reported that they tried to persuade a reluctant spouse to join them birding and there was not a significant difference on this question between female respondents (40%) and males (48%) or within any other paired cohort. Respondents made the following comments in regard to birding with their spouse.

Male comments:

My wife used to be interested in birding but isn’t now;

My wife does not like spending an entire day birding or a trip geared only toward the outdoors and birds;

I want to make it (travel overseas) a birding trip and wife would not enjoy it;

My first wife was not a birder and resented that I was.

Female comments:

I find birding with my spouse slightly stressful;

Since he can’t go now (spouse was unwell), he resents my wanting to.

Despite such comments 91% of respondents reported that they preferred to watch birds with their spouse, including 91% of listers and 92% of ‘birders’. As shown in Table 4.24, female
(88%) and male respondents (94%) differed significantly on this question ($p = 0.0028$), with proportionally more male respondents than female preferring to watch birds with their spouse.

**Table 4.24 Preference to watch birds with spouse: Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No % (n)</th>
<th>Yes % (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>12 (19)</td>
<td>88 (135)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6 (11)</td>
<td>94 (182)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q30. Do you prefer to have your spouse/partner watching birds with you?

As shown in Table 4.25, the only other paired cohort to show a significant difference in preferring to watch birds with their spouse were those respondents who reported similar (97%) and dissimilar (86%) birding interests to their spouse ($p = 0.0001$).

**Table 4.25 Preference to watch birds with spouse: Respondents with similar and dissimilar birding interests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents who reported similar interests to their spouse</th>
<th>No % (n)</th>
<th>Yes % (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 (6)</td>
<td>97 (190)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents who reported dissimilar interests to their spouse</td>
<td>14 (21)</td>
<td>86 (127)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q30. Do you prefer to have your spouse/partner watching birds with you?

To recapitulate, listing or not listing was reported as the most common difference between spouses by female and male respondents with dissimilar birding interests to their spouse as well as ‘birdwatchers’ and ‘birders’. Yet most respondents mainly watched birds, and preferred to watch birds, with their spouse, and nearly half of all respondents attempted to persuade a reluctant partner to join them in watching birds, although again there were significant differences between paired cohorts, for example those of gender and identity (‘birdwatchers’ and ‘birders’) and similarity or otherwise of birding interest,

**4.6.1 Travelling with a spouse**

Survey respondents were asked to rate how often they took specific types of holidays. While the genders showed no significant difference on any of the three items (Table 4.12), respondents who reported that their spouses had similar or dissimilar birding interests did show such differences as demonstrated in Table 4.26, on the items ‘specific birding holidays’ (mean = 2.98 for similar and 2.69 for dissimilar interests, $p = 0.0003$) and ‘travel to birding festivals’
(mean = 1.66 for similar and 1.52 for dissimilar interests, p = 0.0198). A t-test was used to calculate statistics for this question.

**Table 4.26 Type of vacation: Respondents with similar or dissimilar interests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vacation type</th>
<th>Respondents with similar interests</th>
<th>Respondents with dissimilar interests</th>
<th>Level of Difference (* = p&lt;0.05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Combine birding with business or</td>
<td>3.22 (0.74)</td>
<td>3.21 (0.76)</td>
<td>0.8008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pleasure travel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take specific birding holidays</td>
<td>2.98 (0.73)</td>
<td>2.69 (0.76)</td>
<td>0.0003*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird festivals</td>
<td>1.66 (0.53)</td>
<td>1.52 (0.52)</td>
<td>0.0198*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. 36. When you take vacations do you: - ? Four point scale: Never (1); Sometimes (2); Usually (3); Always (4).

There were no statistically significant differences in regard to favourite country, between those respondents who reported similar or dissimilar birding interests, nor between the countries that both cohorts wished to visit. Nineteen percent (70) of 352 respondents who answered the question, reported that they would like to visit a particular country or countries but had not because their spouse did not wish to go. Twenty-three percent (17) named Africa, 21% (16), Asia/SE Asia, and 33% (25), Central/South America. There were no statistically significant gender differences where numbers were high enough to be analysed, nor between those who identified as birdwatchers and birders. Twelve male respondents did not visit Africa because of their spouse compared with five females. Likewise, more male respondents would have visited Colombia (5:1) and PNG/Pacific Islands (6:1) but for their spouses’ reluctance to go with them.

Those who reported similar or dissimilar birding interests to their spouse only differed significantly on Central and South America (but not on any particular country), 19% [7] for dissimilar and 47% [18] for similar, p = 0.0111). Some respondents commented elsewhere on places they had visited without their spouse. For example Dr. Busad, a survey respondent (I have used his name and that of other respondents who also took part in interviews) whose spouse was less interested in birding, stated: “I am going to Ghana in two weeks and my wife is going to Ohio, I guess that says something”. He also wrote that he had not visited India because his spouse did not wish to go. Yet even those respondents who indicated that they had similar interests to their spouse differed. For example:

*I am more interested in birding islands, like Jamaica, which he isn’t interested in.*

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Survey respondents were asked a question on whether they watched birds together while travelling, and if they visited the same places. Table 4.25 shows a significant difference between female and male respondents on the first of these questions (mean = 1.5 for women and 1.6 for men, p = 0.0455). A t-test was used to calculate statistics for this question.

**Table 4.27 When travelling do you watch birds together? Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female Mean (Stand. Dev.)</th>
<th>Male Mean (Stand. Dev.)</th>
<th>Level of Difference (*=p&lt;0.05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Watching birds together</td>
<td>1.50 (0.6)</td>
<td>1.60 (0.6)</td>
<td>0.0455*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>while travelling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q 26. If you and your spouse/partner travel together, do you watch birds together? Four point scale: Always (1); Usually (2); Rarely (3); Never (4).

There was also a significant difference between those respondents who reported dissimilar and similar birding interests to their spouse (mean = 1.76 for dissimilar and 1.31 for similar, p = 0.0000), with more of those dissimilar interested watching birds with their spouse when travelling. Ninety-six percent of all survey respondents agreed that their spouse was usually or always interested in the same activities as themselves while travelling.

Seventy-six percent of all respondents visited the same destinations although there were some significant differences within paired cohorts. As shown in Table 4.28 those who reported dissimilar and similar birding interests to their spouse showed a significant difference (mean = 1.30 for dissimilar and 1.20 for similar, p = 0.0419). These places were not necessarily different countries or even destinations; one male survey respondent declared he would not enter a “quilt shop” while others, female and male, preferred ‘nature’ to ‘cities’ or the converse. A t-test was used to calculate statistics for this question.

**Table 4.28 Visiting the same places when travelling: Respondents with similar or dissimilar birding interests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dissimilar Mean (Stand. Dev.)</th>
<th>Similar Mean (Stand. Dev.)</th>
<th>Level of Difference (*=p&lt;0.05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visiting the same places</td>
<td>1.30 (0.4722)</td>
<td>1.20 (0.4136)</td>
<td>0.0419*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. 28. If your spouse/partner travels with you, is s/he interested in visiting the same places as you? Three point scale: Yes (1); Sometimes (2); No (3).
Seventy-three percent of respondents said they would travel without a spouse disinterested in birding although there were significant differences between various groups. Fifty-five percent of ‘birdwatchers’ and 76% of ‘birders’ (p = 0.0012) reported that they would travel without their spouse, as did 68% of those who reported similar birding interests and 80% of those with dissimilar birding interests to their spouse (p = 0.0001); proportionally more ‘birders’ and those with dissimilar interests noted that they would travel without their partners.

Three male respondents, all of them ‘birders’ and listers’ married to women who were less serious about birding, commented on the differences between them and their partner. One wrote that his wife: “is not a lister, doesn't care about new birds, and likes to bird when conditions are comfortable”, a second pointed out that he didn’t “do shopping”, and a third stated: “My wife does not do strenuous hiking for birds”. Yet all three stated that they preferred to watch birds with their spouses.

### 4.6.2 Spousal negotiation and strategies for travel together

Just over half of all survey respondents noted that they had dissimilar birding interests to those of their spouse, listing and level of dedication to birding being the most common points of difference. Most (73%) reported that they would travel without a spouse disinterested in birding. Yet at the same time 91% of respondents reported that they preferred to watch birds with their spouse. Most, particularly those most serious about birding, also reported that while travelling they did watch birds together, as well as participate in other activities, and visit the same places as their spouse, suggesting that they had negotiated their travel.

Not all respondents answered similarly. As shown in Table 4.22 and 4.23, two paired cohorts showed significant differences between them; proportionally fewer female (88%) than male respondents (88% and 94% respectively, p = 0.0028) preferred to watch birds with their spouse. Likewise those reporting dissimilar (86%) and similar (97%) birding interests to their spouse also differed (p = 0.0102), with those claiming different interests less likely to watch birds with their partner.

Survey respondents were asked if they had changed their birding behaviour to fit in with their spouse, and 59% affirmed that they had, including 60% of those who identified as birders respectively, and 61% of listers. Female (45%) and male (70%) respondents showed a
significant difference ($p = 0.000004$), as did those who reported similar (53%) and dissimilar (66%) birding interests to their spouse ($p = 0.0142$). Therefore, proportionally more men, and those respondents reporting dissimilar interests to their spouse, changed their behaviour to fit in with their partner.

In answer to the open-ended part of this question, respondents indicated that they had changed their behaviour by adaption and compromise. Examples of adaptation given by female respondents include:

- **Go(ing) on a more challenging hike than I would alone;**

- **(Going out birding) even when I have something else I want to do;**

- **Sometimes I go when I feel like I should be doing something else – working, taking care of the garden;**

- **(I limit birding) to easily visible birds – e.g. lots of herons, pelicans, waterfowl**

- **(When with my spouse) I bird a little less fanatically.**

Male respondents demonstrated sensitivity to their spouse’s feeling by statements such as “(I am) more attentive to her” and “I behave such to enhance her birding success. That success brings me great pleasure”. Another male respondent reported that he:

- **Share(d) anecdotes, identification, and life history information about species that I would not otherwise do with a birder that was equally in skill/knowledge level. I also tend to both avoid birding tasks that have a high input/patience:species ratio and take less risks in the field than I would do otherwise.**

The degree to which respondents reported that they changed their behaviour appeared to vary widely. Dr. Cheams, who was also one of the interviewees, wrote: “I'm less hard-core when with her...less time in the field...not so early starts. etc.” Likewise, Mr. Tang stated that he had “often cut days short or skipped locations” because his wife had “different interests”. One male respondent did not go to much effort to help his less serious partner, simply stating that “I'm a bit nicer”, while others went to great lengths to fit in with a disabled spouse, for example: “since she (his spouse) is less able to do things physically than I am, I often do not go into the places she cannot access”. Another wrote: “my wife is disabled with Lupus. I have significantly changed my pace and schedule to meet her needs”. A female respondent noted that her husband
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had been very ill and therefore she “took it a lot easier re walking, driving and travel until he was fit again”. Another did not travel because her ill husband could not. Male respondents also wrote:

*I am a hard core birder - I am a field ornithologist by profession, so I tend to tone down my usual bird till I drop mode when birding with my wife - I do this voluntarily and adds to our mutual enjoyment*

*Fewer hours in the field, less driving and more walking. For international birding we pick places with cultural and scenic attractions in addition to good birds. We avoid dangerous areas like Colombia and parts of the Middle East even though there are terrific birds to be seen there.*

*I try to be less intense about birding. For example, skipping meals or sleeping on the ground are not ways to win over a spouse. Having breaks, regular meals, and acceptable lodging are all important. We even do some things that are not birding.*

*I’m solicitous of her needs; I want to make sure she has a reasonably good time. I might go slower, or skip harder-to-find or less “showy” species.*

Respondents compromised in various ways. One male respondent stated that he chose the “birding trips” and his spouse picked the “cultural trips”. A female respondent wrote that she and her spouse arranged to have one day for birding, one for visiting museums and another for opera, and “that’s what we do together”. Dr. Busad reported: “We have taken cruises with non-birding friends and both modify activities somewhat to accommodate our desires to do some different things”. A female respondent who also participated in the interviews wrote:

*We accommodate each other and compromise on places to visit. I go to the scary places to make (Spouse) happy and he goes to less scary places to make me happy.*

However, Dr. Busad, as well as other respondents of both genders also mentioned that commitment to a partner constrained their birding. A male respondent who identified as a birder stated that it was “more important to maintain (my) primary relationship with my wife and I have to cut back on birding with friends in order to do so”.

A female respondent, whose partner was less serious about birding than she, noted:

*I am careful to choose birding locations that will have something to interest him. I am happy with any birds; he likes the flashier stuff.*
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Twenty percent of all survey respondents noted that there were countries that they did not visit to watch birds because their spouse did not wish to go.

A higher proportion of respondents travelled independently than with an organised tour, and yet 40% reported that they might be or were more likely to travel with a guide if their spouse or partner accompanied them. Yet female and male respondents differed on a number of qualities that they sought in guides, for example women prioritised a guide who treated them ‘like an equal’, while men gave a higher priority to a guide who ‘focussed on hardcore birders’.

Male respondents gave a number of reasons for travelling with a guide. Dr. Busad stated that his wife, who was not keen on birding, was “more comfortable with the planned itinerary and security of a knowledgeable person leading”, also adding that, “we try to avoid foreign birding trips with general bird tours open to the public”.

Respondents were asked how their attitudes had changed because of their partner (in hindsight the term ‘behaviour’ should have been used in the survey instead of ‘attitude’. Attitude refers to a relatively consistent way of thinking or feeling about something whereas behaviour is the way that one acts in relation to attitude, that is, attitude influences behaviour [McLeod, 2009]). Female and male survey respondents showed a few significant differences in response: socialising more with other birders (female respondents [56%] and male [43%], p = 0.0310), buying more expensive birding equipment (female respondents [45%] and male [22%], p = 0.0009), and worrying more about safety (female respondents [8%] and male [37%], p = 0.0004). In response to a question on what had influenced their change in birding attitudes respondents, both female and male, gave a number of reasons relating to their partners in the open-ended section of the question. Some respondents highlighted the link between money and listing, one man writing that, “We value the shared interest” but also the ability to “put more money into better equipment so we can see more birds”. A third male respondent noted that:

I buy more expensive birding equipment because my wife encourages it. Previously, I bought less expensive equipment (and went without certain items) because I was raised to be frugal. Well, so was she, but she says she wants the best for me, and we can afford it, largely because she has a good job.

Conversely, a female ‘birdwatcher’ wrote that “he has more money than me and consequently I have more expensive equipment and go on more trips out of state and out of country”.

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Some respondents raised the issue of socialising while birding. A male respondent wrote: “my wife is more comfortable approaching strangers in the field than I am”, while a female respondent noted, “With a companion I don't have the same need to socialize with others sometimes”; thus indicating that the desire or need to socialise (for example to obtain information on local birds) may be fulfilled by a spouse. However, two female respondents stated that birding with their spouse was not their preferred option, one indicating that her spouse was a hindrance to meeting others:

\[\text{With other than spouse, I like to share the magic.}\]

\[\text{Bringing us close together – I don’t think so. If anything it tries the relationship! I like to go alone, meet new people.}\]

Yet spouses also played a part in lessening female respondents’ anxiety about safety:

\[\text{I feel less anxiety about being in remote areas when I’m in the company of a man;}\]

\[\text{Birding with my spouse (a large guy) makes me less concerned about safety than I would be by myself;}\]

\[\text{Comfort level increases birding with someone close like a spouse”}.\]

Some survey respondents mentioned that they and their spouse shared the same goal. Mr. Hove, for example, mentioned that he and his spouse were “‘joined at the hip’ so we will both see the same birds. A bird that only one of us sees, a ‘half bird’, is a major screw-up”. Likewise a female respondent wrote that because it (birding) “is such a shared activity for us, my attitude can’t help but change some”, while Dr. Cheams mentioned the role his spouse had played in his changed attitude towards birding: “I enjoy the experience more, appreciate the beauty of birds more”.

**4.7 Conclusion**

This chapter reports on analysis of the survey questionnaire. To fulfil the objectives, firstly the demographics and behavioural profiles of respondents were analysed, and secondly, the nature and meaning of couples’ birding experiences as travel (leisure was also explored, the two being related). Thirdly intra-couple differences were identified in the context of birding leisure and travel, and lastly negotiation in relation to birding travel was analysed.
Demographics and behaviour were analysed using three sets of paired cohorts – gender, identity (where survey respondents identified as a birder or birdwatcher), and activity (whether they listed the birds they saw, or not). Investigation revealed that survey respondents represented most states of the USA; most were tertiary-educated; were employed or retired seniors, and were in a long-term, committed relationship. There were some significant gender differences in education. Gender played a central role in the analysis of profiles. Firstly, male and female cohorts gave direct comparisons of gender while identity (‘birder’ or ‘birdwatcher’) gave an indirect comparison (more women identify as birdwatchers than men), as did the activity of listing or not listing (more male birders list). Survey respondents identified as birders and kept bird lists, although there were significant differences between male and female respondents, and those who identified as birders or birdwatchers. Most respondents joined birding or conservation organisations and on this question there was little difference between genders, although such differences did appear between ‘birders’ and ‘birdwatchers’ and those who listed and those who did not, in relation to the ABA.

Respondents, no matter whether they identified as birders and kept bird lists, liked to watch ‘all birds’ rather than focussing on ‘new’ or ‘rare’ birds, and they mostly belonged to the Audubon rather than the ABA. Most placed family and work responsibilities ahead of pursuing a bird in their home state. Respondents preferred to travel independently of organised tours.

The third objective, to identify intra-couple differences in the context of birding leisure and travel, was met in two ways; by examining paired cohorts of those criteria most likely to constitute couples; male and female, the identities of ‘birder’ and ‘birdwatcher’ and whether they listed or not, and also by exploring the question of participants who reported that their birding interests were similar or dissimilar to those of their spouse. There were few differences within paired cohorts in relation to the birds that respondents liked to watch, but there were others. More male respondents, ‘birders’ and listers were motivated to watch new birds over feeling a ‘special connection with nature’, to compete with other birders, and to find themselves at risk while pursuing birds. They travelled more specifically to watch birds and prioritised a guide’s knowledge of birds and were more appreciative than females of a guide who ‘focuses on hardcore birders’.

In relation to the qualities they wanted in a guide, female respondents, more so than males, included the desire to be treated as equals. Other differences between genders on the qualities desired, included the greater wish of female respondents to have a guide who could give them
scientific information and who could help them relate to wildlife. Otherwise these cohorts did not necessarily fit the picture drawn by other researchers of someone for whom the activity was central to lifestyle. Respondents, in particular males, preferred to watch birds with their spouses.

The fourth objective, the negotiation of joint birding travel, was demonstrated by the question on how respondents changed to accommodate their spouse’s lesser or greater interest in birds and birding. Despite the many differences between paired cohorts, responses indicated that the relationship was central rather than that of the activity in that survey respondents reported that they put family and work responsibilities ahead of chasing a new bird, and while many acknowledged that they would travel without a disinterested spouse most preferred to watch birds with their partner and over half changed or modified their behaviour to fit in with a spouse whose interests differed. Many used compromise and negotiation so that both could have an enjoyable trip, and some even eschewed certain countries because their spouse did not want to go.

Overall, few respondents fitted neatly into one cohort or another with different genders, and identities, those who listed and those who did not, and those with similar or dissimilar interests to their spouses appearing to have much in common, the cohorts perhaps representing the polar ends of a continuum.
CHAPTER 5. INTERVIEW FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of 25 interviews carried out with US couples who watch birds and have travelled internationally together, with birding forming part or all of that experience. The names of all interviewed have been changed.

The objectives that are covered in part in this chapter are:

- To further explore the behaviour of birding couples the role of gender and the couple relationship;
- to explore the nature and meaning of couples’ birding experiences as travel;
- to identify any intra-couple differences, gendered and otherwise, in the contexts of birding leisure and travel; and
- to understand how couples negotiate their birding travel.

The first section of this chapter gives an overview of four key themes identified in the interview findings. The four themes are described briefly below.

1) Birding: A shared identity

- The first theme explores the nature of birding couples and the couple relationship as it pertains to birding leisure and travel. In these interviews couples demonstrated a shared identity or interdependency expressed in a number of ways, for example through their self-identification, language, expressions of empathy and/or interdependency, and a ‘them and us’ attitude to mutually disliked behaviour in relation to birding companions. Birding for these couples was a shared leisure and travel interest (although more important for some than others) with a history of common experiences behind it. Subthemes are: shared language (verbal and body) of couples who watch birds; shared birding experiences; empathy with couples who watch birds; and intra-couple interdependency.

2) Terms Matter: Birder or birdwatcher

- This theme and the next introduce the subject of difference between spouses in the form of gender and identity (that is, whether they identify as a ‘birder’ or a ‘birdwatcher’). It covers interviewees’ categorisation of those who watch birds, including both their own self-identification as ‘birders’ or ‘birdwatchers’, and also their perspectives of others, and the relative status of these categories.
There are three subthemes: the relevance of the terms ‘birder’ or ‘birdwatcher’, the status or identity of these terms in the birding world, and the role of gender in birding.

3) Other differences between spouses:
   - Building upon the previous category, this theme describes spousal differences other than gender or identity that may affect their birding both as recreation and travel. Subthemes are: differences in spousal interest in birding; differences in spouses’ best and worst experiences, and situations that lead to one birding without the spouse.

4) Birding and birding travel as a negotiated experience
   - Couples generally expressed a desire to watch birds and travel together even though there were distinct differences as revealed in the themes above. This theme covers couples’ methods of negotiation that allow them to watch birds and travel in such a way that both spouses’ desires are met. There are two subthemes here: firstly, an exploration of the tools that spouses use to negotiate differences, and secondly, the blurring or lack of a clear demarcation between gendered and other interests.

Section 5.5 of this chapter examines comments by interviewees that demonstrate a blurring of the differences between them. Throughout the chapter excerpts from the joint interviews are used to reveal in-depth accounts of the couples’ experience.

5.1 Birthing couples: A shared identity

According to the survey data most participants had been married for thirty years or more, and thus shared a relatively extensive common history of life experiences. This section examines shared or couple identity demonstrated through their use of language, their shared birding experiences, and demonstrations of empathy and interdependency.

5.1.1 Shared language of birthing couples

In these interviews many participant couples demonstrated their relationship with each other through their spoken language. Verbal language examined consisted of interviewees’ self-identification, and whether they identified similarly (for example, as ‘birder’ or
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‘birdwatcher’), the presence or absence of shared banter, whether spouses expanded one another’s replies, ‘couple’ language, and inclusive pronouns.

For most couples interviewed, both spouses identified themselves similarly, either as birders (birder/birder) or birdwatchers (birdwatcher/birdwatcher). ‘Birder’ was the term most often adopted regardless of whether an interviewee’s interest in birding was casual or serious. For these interviewees adoption of a partner’s birding identity resembled ‘role-taking’ (Burke and Cast, 1997, p. 18), where spouses’ gender identity drew closer to that of their partner. Another form of role-taking appeared to occur with some male interviewees, all serious about the activity but who downplayed the importance of being called a ‘birder’, as is demonstrated in the examples below:

Example 1) You can call us what you like (Dr [Mr.]? Stellar).

Example 2) I don’t really care too much about it, that distinction (Dr [Mr.]? Gowe).

Example 3) I’m not really too hung up on these terms and I don’t mind when any of them are used (Mr. Tang).

Many couples used language to express their closeness or otherwise, for example humour, special terms generally only known and used by the couple, and inclusive pronouns (for example, ‘we’, ‘us’ or ‘our’). The couples below used both inclusive pronouns as well as expressing a sense of ease with each other by using good-humoured banter.

When we’re birding we don’t usually think about stress things (Mr. Hove).

bills or – (Mrs Hove, interjecting).

Yeah, or how cold we are, until the birds show up and then we’re not cold any more (Mr. Hove, interjecting).

We forget (Mrs Hove, laughing).

Some couples expanded upon their partner’s statements, as the Warles did when they talked of the characteristics of the ‘birdwatcher’:

‘Birdwatcher’ doesn’t necessarily travel to see birds (Mr. Warle).

‘Birdwatcher’ would be less aggressive about seeing birds or travelling to see birds (Mrs Warle).
'Birdwatcher' might be a feeder watcher (Mr. Warle).

(Here Mr. Warle means that a ‘birdwatcher’ might be more likely to watch birds at home, bird feeders being a common feature of US gardens).

Some couples also used “couple” language that would not normally be understood or used by others. The terms “half-bird” and “lifer” refer to birds for the list. In 1a) below the Hoves use the term “half-bird” in reference to the keeping of a joint bird list, as are the Vines in example 2.

In 1b) “lifer” refers to a bird seen for the first time, particular a hard-to-find species. Both the Hoves and the Vines used banter as well while Dr. Stellar in example 3a used collective pronouns.

Example 1a):

A “half-bird” is a bird seen by one and not the other (Mr. Hove).

And the worst half birds are the ones I see and he doesn’t (Mrs Hove).

Yeah, those are really serious (Mr. Hove, grinning).

Those bother him (Mrs Hove, laughing).

Example 1b):

When we see a bird she says, “that’s a lifer”, and I’ll say, “Have you forgotten when we saw that in Costa Rica in 1978?” (Mr. Hove).

It’s a virtual lifer (Mrs Hove).

Those are birds that we haven’t seen in so long that they count as lifers all over again (Mr. Hove).

Example 2a)

We can’t count it (the bird) if we see it separately. You can’t count that yellow-green Vireo you saw ... (Mrs Vine, looking at her husband and grinning)

Yeah, we can’t count the yellow-green Vireo (Dr Vine, interrupting).

.... until I see it (Mrs Vine).
Example 3a).

Sometimes (birding) can increase (stress). It can get very frustrating when you’ve got a little bird in the bush that won’t go in the direction that you want (Dr Stellar).

Or everyone else is seeing the bird but you’re not seeing it (Ms Stellar).

Yeah. Bush blindness. ... there’s a bird in the bush and everybody is ... saying it’s right there in front of you on that green twig and you just can’t see it ... it’s the most frustrating thing. It’s like half a dozen people saying “IT’S RIGHT THERE”. And ... then it flies off, ... and that’s it. So that’s bush blindness (Dr Stellar).

Figure 5.1 Yellow-rumped Warbler, Tabor Sewage Ponds, Iowa. Potential case of “bush blindness”.

Example 3 b)
Australian rules are perhaps a bit dodgy at times. When I was first learning to bird we were being very careful looking at this little wren hidden deep in a bush and this Australian guy came along ... he just ... flushed it out so he could get a look at it. And that was (when) America discovered Australian Rules football which is, of course, even rougher than our football. So that became Australian Rules birding which is a little rougher than what we would do (Dr Stellar).

Humour in an interview could sometimes be construed as one-sided by an outsider, as in Ms. Bowe’s answer as to whether one should involve an unwilling spouse in birdwatching:

Why not! Remember, this is the same spouse who swears s/he won’t eat broccoli or liver. Conversions are possible.

The Bowes gave email interviews and so it was not possible to tell how seriously Ms. Bowe meant this comment until we met in August, 2013 when I reminded her of the statement about broccoli. She grinned at her spouse and said she must have had “too many glasses of wine”. He grinned back, giving the impression it was a joke between them.

Several participant couples used inclusive pronouns, for example the Hoves, Vines and Stellars (as mentioned previously). For example:

It’s something (birding) we do together (Ms. Stellar).

We’re ... compatible in that we both understand the need to be quiet ... we can just spend a lot of time in silence watching things and saying very little (Dr Stellar).

In this exchange Dr. Stellar highlighted couple communication without the need for words. Another point raised by most of the interviewees’ comments is that there was not a bias in the taped interviews with spouses of both genders interrupting each other with approximately equal frequency unlike the finding of Smith-Lovin and Brody (1989, p. 62) of a status imbalance in “mixed-sex” conversations, with women more likely than men to be interrupted by their spouse, even within families.

To recapitulate, interviewees identified with each other by referring to themselves in the same way, and through their ‘role-taking’, inclusive and ‘couple’ language and shared humour, their sharing of a bird list, and the ability to communicate, sometimes without the need for dialogue.
5.1.2 Shared birding experiences

Shared history adds depth to the picture sketched by the interviewed couples’ common language. Couples spoke of a birding history of shared memories and experiences. They shared experiences where both were present or even if it were just the experience of one of them, in the retelling of that experience and the accompanying feelings that it aroused in the other partner. These shared experiences were not always pleasant, as Ms. Lortes describes, but in that case they often gave rise, in hindsight, to concern and sometimes empathy on the part of the other spouse. The Weines and the Stellars talked of the meaning of their shared experience:

Example 1: NO CHANGE IN STYLE: COMMENTS FROM 2 DIFFERENT PEOPLE

It (birding) gives us a shared history. ... And as we were looking at your questions, we had the best time (looking at each other) to prepare, going back and (Ms. Weines) said, “Well, I think this is my worst experience,” and I said, “No, I can remember one” (looking at each other), and we shared that ... And so we have this shared memory which is absolutely wonderful (Dr Weines).

Example 2:

... a lot of lone birders go join groups ... so you’re thrown into a whole (different) crowd ... each time (with) different ways of doing things, whereas the two of us - we’re always together and we know exactly how we do things together (Dr Stellar).

Yeah, and there’s that shared experience thing of “wow, we just saw the coolest thing”, you know. Whereas if you’ve seen it all on your own or in a group of people you aren’t necessarily close to it’s not, it takes an edge off that pleasure (Ms. Stellar).

Ms. Weines was happy to share her husband’s excitement when Dr Weines saw a bird very special to him although she was not present.

Example 1:

I think specifically the best (experience) was seeing a bird that I had always, always ... wanted to see in South Africa, ... a Pel’s Fishing Owl. ... if you had given me only one bird to see that would have been the bird. ... Our guide ... found one that flew up to the top of a tree where it sat fully exposed and glared at us as if it would really like to rip our hearts out (Dr Weines).

Oh it’s just a different birding experience with your partner or spouse. It’s lovely to share that experience together ... that it’s also just lovely to know that he’s seen it (the owl), that you’re
there with him and that you can be a part of his real excitement and pleasure in finding this bird and seeing it (Ms. Weines, grinning).

Example 2:

Oh I just love going out if I’ve had a few tough days at work (his spouse nods). You just ... hang out with nature. It’s great (Dr Gowe).

(He) comes home from a weekend of birding and he’s just relaxed and happy and (nodding), and it’s good (Mrs Gowe).

Some participants shared an experience that one of them did not enjoy. In the following exchange Mr. Lorte demonstrated concern towards his spouse while Ms. Lorte sought to allay his concern with humour. Unfortunately, because this was an audio interview I could not interpret the Lorte’s body language and so I added more humour into the conversation just in case they found the memory difficult to deal with.

(Spouse) might not agree with this but I had a really miserable time on a pelagic. He had a good time (Ms. Lorte) ...

Mr. Lorte interjects - that’s when you were sick. (He laughed, but not unsympathetically). ... seasick.

So you were chumming as well, eh? (Denise). (Chumming is the act of throwing fish parts into the water to attract other fish, such as sharks or tuna, on in this case, seabirds).

Yeah, yeah. ... I was stupid enough to go on another one off of Capetown on a much smaller ship (she laughed again) and I got equally sick.

I wonder about birders who do this sort of thing you do (Denise). (We all laughed).

As the Lortes demonstrate couples’ birding experiences were not always pleasant experiences for one or the other. Nonetheless, the recounting of these memories often appeared to arouse empathy and a sense of the meaning of that shared experience for each. This also occurred with two other couples, both of whom had had unpleasant experiences with fellow birders. As part of their shared birding experience some couples reported common dislikes, suggesting an ‘us versus them’ situation as shown in the following examples.

Example 1:
(Photographers are the) spawn of the devil. They get in everybody’s way, get too close to the birds, and are generally trying to do something different from birding (Dr Cheams).

Photographers are often a pain, barging ahead, holding up the group, feeling entitled (Mrs Cheams).

Example 2:

My strongest allergy is to photographers who push ahead, try to get too close and scare away the object of their desire (Dr Menzies).

Birding and photography don’t go together for birders who aren’t photographers. ... no problem with non professional photographers who just quietly and unobtrusively snap away for their own use, just as I have done. Professional photographers or those with a serious photography hobby are the insufferable ones (Mrs Menzies).

Example 3:

I think photographers do more disturbing than birders. Birders just look from a distance. Photographers sit at a nest and take pictures… right at the nest (Mrs Vine).

... and will sometimes disturb birds deliberately so they can see them. I know of one case where a long time nest was disturbed by one photographer who kept bugging the birds whenever it came round so he could get a picture of it flying away. I consider that ... (Dr Vine, interjecting)

… that’s harassment - reprehensible behaviour (Mrs Vine, interjecting).

Example 4:

Getting the “perfect” photograph is not worth it if the birds suffer (Dr. Busad). Concur (Mrs Busad).

As with the example of the Warles given under the section on shared language, Mrs. Menzies, and Dr. Vine expanded upon their partner’s comments, Dr. and Mrs. Vine also interjecting to finish each other’s sentences.

In summary, couples shared a history constituted by a wealth of shared experiences, both bad and good, and bound together by shared likes and dislikes and similar values.
5.1.3 Empathy in birding couples

Empathy towards each other was expressed by couples in the previous section on shared language and experience, and will be further covered in this section.

Sometimes intra-couple empathy was obvious in exchanges between interviewed spouses, and at other times not so obvious, as in the email interviews. In some couples only one displayed what appeared to be empathy while others seemed to be simply responding to a spouse’s negative reaction as in three male participants whose wives had unpleasant experiences birding with them. However, the development of empathy for a few male interviewees may have been facilitated by their desire to have their spouses continue to watch birds with them. The appearance of empathy in these men appeared to take some years to develop while in others it was ingrained. For example, Ms. Weines expressed delight when her spouse saw a much-wanted bird, demonstrating that she knew how much he wanted to see this bird.

Other interviewees empathised with their spouses over trips where they had encountered unpleasant fellow birders or guides either indifferent to others, or driven only by their desire to see new birds. Dr Weines empathised with his spouse about such a trip she had in the Amazon without him. Ms Weines stated: “I was almost in tears ... we were sliding, going under things and ... it was really tough”. Dr. Weines angrily responded that: “I have never seen (spouse) so thoroughly exhausted ... the leader who was someone we liked was kinda insensitive to the group because he was very pushy to see some birds”.

In the dialogue below Dr. (Ms) Whise had an unpleasant experience and her partner expressed empathy and also appropriate humour thus lightening the moment:

*Probably the worst (experience) ... was one ... here in Texas. I had the opportunity to go with ... the local Audubon society ... to a private ranch ... some ... who’d already got there were racing ahead so that my friends and I... no sooner get our scopes set up than people would be leaving saying “we’ve already checked everything out” ... It was just totally infuriating ... Nobody spent any time really stopping to watch the birds or to enjoy the place ... it was miserable (Dr [Ms] Whise).*

*Is that the one where ... they’re saying, “goose up on the hill” and they all poured out and put their scopes on it and discovered these were decoy ...*(Dr [Mr.] Whise)*

*... geese, decoys for hunters! (Dr [Ms] Whise) (We all laughed).*
Sometimes empathy seemed to be missing. Mrs. Hove joked about her husband nearly dying of hypothermia on an Antarctic trip (Mr. Hove had told me of this previously).

Denise (to Mrs Hove): He must have you worried at times (referring to the Antarctic incident).

No (laughing). Actually I was very calm. He was worried about dying and I had just watched a film about Shackleton the night before who - he and his men were out in the open for 700 + days and they survived! (Mrs Hove grins at her spouse).

Mrs. Hove knew her husband would realise she was joking and her spirited defence of her husband when he had an unpleasant experience as a guide, indicated the degree to which she knew and cared about him. A second example of missing empathy appeared in the following comments by a couple, he a keen and expert birder, and she describing herself as a beginner.

... I prefer a balance between birding with my spouse and birding without her. I enjoy when she is with me but I also enjoy the freedom when she stays home (Mr. Tang).

I don’t notice disagreements because he allows me to choose whether or not to go on outings and I allow him to go on his own as well (Mrs Tang).

Despite Mr. Tang’s enjoyment of birding without his spouse it was to her he turned on finding himself on a trip with less than convivial companions.

My worst birding experience involved a trip to Texas with two acquaintance ... who were extreme environmentalists and militant vegetarians ... we were at odds most of the trip. At one point, I called my wife and considered breaking away and finishing the trip separately (Mr. Tang).

As with the Hoves and others these excerpts demonstrated the importance of considering the whole story. To summarise, couples and individuals displayed empathy both overtly and sometimes less obviously, it only emerging over the course of the interview.

5.1.4 Intra-couple interdependency

Spouses often gave complementary reasons for birding together, with each providing skills, or physical or emotional support that contributed to the success of the trip. Spouses’ voices sometimes differed in that one was more instrumental or emotional or empathic than the other as in the following excerpts. These examples of dialogue were made in response to the question as to whether birding together made a difference.
Example 1:

I eat better and have better snacks! I see more birds because of the extra set of eyes. (Spouse) is a better birder by ear than me. You can share carrying the scope. That helps because sometimes you might not take it at all if you are alone (Mr. Warle).

(Spouse) is much more patient, than me. So we’ll see things that I would have given up on. (I keep) the list and (work) out the logistics for trips (Mrs Warle).

Example 2:

(Birding with a spouse is) ... more of a pleasurable, bonding shared … (Mr. Lorte).

... shared experience (Ms. Lorte, interjecting and repeating).

Yeah. And of course an extra pair of eyes and ears. And somebody to hang out with when you’re tired and the birds are quiet (Ms. Lorte).

It’s the shared experience that you can talk with afterwards (Mr. Lorte).

And somebody to blame when you forget your car keys! (Ms. Lorte, interjecting)

And somebody to pick up if you’ve, not lost something, but having a down or whatever day or something like that. You got somebody else to lean on. Especially when you’re travelling … in a difficult country. It’s nice to have that person you can rely on. I guess like a friend but a little bit closer and so there’s a bit of give and take with it (Mr. Lorte).

Like when we were in Korea and I couldn’t leave the toilet for more than a minute? And I ran out of toilet paper? (Ms. Lorte. She laughs).

... and if you are sick you’ve got somebody who’s not ... just reliable but somebody who is actually going to commiserate and, you know, help you out (Mr. Lorte).

And in (Spouse)’s case I’ve got something really extraordinary which is he is an amazing navigator. We can go anywhere and he can find his way within three inches of where we’re supposed to be without getting lost ever…. I mean it’s just incredible. So I never have to worry about, how do we get there? (Ms. Lorte)

In this dialogue Mr. Lorte appeared to be expressing his spouse’s dependency and his reliability and empathy, while Mrs. Lorte expressed interdependency alone.
The following examples demonstrate how different abilities might enhance a couple’s birding success whatever a spouse’s level of experience or enthusiasm for the activity.

Example 1:

*My husband and I have different birding strengths. I hear better and know more bird sounds, he is a better spotter than I am (Mrs Pewe).*

Example 2:

*There’s one other thing that (Spouse) helps with. ... I’ve become much more near-sighted over the years so I’m finding that I don’t see nearly as much alone as what I see with other people. So (Spouse) provides a very, very good pair of eyes ... She’s a good spotter, absolutely (Dr Hamit).*

Example 3:

*b) What was your best birdwatching experience? That’s you too, (Mrs Gowe). (Denise)*

*The wet godwit. (Dr Gowe grinned).*

*We were ... in New Zealand and ... and ... everybody was looking for (Hudsonian Godwit) ... I had new binoculars and I had just been wandering around you know, enjoying the scenery and kind of looking at birds. But then I sat down and I trained my binoculars on these birds just to see how well the binoculars were working and ... and there was one godwit that looked different from the others. It was darker and I thought it was just because it was wet (Dr Gowe is grinning to himself). And meanwhile they had given up. They’d been looking, looking, looking, and they couldn’t find it. And (pointing) I said, (to spouse), that one that looks different. Is it just wet? Is that why it’s darker? And (he pulls a serious expression) he said, “No, that wouldn’t be why”. He got his telescope out and that was the Hudsonian Godwit (Mrs Gowe).*

*Everyone goes crazy. (Local guide) and I had been scoping all the godwits as they came in ... But yes, she found it, so every bird after that that was good on that trip was a “wet bird” (Dr Gowe, grinning). (we all laughed).*

Mrs. Gowe had picked up on the slight differences in the bird’s plumage as marking it as different from the more common species of godwit.

Some female interviewees went to great lengths to be with partners. For example Ms. Lorte went on pelagic trips where she became seasick because: “(Spouse) loves them ... loves pelagics”. Likewise Ms. Stellar, who did not like the cold, arose at 4.30 am, and stood for hours
in freezing weather with her spouse, who didn’t mind cold weather, waiting for a harrier that did not materialise. Mrs Vine experienced “barbed wire’ handrails on a rickety bridge, to accompany her spouse on a birding trip, and Mrs Busad, who, according to her spouse would not “suffer” to see a new bird, took a long hot walk on a “very, very hot day”:

*The trails were very slippery and the 5 easy kilometres (according to the guide!) felt like 20 very hard and sweaty kms. One of the worst experiences of my life (Mrs. Busad).*

However, for some interviewees being with their partner made a good experience even better.

*Example 1:*

_Honduras was pretty incredible (Ms. Stellar)._  

*That was fun for us because that was one of the first times we’d been birdwatching together for any period of time (Dr Stellar).*

*Example 2:*

*It (the search for the Angolan Pitta) was the whole story and also it was our honeymoon (Ms. Lorte). (They both laughed).*

To Ms. Lorte the search for a special bird was also a special time in their relationship. Given her previous remarks that might have been construed as instrumental only, this comment, along with her willingness to accompany her spouse on a hated pelagic trip, demonstrates the importance of examining the whole interview. Yet, even when a partner was not present their support could be essential as several interviewees demonstrated, for example Mr. Tang and here Ms. Weines:

*Nobody (in the group) is going to probably take that same kind of care of you in helping (as your spouse) (Ms. Weines).*

As shown in this section, couples identified with each other firstly by using similar forms of identification, and secondly through language such as special couple terms like ‘half-bird’, inclusive pronouns and shared banter. They shared a history expressed through pleasant and not-so-pleasant memories and empathy. They were interdependent when travelling, each supplying skills and qualities that enabled them to, more easily, find the birds they wanted, and give each other an increased measure of safety and reliability. Spouses offered support and understanding, particularly to female partners experiencing a hard time or discrimination that
they might not expect from others. Yet it was not all one way; even when less interested in birds or less experienced, provided keen eyes that were able to spot new birds. Some wrote about their experiences made better by the presence of their partner. Some interviewees, women in particular, went to some lengths to accompany their partners on difficult birding trip on which they felt unsafe or were sick or uncomfortable.

5.2 Terms matter: Birder or birdwatcher

This next section explores the topic of difference in the form of what participants called themselves (either ‘birder’ or ‘birdwatcher’), and different birding activities that participants undertook, and also the differential status accorded to names and activities. As discussed in Chapter Two, people who watch birds form two broad categories. According to the literature those considered serious about the activity – birder – actively chase birds to identify and list them, while ‘birdwatchers’ do not list but choose to enjoy birds in a more passive manner, often using the activity to socialise (McFarlane, 1994), to study bird behaviour (Cooper & Smith, 2010; Watson, 2010), or to connect with nature (Watson, 2010). Consequently I asked interviewees a series of related questions: how they identified themselves – as ‘birders’ or ‘birdwatchers’, or some other title (such as ‘birder’s companion’, a term clients had used at times), and what qualities they attached to these identities.

Also, as covered in Chapter Two, research has demonstrated that most of those who refer to themselves as ‘birdwatchers’ or ‘casual birders’, or who act in the manner of these cohorts (for example by not focussing on the pursuit, identification or listing of bird species), are women (see Cooper & Smith, 2010; McFarlane, 1994; Moore et al., 2008). Therefore, the second part of this section analyses participants’ answers through the lens of gender.

Ms. Lorte stated that, “somebody’s who’s serious is a birder”, a remark mirrored by other interviewees. Dr Gowe added another qualification to the term, stating that the desire to identify and list a species is the “key” to one’s status as a ‘birder’ and that “I kind of see birders as being essentially listers”.

Example 1:

Birdwatchers will … look at (and) enjoy (birds) and not necessarily know what they are…(Dr Gowe).

Example 2:
A birdwatcher to me is someone who is ... happy to see whatever he or she sees and that’s it (Dr Hamit).

Mrs Hamit supported her husband’s comments from a personal perspective, stating that she considered herself a ‘birdwatcher’ as she didn’t “keep a life list” and was “happy to see” whatever came along. Some female participants married to men more serious about birding, highlighted the status of the ‘birder’.

Example 1:

*Birders not only watch birds, they are often active in data collection, conservation of habitat, and ecology related to birds (Mrs Tang).*

Example 2:

*Seems to me that to be a birder you need to have a certain kind of mind ... you have to be very intelligent for one thing but you have to (shaking head) .... have a great memory and be able to pick up details and yet see the whole picture. You just have to be an awesome person to be a birder (Mrs Gowe).*

Example 3:

*Birders keep life lists, study bird field guides and are generally aware of the status and distribution of birds. They travel mostly to see birds, and check bird hotlines for rare birds (Mrs Cheams).*

These female participants spoke about ‘birders’ in positive terms, highlighting their dedication, while Dr Cheams, himself a keen birder, spoke of that dedication in a disparaging but light-hearted manner:

*Birdwatchers tend to enjoy birds as they see them, usually at their back yard feeders; they rarely spend days throwing up over the railing of boats on pelagic trips, or agonize over a missed lifer (Dr Cheams).*

Mrs. Hamit, too, was not without criticism of some birders, saying she disliked those who felt they needed to list every common bird they saw on a trip, and reportedly told her husband’s birding friends that they did not “have to list”. She also reported the response of others, including her brother-in-law, in regard to listing, indicating she wasn’t alone in thinking the activity pointless at times:
A ‘lifer’ is one’s first sighting of a bird to add to one’s list, often applied to rare or difficult birds. Dr Busad, in line with Dr Cheams’ summing up of ‘the birder’, stated he would “suffer” to see a “good bird”, that is a ‘lifer’. The qualities interviewees applied to birders and birdwatchers are listed in Table 5.1.

### Table 5.1 Qualities of ‘birdwatchers’ and ‘birders’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birdwatcher</th>
<th>Birder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Casual/passive</td>
<td>Serious/active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not goal-oriented</td>
<td>Goal-oriented/worklike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No bird list</td>
<td>Keeps bird list (sometimes many)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not concerned about bird identification</td>
<td>Concerned about bird identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watches birds at home/at feeder or locally</td>
<td>‘Chases’ birds. Travels to see birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likes colourful, ‘showy’ birds</td>
<td>Likes hard-to-identify birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefers to watch birds in comfort</td>
<td>Will put up with discomfort or risk to see new birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressed doubts about birding abilities</td>
<td>No doubts expressed about abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care more about nature</td>
<td>Cares less about nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May have other priorities or interests</td>
<td>Focus on birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable about birds</td>
<td>Knowledgeable about birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower status</td>
<td>Higher status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less obsessive</td>
<td>More obsessive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, most interviewees, both male and female, tended to label themselves ‘birders’ although those who identified as ‘birdwatchers’, or were labelled so by their spouses were mostly women. Interviewees, particularly those with a spouse serious about the activity, were more likely to refer to themselves as ‘birders’, whatever their level of expertise or interest. Interviewees identified a suite of differences between ‘birders’ and ‘birdwatchers’, with ‘birders’ seen as listers, and actively seeking to find and list new birds. ‘Birdwatchers’ by comparison, were reported to have a passive, ‘wait-and-see’ approach to birding. Some interviewees praised ‘birders’ for their intelligence, eye for detail, and conservation ethos while others pointed out the extreme lengths that ‘birders’ went to, in order to see new birds.
5.2.1 It is just not done to call oneself a birdwatcher!

Interviewees tended to call themselves birders, the accepted term in the US for someone who watches birds for recreation. Another reason for preferring this term over ‘birdwatcher’ was its higher status as demonstrated by Kaufman (1997) in denying that he was a ‘birdwatcher’ and the historical stance of the ABA that, in the birding social world, it was unacceptable to be a ‘birdwatcher’. Some interviewees also held that stance:

Example 1:

‘birdwatcher’ ... has a negative connotation ... (In the) television show ... The Beverley Hillbillies ... was this weird old lady named Miss Jane Hathaway who used to run around in ... bizarre British army field gear with a pith helmet and tennis shoes and knee high socks and beating the bushes for birds, and that’s what the image of birdwatchers is. (Ms. Lorte).

Example 2:

(‘Birdwatchers’) are) nerdy people who have few social skills and are somehow outcasts from the rest of society. (Mr. Tang).

Mrs Moore stated that, “‘birdwatcher’ sounds old-fashioned and brings to mind a disagreeable stereotype”. The spouses of these participants did not state their feelings about the term so obviously. Mr. Moore noted that the term ‘birdwatcher’ sounded “static” while Mr. Lorte and Mrs. Tang did not pass an opinion, Mr. Lorte only remarking in relation to himself that he was “definitely a birder”. Mrs. Tang’s reference to herself as a ‘birder’ or a ‘birder’s companion’, rather than a ‘birdwatcher’ may have indicated that she wished to avoid labelling herself as such, possibly because of her husband’s remarks.

Others appeared to be avoiding identifying as ‘birdwatchers’ as well; one interviewee who referred to herself and her spouse as ‘birders’, explained that ‘birders’ were “serious” and ‘birdwatchers’ were “amateurs”, but added later in the interview: “We think that we’re enthusiastic amateurs”. She also mentioned that once she had referred to herself as a ‘birdwatcher’ in front of a birding guide who had told her that the term was socially unacceptable.

Mrs. Busad identified as a ‘birdwatcher’:

Should I call you ‘birdwatchers’ or ‘birders’? (Denise)
INTERVIEW FINDINGS

_Birder (Dr Busad). Birdwatcher (Mrs Busad)._ 

Asked if they saw a difference between the terms Dr Busad replied, “(In the) level of proficiency and dedication”, and Mrs Busad agreed. Later in the interview Dr. Busad added: 

_I have encouraged (Spouse) to do some things that turned into wonderful experiences, but other times they have (been) disasters too hot and humid, too many bugs, too rocky and steep, etc. Her tolerance for discomfort ... is much less than mine; I will “suffer” to get a good bird. I think (Spouse) would say: “forget the bird”! (Dr Busad)._

Neither of the Busads expanded upon Mrs. Busad’s lack of “proficiency”, although Mrs. Busad did state that she had difficulty locating a bird that others could see (a point other interviewees both female and male raised). Mr. Tang highlighted the pressure that could be placed on women to live up to a standard set by spouses who were serious birders in his statement about a birding couple he once guided: 

_He is a world famous birder (with) a world list of over 7600 and is in the top 5 (US) listers. He was with me because he wants to see more than half of all the birds found in every (US state). (His wife) birds with him often but she does not keep continent lists or state lists. She only keeps a life list because he harasses her about it. Listing is not important to her (Mr. Tang)._

Despite Mr. Tang’s obvious understanding of the pressure the famous birder’s wife was under to list, he still thought little of ‘birdwatchers’ as was demonstrated in his comments of them as ‘nerdy’, socially inept and ‘outcasts, and he saw women who watched birds as ‘different animals’. Unsurprisingly, Mrs Tang still appeared to want to be seen as a ‘birder’ although she seemed hesitant about identifying herself by this term. The participant who stated that she and her husband were “amateur birders” also mentioned that when she had used the term in front of a local bird tour guide, he corrected her on the “right” term to use. Some couples implied different levels of status to ‘birder’ and ‘birdwatcher’ by using modifiers such as ‘more’ or ‘less’.

For example: 

_To me a birder is more knowledgeable, more active, more committed. ... And a birdwatcher is ... interested, active, committed perhaps, but to a lesser degree (Mrs Bowe)._

_('Birders') have more experience and traveled more (Mr. Bowe)._
Dr Hamit stated that to him, a ‘birdwatcher’ “is someone who is quite a bit less committed”. Mrs Hamit, a ‘birdwatcher’, put the term “less committed”, into context, stating that she could watch birds for a few hours “and then I'm ready to do something else, whereas (Spouse) and my Dad can go for fourteen hours … way too much”. A few interviewees remarked that ‘birdwatchers’ studied and were knowledgeable about birds.

To recapitulate, some participants expressed the view that ‘birdwatchers’ did not watch birds correctly (like Miss Hathaway) or were “amateurs”. They were also seen as incompetent, casual about the activity, and socially unacceptable, while ‘birders’ were more “proficient” and “dedicated”. Whatever their interests, most participants identified as birders, some because they did not wish to be labelled ‘birdwatchers’, as a couple of women were, by their keen birder spouses. Yet some participants serious about the activity put birding into perspective, mentioning the long hours that could be spent trying to find a bird and the discomfort that one could experience on a pelagic trip or travelling in harsh conditions.

5.2.2 Birding as a gendered activity

There appeared to be gendered differences between interviewees, in how they identified themselves (six female participants referred to themselves as ‘birdwatchers’ but only two males, both of whom were married to birdwatchers), the birding activities they pursued, their perspective (whether they simply focussed on birds or were interested in the broader picture), and their treatment by others that appeared linked to gender. The couples below demonstrated different attitudes to birds and birding along gender lines with all four male interviewees focused on birds while their spouses expressed a range of different attitudes, behaviours and interests.

Example 1:

(Birding is getting) outdoors, and being amaz(ed) at the beauty of birds (Mrs Cheams).

(I) like the “sport” aspect of chasing birds enjoy the intellectual exercise in developing birding skills (Dr Cheams).

Example 2:

I consider myself a birder (Mr. Shell).
I say I’m a birder and a flower checker both. I get torn and so try to look at the flowers first and then the birds (Mrs Shell).

Example 3:

He loves his little shorebirds if they’re small and brown and have exactly one feather difference (Ms. Stellar).

I drive her mad looking at little grey things that all look the same trying to pick out the differences between them (Dr Stellar).

Example 4:

I ... will wait a long time to see a bird that I have already seen many times. My husband likes to move on unless it is a new bird to add to the life list (Mrs Pewe).

Some interviewees spoke in relative terms about differences that they believed existed between men and women, most mentioning listing, competition and identification. Several believed that more males exhibited extreme birding behaviour:

Example 1:

Females and males are different animals and this is reflected in their birding habits and behaviours. ... listing competitions, big days, big years, and other competitions are almost exclusively done by males. (Mr. Tang).

(Men are better at birding) only because men seem to work at it harder ... developing skills to extreme levels .... I don’t believe this is indicative of any innate deficiency in woman ... men simply place more importance on that sort of thing. (They) want to know everything so they can be the best. Women, for the most part, simply want to enjoy the birds for what they are and could (not) care less about primaries, vents, or ceres (Primaries are the largest flight feathers in a bird’s wing, the ‘vent’ is the common opening for a bird’s urinary, reproductive and intestinal tracts, and the ‘cere’ is the prominent flesh at the base of the beak into which a bird’s nostrils open). (Mr. Tang).

Example 2:

I see men as being a little more oriented towards the ... quest of the experience. .... They want to list birds, they want to climb the highest mountain, they want to cover the most miles, whereas women are much more content to be, I guess, for want of a better term, conservationists. ...
there are some very, very serious, committed birdwatchers who are listers, the listing tends to be disproportionately a male province (Dr Hamit).

Mr. Menzies stated that he suspected men were “more enthralled by such things as making lists, naming names, etc.”, and that they were “much more competitive and birding can easily turn into a macho competition for who can find the most or rarest bird”. Mrs. Tang made a similar comment.

Well, I joke that only men could make a gentle pass-time (sic) like watching birds a competitive sport…. I know an equal number of men and women birders, and only a few of the women seem to care about the numbers of species they have on their “life list” as compared to the men.

Mrs Hamit also mentioned obsessive listing behaviour on the part of men, but in a different context from those who seek new or rare birds. She spoke of birders who, going on a local trip, listed common birds that they had seen many times before.

The Busads were an example of the gender difference in birding behaviour. Dr Busad stated he was happy to “suffer” to see a new bird, whereas Mrs Busad would say, so he stated, “forget the bird”! , it was not always the male partner who was a serious lister. Dr Searle was more interested in avian aerodynamics than seeing new birds. To Mrs Searle, however, new species were paramount to the extent that she nearly knocked her husband over in an attempt to see a new bird. Dr. Searle explained:

(When a particular new bird appeared) I happened to be between (Spouse) and her binoculars and I got belted halfway across the paddock.

He realises that he better not be around when (a new bird is seen) because I don’t think. I just sort of leap! (Mrs Searle).

Some interviewees mentioned that there were very keen women listers (for example Phoebe Snetsinger who at one time had the world’s longest bird list), and a few reported that they had witnessed intense birding behaviour by women. However no one mentioned that female birders behaved in quite as an extreme manner as some male birders.

Unlike their spouses some female interviewees were reluctant to watch birds in what they considered to be less than optimum conditions (to be further explored in the next section). Other unpleasant experiences female interviewees mentioned stemmed from the behaviour of other birders including guides, who subjected them to behaviour they considered unacceptable:
Example 1:

I/we have had several bad experiences with macho, arrogant male birders. This is par for the course, but I personally suffered on one trip to South Africa with someone who had a very authoritarian personality and who became personally rude, loud and demanding, to the point where I complained to the local guide we were with. I think he had a problem with women in general, because I had done nothing to provoke him (Mrs Menzies).

Example 2:

The worst experience was when I was on a private birding tour in Costa Rica. We were watching a hard-to-find secretive bird ... at twilight. A cat came along, greeted all of us and then started stalking the bird. One of the gun(g)-ho birders bounded up, grabbed the cat by the tail and slung it into the woods! I don’t know if the cat died or not, it made a terrible screaming. Most of the women (were) in tears (Mrs Priori).

Example 3:

The man (guide) ... was quite tall and when we would be looking into some foliage ... he’d say, “it’s right in front of you”, and I’d say, “I can’t see it. Where is it?” ... He was looking kinda down on it and I was looking straight ahead into this dense foliage, and he’d say “just look, don’t think! ... Put your binoculars up and look!” which I found irritating (Mrs. Hove).

This guide expected Mrs. Hove to have exactly the same view of the bird as he, despite his height (Mrs. Hove appeared to be quite diminutive on Skype). Other female interviewees, including some who were serious birders, reported being unable to keep up with a group or guide; Ms. Lorte mentioned such a trip, as did Ms. Weines. Nevertheless, it is also doubtful that men were to blame for all inappropriate behaviour reported by interviewees, particularly when a group or another couple behaved badly, for example in (Dr (Ms) Whise), the Vines’ and Ms. Moore’s experience.

Female interviewees who criticised (or whose spouse criticised) the behaviour of certain birders or guides whose behaviour they considered inconsiderate, sexist, racist or abhorrent, were concerned that their remarks might make would find their way back to the people they were criticising. For example, one female interviewee mentioned two birders that she had met several decades ago:
They had no social skills whatsoever and when you were around them they were just looking (imitates looking through binoculars) around for birds the whole time and they never looked at a person!

She then looked nervously at her husband and said, “They might watch this.” (I reassured her “they” would not). Likewise, Mrs Hove was concerned when her husband mentioned a birding guide they thought was “impatient and gruff”, “sexist”, and “condescending” towards indigenous people.

XX comes to mind (Mr. Hove). Well, we don’t need to name names (Mrs Hove).

When Dr Vine began to tell of a couple of extreme birders they encountered on a trip to Madagascar his wife intervened.

We later found out why there were two spaces available. There was a couple … (Dr Vine).

Don’t slam anybody (Mrs Vine).

The spouses of a few mostly male interviewees appeared to feel rather negatively about watching birds with their spouses. Some made adverse remarks about birdwatchers (a title to which Mrs. Busad acquiesced and which could have described Mrs Tang as well). Both of these women appeared to be rather passive, in that they did not appear to respond to their husbands’ comments, but at the same time they displayed some resistance. Mrs Tang appeared unfazed by her husband’s statements both about women and ‘birdwatchers’ and his preference to watch birds without her, stating that she “allowed” her husband to go birding by himself. Mrs Busad on the other hand remarked that different attitudes ought to be respected. Ms. Lorte also might have appeared to show passive behaviour in accompanying her spouse on the pelagic trips that he “loved”, although she became terribly seasick, but given her rather feisty dialogue in some of their exchanges it seemed more as if this was a part of the “give and take” of a balanced relationship rather than her deferring to his wishes.

In review, interviewed couples showed some gender differences in the language they used when describing their holiday and leisure experiences, and whether they focused on birds and birding or the broader picture. Some also believed that men and women differed, men viewing birding as a competitive and masculine quest to build the list, while women wanted to enjoy and look after the birds and their habitat. However, there were exceptions with some female interviewees being listers and their husbands the ones interested in a wider perspective. Some female
interviewees also mentioned the behaviour of other birders and guides that they found unpleasant, insensitive and difficult and worried about their remarks reaching the ears of those they criticised. A very few participants were the subject of negative complaints emanating from their husbands. While appearing to under-react to such comments, these women showed some resistance to these comments.

5.3 Spousal differences: Birding as leisure and travel

Apart from gender there were other differences between spouses that also related to their priorities or personal taste. Some disagreements seemed minor, for example over how much time should be spent birding. Other areas of dissent had potentially larger ramifications such as disagreements over destinations.

5.3.1 Spousal differences: Time, destination and experience.

Some spousal differences in relation to birding leisure and travel appeared relatively minor, such as disagreements over time spent on the activity while others were potentially serious. Some spouses felt differently about their travel experiences and their feelings about particular birding companions or practices, for example some interviewees found birding stressful, and their partners did not. Or occasionally both felt stressed but for reasons that differed from those of their spouse. These differences were important in their potential to shape birding as leisure and as a reason for travel.

In the dialogue below Mr. Moore mentioned that he and his spouse had disagreements over time spent birding, explaining later on in the interview that he often watched birds alone because his wife was “often interested in other activities” which could have meant the housework to which she was alluding or other leisure interests. The importance of a trip for this couple is demonstrated by her comment that she stops worrying about housework when she is holidaying in a “foreign country” as discussed later in this chapter.

Example 1:

Disagreements tend to take the form of how long to be out birding on any given outing and when it is time to quit for the day (Mr. Moore).

For me the only disagreements are basically how long to stay out. On a trip I can stay out all day and love it. At home, I start worrying about all the things I’m not getting done (laundry, shopping, etc.) (Mrs Moore).
Here Mrs. Moore demonstrates that her domestic obligations constrains her birding, but they did not prevent her from travelling internationally. While this constraint could be construed as gendered, Dr. Hamit also mentioned family responsibilities as a constraint.

Some couples interviewed disagreed over their travel destinations. Potentially such disagreements could have quite profound ramifications, considering international journeys were involved.

*Example 1:*

*I've been to the Pantanal, and I thought it was a magical place and I know that (Spouse) would react to it and so I've been trying for ten years to get her to go there. ... it isn't that she doesn’t want to go but rather that she has other priorities (Dr Weines).*

*Example 2:*

*I've tried to talk her (Spouse) into going into the outback of Australia she's never been willing to do that (Mr. Hove).*

Ms. Weines had an unpleasant trip into the Amazon which may have shaped her opinion to visiting yet another South American region, and Mr. Hove had nearly died in a remote area – the Antarctic, perhaps colouring his spouse’s feelings about venturing somewhere else far from civilisation.

Spouses demonstrated a difference in the way they felt about birding for both leisure and travel. Some were obviously keen birders while their less involved spouses gained enjoyment from a wide range of interests. The couples below visited the same destinations but highlighted different aspects:

*Example 1:*

*Seeing the hand-fed antpittas at the Angel Paz Reserve ... was one such lifetime highlight because these birds are normally very difficult to see (Mr. Moore).*

*Angel Paz Reserve was a highlight, as was listening to the infectious laughing of kookaburras in Australia (which reduced me to giggles myself), and getting rained on so hard in Costa Rica that*
our umbrella soaked through and we looked as though we had jumped into a swimming pool with our clothes on (Mrs Moore).

Example 2:

Well, I think our trip to the Galapagos Islands (his spouse nods). That was a very interesting birdwatching experience: A good number of species and knowing about Darwin and evolution and his theory of natural selection and being able to see the differences, small differences, between species on separate islands (Mr. West).

Going swimming with penguins ... They were small (gesturing) equatorial penguins and watching them swim, like bullets. They were much more graceful and beautiful under the water than they were on top or on the land, so, that was just amazing. (Looks at her spouse). And the blue-footed booby nest. And the frigatebirds displaying. Yeah, that was pretty special (Mrs West).

As seen in the exchanges above female interviewees tended to use emotive and descriptive language and metaphor while male interviewees’ dialogue was rather sparse and perfunctory. In Example 2, Mr. West does not mention different bird taxa, while Mrs. West does, in detail.

The following couples had completely different best experiences from their spouse, and for different reasons. In Example 1 the surroundings appear as important to Mrs Shell as the bird, whereupon her husband focused only on a particular bird and his pleasure at being able to identify it. In the second couple (Example 2) Mrs. Coul focussed on the experience of having owls called in while to her spouse she was the highlight. In the third example Mr. Tang’s best experiences related to being alone in familiar country, while his wife who was not as interested in birding or as dedicated, also revelled in the delight of being able to identify a new bird, probably because this was such an important part of her husbands’ world and such a skill might have boosted her legitimacy in the eyes of that world. The latter two examples demonstrate the limits of stereotypes in that firstly Mrs Coul focu sed on the bird while to her husband she was the focus. In the third example it was Mrs. Tang, a ‘beginner’ birder, who focused on bird identification.

Example 1:

In Australia we were looking for (Sandstone Shrike-thrush) ... We went to a beautiful little park ... every morning ... On the last morning... it’s like we kind of expected not to see it but it makes no difference ... We’ll never forget how beautiful this canyon is so we sort of gave up ... and as
we were walking down, there’s two birds on a rock ... (Spouse laughs) ... We were really looking but I’m also enjoying the whole picture of the whole habitat (Mrs Shell).

We were looking through the book – ”Oh, that’s a cute little bird I’d like to see that” ... not knowing how difficult it was going to be to see. Well, we were walking ... and this bird just flopped ... ten feet away ... So I guess that to me is an important experience for me (Mr. Shell).

Example 2:

Calling in Great Horned Owls! (Mrs Coul).

Spending two weeks in Alaska bird-watching with my wife (Mr. Coul).

Example 3:

Birding alone in mountains near home gives me a level of peace and joy that I have not found on any birding excursion outside of my area (Mr. Tang).

Being successful with new bird identification (Mrs Tang).

Often the worst experiences of spouses of participants serious about birding were related to their partners’ inclination to look for birds in very hot or inclement weather, and in rough terrain or dangerous conditions. For example Dr Busad liked “the challenge of finding and identifying the birds” and that included traversing difficult terrain in all sorts of weather, whereas Mrs Busad stated that she liked to watch birds “during good weather only”. Mrs Tang’s “worst experiences” were also related to “extreme heat or cold winds”; Mr Tang stated that they had “different thresholds when it comes to the amount of discomfort each of us is willing to endure while trying to find birds. I’m willing to endure more than her”. Mrs Vine endured barbed wire handrails on a bridge her husband took her to. Another participant’s worst experience involved her children waiting around while her spouse, a keen birder searched for birds in a ‘boring’ landscape:

The worst one (birding experience) ... is when (Spouse) took me and our sons ... to a rice field area,... and (Spouse) was looking for some shorebirds there. And the boys and I weren’t the least bit interested, and (we were) miserable ... that stands out as a turning point ... after that the boys and I said if you’re going to the rice fields or the turf grass farm we are not going (Mrs Hamit).

Some participants’ worst experiences involved birding with others who in their opinion behaved badly. Mrs Gowe’s worst experience while watching birds occurred around the time
she met her husband. She found herself in the company of hardcore birders who were so lacking in social skills that she stated, with a laugh, that if she had known her husband-to-be was such a keen birder she would have thought twice about getting involved. Spouses sometimes appeared to differ in the sorts of behaviour they disliked. The following examples are from participant spouses who differed on what they construed as bad or annoying behaviour on the part of other birders.

*Example 1:*

(I dislike) somebody who’s always talking about things she or he has seen at other times and may even put down some of the sightings that we’ve seeing ... as a “trash” bird... Another kind of birder I’m put off by is somebody who is manufacturing sightings. ... that gets a little obnoxious *(Dr Hamit).*

*There are listers locally who (make a list) of the birds that they’ve seen in each county ... everywhere. ... A very common bird is a cardinal, but if we’re ... in a new county they say, “Okay well we need to make sure we see a cardinal *(Mrs Hamit).*

*Example 2:*

All of a sudden this mob of rude and obnoxious birders ran into the area we were in and basically knocked us down to get to our... scopes.... We ... physically had to rip the scope away from one person who cursed us out ... I hate going on dedicated birding trips since I hate how one minded and obsessed they can be *(Ms Strickland).*

Mr. Strickland, who appeared to be a beginner birder, simply stated that he disliked “pushy” people. Mrs Prior commented that she did not like “standoffish, holier than thou, ‘I’ve seen more birds than God’ kind of people”, while her husband stated only that he disliked “noisy talkers at inappropriate times”. The Vines appeared at first to agree that a couple they met while on a birding tour was difficult to get along with.

*We were birding (in Madagascar)... 14-16 hours a day and our leader felt that considering this we could take a two-hour siesta in the middle of it. ... This couple objected severely to our losing good birding time ... They were invariably out for a couple of hours before breakfast birding and ... *(Dr Vine).*

*And on into the night owling *(Mrs Vine).*

*They were difficult individuals (but) we avoided physical violence *(Dr Vine).*
In reply to Dr Vine’s last remark Mrs Vine replied, laughing, that she liked the couple “just fine” and that the “leaders” were the only people in the group “bothered by them”. She then admitted that the couple was “just a little … obsessive”. I did not press the couple further on what might have been a point of contention. Other participants reported that birding in a group could cause stress, as it most likely did with the Vines, although for some it was stress relieving, and as these interviews findings show both stress reduction and stress increase could be the result of either casual or serious birding. In the first two exchanges below, Mesdames Moore and Cheams expressed birding as a vehicle for involving them with the broader picture; it got them outdoors or abroad and into other enjoyable activities, and therefore for these women birding relieved stress. However, both their partners were more focussed on the bird as the goal and while Mr. Moore implied that birding eased stress, Dr. Cheams stated that it increased stress. The Busads presented a complicated picture of birding both as stress-inducing and stress-relaxing.

Example 1:

*Birding is relaxing and fun. It can be intense, but it’s such a great diversion from thinking about stressful situations at work or elsewhere (Mr. Moore).*

*(Birding relieves stress) in that I am not working and I am enjoying the great outdoors and hopefully in a foreign country experiencing different cultures and cuisines, most definitely yes (Mrs Moore).*

Example 2:

*It’s a relaxing hobby that gets you out in nature (for) fresh air and exercise (Ms. Cheams). Sometimes (birding) adds to my stress level…but in a good way, I think (Dr Cheams).*

Example 3:

*Birding alone is relaxing and reduces stress. Birding with (Spouse) and others increases my stress (Dr Busad).*

*I find birding very stressful - especially in a group where everyone sees the bird and I can’t find it. Or if I do find it, I can’t see it very well (Mrs Busad).*

Others shared Mrs. Busad’s stress at being unable to see a bird in company. Mrs Hove spoke of a similar experience in the context of a guide who berated her because she could not see a particular bird while Dr. Stellar called it “bush blindness”, implying that it was something he
had experienced as well. Mrs West, a self-declared ‘birdwatcher’, explained such situations stating that ‘birding’ was a “competitive sport for some” and if they were “not finding as many as they hoped for”, on a trip, “theoretically I could see that would be stressful for some people.” While other participants did not mention stress as a factor in their different birding interests, it appeared obvious between some spouses. For example, Mrs Searle was more serious about listing birds than her husband:

> It doesn’t really matter (whether we watch birds together) (Mrs Searle).

> Except it’s fun to share (Dr Searle).

> Right, except when one prefers doing something else (Mrs Searle).

Their differing interests in birding appeared to be contested, but it was only one reason for their travel together, the others being shared interests in archaeology, food and wine, and meeting people of other cultures.

To summarise, interviewed couples showed a range of differences in relation to birding, both as leisure and a reason for travel. Some were minor such as squabbles over how long they should watch birds when there was work to be done at home, while others involved travel destinations that one partner did not wish to visit. Some displayed differences in what attracted them at a destination. Most spouses had different best and worst experiences from their partner linked to their differing interests and levels of interest in birding. They disliked different people, again linked to their different interests, and different situations caused them stress. While gender appeared to be a factor, for example in the language used in described best experiences, and the greater or lesser focus on birds, differences in personal taste also seemed to be a factor.

5.4 Birding and travel as a negotiated experience

This section explores the ways that interviewees handled differences that could impact on their birding as leisure and travel. Some couples, like the Gowes and Stellars, seemed to get along so well that negotiation was not necessary whatever their level of interest. Others changed their behaviour to fit in with their spouse, while a few appeared to expect their spouse to adapt to their interests.
A number of interviewees changed or modified their behaviour to fit in with a partner, particularly when travelling. While those who were more serious about birding tried to fit in with a less interested or ‘other’ interested spouse, those partners also increased their participation to fit in with a more serious spouse. For example Dr. Stellar, a serious birder who was expert at identifying shorebirds, knew that his partner was not so keen a birder (as did Dr Gowe), and Ms. Stellar, who, her husband acknowledged, was driven to distraction by his obsession with these similar-looking little species, was generally happy to fit in with her husband’s wish to watch birds in some cold, wet places. However, she had some limitations which he recognised:

_Seriously the biggest difference is that I come from the UK with a relatively cold, damp climate and ... I have high tolerance of that (and Spouse hasn’t) ... I need to be tolerant of that and say, “okay, it’s cold and wet, so let’s go” (Dr Stellar)._ 

_I’m happy to sit in the car while he continues to watch but yeah, really, really cold and wet you’d better take me home and put me in the tub (Ms. Stellar)._ 

Other interviewees like Drs. Hamit and Busad appeared to take some time into the marriage to realise their partner’s lack of interest and took them on birding trips that neither women enjoyed. Mrs. Hamit made her objections clear after she and their sons spent hours at a rice field while her husband was off chasing birds. Though there was nothing so forthright in Mrs. Busad’s comments, she remonstrated with her husband over his apparent inability to accept that, unlike him she would not “suffer” to see a bird.

_I think it is nice to encourage and invite your spouse/partner/friend, but be accepting if they choose not to participate. People know themselves best and if they decline, there is probably a good reason and it should be accepted (Mrs Busad)._ 

Yet, both Drs Hamit and Busad reported how much they enjoyed the company of their wives on birding trips, and in the case of Dr. Busad, sharing the memories afterwards.

_Example 1:_

_I’d rather birdwatch with her (Spouse) more than anybody else. I enjoy it thoroughly so we have great outings together (Dr Hamit)._ 

_Example 2:_
I much prefer to have my spouse as a roommate and to share these wonderful experiences with her. Reflecting on past trips and reviewing the photographs is a lot more fun if we did the trips together (Dr Busad).

Both of these men recognised the importance of negotiating if they wanted their spouse’s company, and consequently changed their attitude and behaviour. Another point common to the responses of both these men is the behaviour of birders without spouses or families who can do what they like without caring about others.

**Example 1:**

(Birders with families) have to negotiate.... They have children responsibilities; their spouses may not want to be able to go so you can’t just drop everything. ... some of the people that I know who do not have partners or spouses are able to run off at a moment’s notice to go look for birds, and I’m just not able to do that. I have to plan far ahead (Dr Hamit).

Normally, ... if it’s around here I’ll just say, “No thanks, I don’t want to go”. Or if there’s an outing that I do want to go on and (Spouse) really wants me to go then I might negotiate, then how long and can we add any thing more interesting to it. ... (Mrs Hamit).

I think that’s the dynamic that we have ... - a certain number of hours I can count on (Spouse) to birdwatch. So I have to be very, very careful not to abuse that (Spouse is grinning). She’s said on a couple of occasions that I did not expect that we were going to do this”, so I need to very, very mindful of that. ... I may go out first thing in the morning ... when it’s dark, and then coming home. (Spouse) is very content to sleep in during that time (Dr Hamit).

**Example 2:**

I am concerned with my spouse’s enjoyment of our activities and make more concessions to find middle ground while my single friends don’t seem to be bothered about the sensitivity of anyone else (Dr Busad).

We have also learned to be amenable to some individual trips where one wants to go and the other does not. We generally separate ... and I go birding while she does something else. We ... take walkie-talkies with us on trips to solve this problem (Dr Busad).
While Mrs. Hamit responded to her husband’s efforts at negotiation Mrs. Busad did not reply to her husband’s remarks, suggesting that his attempts at reconciliation were not altogether successful.

In the following excerpts other spouses illustrate how they and/or their partner modified their behaviour.

Example 1:

Maybe (Spouse) tends to want to drive further for a rare bird than (I do). In these cases (Spouse) just goes alone, or finds someone else to go with (Ms. Cheams).

(Spouse) is less motivated … to get up really early to go birding (Dr Cheams).

We usually negotiate and compromise (Ms. Cheams).

Example 2:

I will set up a trip and then she will comment on whether she thinks it’s a good idea to make this long hike or travel to that extreme location. I usually defer to her because I want her to enjoy the trip as well. Sometimes she will do the same for me (Mr. Tang).

Unlike other interviewees, the Gowes said they were happy to mostly go their own ways when traveling internationally. Yet they seemed to know, without negotiation, how best to fit in with each other. Evertsson and Nyman (2009) concluded that couples could reach compromise and accommodation through their daily life without dialogue (p. 71), that is, without having to overtly raise the subject, and this was the impression I gained from both interviewing, and living with the Gowes for some days. When they did travel together Dr Gowe modified his behaviour to fit in with Mrs Gowe, and as was demonstrated with the tale of the “wet godwit” she did the same for him.

When he went to Fiji … he had a wonderful time and I loved hearing about it, but I didn’t wish I had been along. And when I talk about Europe like Rome and Paris (looking at her spouse), I don’t think you really wish you were there (Mrs Gowe).

No. I mean I’d love to go to those places but … you prioritise them (Dr Gowe).

You mean you’ve seen enough rock-pigeons (feral doves) to last you a lifetime! (Denise).
Yeh (all laugh). The thing is, if I go to Europe it’s not going to be a birding trip so I have to reconcile (Dr Gowe).

So you mean you wouldn’t leave her in a shopping mall somewhere and go wandering off to the countryside? (Denise)...(all laugh).

Oh yeah, I’d probably do that a couple of times... But the way we do it sometimes is that I’ll get up early and bird for a couple of hours and then go back to the hotel and then we’ll go get breakfast (Dr Gowe).

Drs. Vine and Gowe, and Mr. Tang reported that they made trips without their wives. Mrs Vine commented later that she endured several “risky” trips, both local and international, including one on which she was hurt and that she had decided not to accompany her husband on some trips. He acknowledged making choices that were not in her best interests. Mrs Tang stated that she and her spouse both “allowed” each other to “choose whether or not to go on outings”. Mr Tang in return mentioned that he wanted her to “enjoy” the trips they took together and sometimes deferred to her, she doing the same for him. To another participant whose husband was ill there was no “competing priority”; Mrs Prior simply stopped travelling because he did not want her to go without him. The Hoves were another particularly close couple, but unlike the Gowes, Vines and Tangs they would not travel without each other.

A few interviewees, including women serious about birding seemed unyielding in their interviews, expecting their partners to fit in with them. One couple, the Lortes, raised the issue of relationships where couples’ interest in birding differed. Mr. Lorte appeared optimistic about such marriages lasting as long as the less keen spouse adapted to the other, but Ms. Lorte was more pessimistic:

It depends on how addicted the birder is .... I think if the spouse loves nature and is willing to go with the birder on birding trips and put up with it then there’s a possibility of a relationship succeeding (Mr. Lorte).

If they’re not into birds at all then forget it. ... Because your whole life revolves around it and the amount of money - we did know someone ... - the wife was happy just to travel ... to these countries and you know the husband would go off birding and they’d have dinner together. And even that marriage finally fell apart (Ms. Lorte).

Interviewees often displayed differing levels of dedication to birding to their spouse. Some male interviewees, who were serious birders, recognised their spouses’ limits and respected
them, seemingly without effort and prolonged negotiation. For others it took some time to recognise that there was any difference between their attitudes and that of their spouse, until their partners offered resistance to accompanying them on birding trips. These men preferred to watch birds and travel with their partners, and so negotiated the conditions under which their wives would accompany them. While these men changed or modified their behaviour to fit in with their spouse they recognised that they were out of step with their single birding friends who had no responsibilities.

5.5 Continuum: The blurring of couple differences

Interviewees generally considered themselves as either ‘birders’ or ‘birdwatchers’ and differentiated between the terms. Likewise a few interviewees attributed different qualities in regard to birding to either gender although, according to their responses, many shared the gender and ‘birder’/’birdwatcher’ qualities they perceived. For example, interviewees stated that ‘birdwatchers’ watched birds locally, and yet so did participant ‘birders’, for example Messrs’ Moore and Tang. ‘Birders’ were said to travel mainly to see birds but ‘birdwatchers’ travel interests were broader, although they also wanted to see birds. As well several ‘birders’ travelled for reasons other than to see birds; for example one couple were interested in archaeology, one reason they visited Syria and Egypt, and travel as a “major hobby”.

Some interviewees stated that ‘birdwatchers’ generally preferred pretty, ‘showy’, colourful or interesting birds, and that ‘birders’ preferred taxa difficult to identify, for example the LBJs and shorebirds, many species of which look very similar. Some self-admitted ‘birdwatchers’, like Mrs Hamit, did mention a preference for “showier” birds or birds in flocks, as did some ‘birders’; for example Mr. Moore, enjoyed the “serendipity of finding (colourful) birds”. Yet Mrs. Hamit also liked, as did Mrs Tang, to try to identify difficult birds or birds they did not know. Another participant, a keen photographer, developed an interest in the “little peeps” as he called small passerines (a passerine is a bird with feet adapted for perching. A sparrow is a passerine as is a crow), that his wife, a keen birder, liked to watch.

Another characteristic that interviewees attributed to ‘birdwatchers’ was lack of focus on ‘birding’ as the pursuit, identification and listing of species. Yet Mrs Moore, who identified as a ‘birder’, demonstrated features of both categories, according to her husband; as mentioned earlier, Mr. Moore often birded locally without his spouse because she had other interests. But birding became a focus for both when they travelled abroad, according to Mr. Moore:
...when we travel to foreign destinations for birding, my spouse shares my enthusiasm for more intense birding.

Dr Hamit explained this fluidity of the terms ‘birders’ and ‘birdwatchers’ suggesting that one could be both a ‘birder’ and a ‘birdwatcher’.

*I can be a birdwatcher around my home, happy to see whatever I see and not actively searching for particular species.*

Therefore, according to interview participants the boundaries between ‘birdwatcher’ and ‘birder’ (as participants described this category) are blurred with interviewees sharing features of either birding or birdwatching both as individuals and as a member of a couple.

### 5.6 Conclusion

Analysis of the 25 interviews found that there were four major themes. Firstly, couples shared an identity based on shared experiences, both good and bad, and expressed through their self-identification, language, empathy and interdependency. Secondly, it mattered to many participants whether they were called birders or birdwatchers, and they attached different qualities to the terms.

Some participants indicated that it was socially unacceptable to be a ‘birdwatcher’, and that people classified as such did not watch birds in an acceptable manner. While these remarks were usually directed at the category, a very few male participants directed such comments at their spouse, and more female participants referred to themselves as birdwatchers than men, thus indicating that the terms were gendered. However other male participants, whose spouses were not particularly interested in birding, did not care what they were called. The behaviours of male and female participants were gendered as well; men focussed more on birding as challenge constructed around pursuit, listing and identification while women were more inclined to observe and connect birds and other wildlife. Some female participants told of behaviour from male guides and other birders that they regarded as sexist or otherwise socially unacceptable, but were concerned that the men involved might hear of their criticism.

The third theme dealt with other differences between spouses that did not always appear to be gendered, for example, their best and worst experience, dislike for birding companions and the birding situations that caused them stress, and differences over destinations. The fourth theme was negotiation between spouses in relation to birding and travel. Spouses often displayed
different levels of interest and dedication to birds, and yet they generally managed to coordinate their interests with those of their partner. For some men in particular it was a journey of discovery before significant differences between them and their spouse were realised and acted upon. Others recognised their spouses’ limits, seemingly without effort and prolonged negotiation, and modified their birding behaviour when travelling together to fit in with their desires and needs.
CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the results presented in Chapters 4 and 5 in the light of existing research on US birders and other relevant studies. Thus it addresses the objectives of the thesis which are: to outline the demographics, behaviour and attitudes of married birders; to explore the nature and meaning of couples’ birding experiences as travel; to identify intra-couple differences, and to seek to understand how, within the context of those differences, they negotiate their birding travel. The review of relevant literature, Chapter 2, found that while a concise picture of serious male birders as individuals could be drawn, there was little research on women and couples who watch birds and travel internationally for that purpose. The survey and interview findings in Chapters 4 and 5 present a more complete portrait of both women’s and couples’ bird-related leisure and travel, and the recognition of other perspectives of serious birding, and are discussed together in this chapter with the existing literature.

The term ‘respondents’ refers only to those participants who answered the questionnaire while ‘interviewees’, to those who were interviewed. At least one member of each couple also answered the questionnaire and therefore is included in ‘respondents’. Collectively, I refer to all as participants.

6.1 Demographics and behavioural profile of married birders

Analysis of the data found that survey respondents showed both similarities and differences to both demographic and behavioural profiles drawn by other studies of birders. Firstly, participants were predominantly male as in much other research on birders (for example Hvenegaard, 2002; Moore et al., 2003; Scott & Lee, 2003, 2010). They were older than those in some studies (Hvenegaard, 2002; McFarlane, 1994; Sali & Kuehn, 2007; Scott & Lee, 2003, Scott, Lee & Lee, 2009) although not in others (Lee, et al., 2014; Scott & Thigpen, 2003). The seniority of respondents is interesting to note in the light of a comment by Clarke and Critcher (1985, p. 154) defining “old” people, as those who, having retired from work or whose partner has ceased employment, were considered “peripheral” to the leisure market, having reached an “economic” boundary. This does not appear to be the case in birding for leisure or bird-related travel.

Most participants in some studies were women, simply because beginners, and casual and novice birders constituted the largest portion of those surveyed (for example, Ellis & Vogelsong, 2003; Hvenegaard, 2002), although this was not the case for studies of ABA
members (Lee & Scott, 2004; Lee et al, 2014; Scott et al., 1997), few of whom regarded themselves as novices or beginners.

Fifty percent of respondents had been married for thirty years or more (other research on birders had found that most were married, 73% in an ABA 2009 study by Scott, Lee & Lee. Length of marriage was not noted in any other studies of birders that I examined). Analysis of the survey found a higher percentage of participants (91%) were tertiary-educated compared with Scott, Lee and Lee’s findings among ABA members (2009) of 85%, which were much higher than for the general US population of 11%. A higher percentage of female respondents were tertiary educated (91%) than in the general populace (10.5%) according to the US Census (2013). Respective education levels of male and female birders were not found in other papers examined.

6.1.1 Behavioural profile of individual married birders

This section outlines the profile of individuals, mostly survey respondents. The profile will be discussed in later sections through the lens of gender and self-identification.

Most interviewees and survey respondents identified as birders and kept bird lists. Stebbins (1982; 2005) included identification with the activity as a criterion for serious leisure, and consequently in this chapter and the conclusion I will mostly use the term ‘serious birder’ to refer to participants who both identify as a ‘birder’ and who lists. Survey respondents belonged to birding or conservation organisations, mostly the Audubon Society or its chapters, followed by the ABA and wildlife/conservation organisations such as the Sierra Club. The major reasons given by all respondents for joining such organisations were their concentration on birds and policy on conservation, followed by the opportunity to join others for birding.

Respondents mostly reported that they liked to watch all birds. However, given the responses to other questions it appears that seeing new birds was important to most. Indeed, the majority prioritised seeing new birds over every other motive for watching birds except feeling a special connection with nature. As well birds were given as the major reason why respondents regarded a country as their favourite or as one they wished to visit. Knowledge of birds was the quality most wanted in a guide. Furthermore just under half of all survey respondents had felt in danger while birding implying that the activity was important enough to take risks. Still, birding in order to compete with others (on the size of their list) was the least popular motive suggesting that respondents listed for other reasons.
A small majority of respondents preferred to combine birding with holiday or business travel. Specific birding trips were next most popular. When travelling internationally most respondents used a combination of international and local tour operators and guides although more respondents recorded that they travelled independently than on organised tours. Most cited Central and South American countries as their favourite destinations and the destinations they would most like to visit, followed by Australia/New Zealand. Reasons were birds (including new, diverse, and interesting species), beautiful scenery, a range of other fauna (and also flora), and friendly people.

Despite new birds and listing being so important to respondents family took priority over the pursuit of birds, including that of new species that turned up in their state. Respondents preferred to watch birds with their spouse, and mostly did so, both generally and when they travelled. That they liked to share the experience was a major reason for watching birds together. Indeed, respondents gave sharing with someone they cared as the fourth most important motive for watching birds. Many also reported that birding brought them and their spouse closer together. Most usually participated in other activities with their spouse, at home and when travelling. Indicating other areas of shared leisure in their lives. Most respondents did not care about their spouse’s skill level or level of interest although the majority recorded that their spouse was less interested in birding than they, while just under half noted that they and their spouse had dissimilar birding interests, generally because only one partner listed.

A significant minority (20%) of respondents avoided some destinations because their spouse did not wish to go and most respondents recorded that they would travel without a spouse disinterested in birding. Still, more than half of all respondents modified their behaviour in some way to encourage their spouse to watch birds with them, and about a third had changed their attitudes and behaviour towards birding because of their spouse. These changes included becoming more careful about where and how they watched birds, buying more expensive birding equipment, and socialising more with other birders.

### 6.1.2 Birdwatchers and birders

As mentioned in the previous section survey respondents were asked whether they identified as a birder or birdwatcher. Those interviewed were asked the same question, but also to define these terms. This section discusses the responses of both interviewees and respondents in relation to each other and also extends or challenges the findings of this study to existing papers on birders.
Most participants, both respondents to the questionnaire and interviewees, identified as birders. Most, birders, and birdwatchers too, reported that they listed. Respondents to the questionnaire, whether they identified as birders or birdwatchers, liked to watch all birds, including colourful species and some birdwatchers liked to identify LBJs. Birders differed from birdwatchers in that they prioritised seeing new birds when they travelled, new birds being a major reason as to why a country was their favourite and why they wanted to visit particular countries. Yet most of those who identified as birders were also members of the Audubon and their most important motive for watching birds was to feel a special connection with nature. While male respondents and ‘birders’ were keen enough to take risks while on a trip, they also put home and family before chasing a new bird that turned up in their state. They also preferred a combination of birding and pleasure or business travel to specific birding trips. Birdwatchers, like birders, travelled to see birds and prioritised knowledge of birds in a guide. However, seeing new birds was not an important motivation for either watching birds or for travel, and they were less likely to take specific birding trips than birders. They were also more interested in a greater diversity of wildlife, connection with nature and conservation.

Interviewees’ definition of birders and birdwatchers differed somewhat from the answers provided in the questionnaire by those who identified themselves as one or the other. To interviewees ‘birders’ were serious about pursuing, identifying and listing new birds while ‘birdwatchers’ were not serious about birding, did not list, watched birds opportunistically, often in their gardens, and were not particularly interested in identifying species. To interviewees ‘birders’ were interested in seeing and identifying LBJ’s while birdwatchers preferred colourful or showy birds, to little dull-coloured, hard-to-identify species ‘Birders’ were prepared to suffer to see birds and birdwatchers were not and birders were competitive as opposed to birdwatchers. However, there were differences between interviewees’ definitions and what respondents actually reported. For example not all who identified as birders kept a list while most birdwatchers did and many birders reported an interest in colourful birds as did some birdwatchers.

Interviewees’ definitions of birders and birdwatchers were largely supported by researchers and other authors. Most (for example Cooper & Smith, 2010; McFarlane, 1994; Paulson 2003; Prior & Schaffner, 2011; Scott et al., 2009) used listing as a criterion to define someone who was serious about birding whether through the number of birds on their lists or birding trips they took, or the optics and field guides that they owned (see McFarlane, 1994; Moore et al., 2008; Sali & Kuehn 2006; Scott et al., 2009). The importance of listing was also made obvious
through the preponderance of bird books and apps that focused on the field marks that enable birders to recognise particular species (Schaffner, 2011). Yet, in reality, the number of US birders who kept a life list was small, only 5% according to La Rouche (US Fish & Wildlife Service, 2006). While there is no later statistic for all US birders on list-keeping, a comparison can be drawn with 83% of ABA members who kept such lists (Cole & Scott, 1997), rising to 97% in a later survey (Scott et al., 2009). The competitive nature of listing mentioned by both interviewees and survey respondents as a characteristic of serious birders was also supported researchers (see Donnelly, 1994; Scott & Lee, 2003; Moore et al., 2008; Sheard, 1999).

Another characteristic of birders identified by interviewees was the desire to see new rare, and difficult-to-identify birds (LBJ’s), as opposed to the colourful, showy or interesting birds preferred, in their opinion, by birdwatchers. In support, Connell (2009) made the point that twitchers were excited when they were able to identify nondescript birds, but were not moved by the sight of colourful or showy or interesting birds. Other studies (Caroliniinan Canada Coalition, 2011; Maple et al., 2010) supported interviewees’ inclusion of colourful birds as a criterion for identifying those less serious about birding. Moss’ (2003, p. 321) comment that sightings of colourful birds were referred to as “tarts’ ticks”, implied that such birds were of lower status than an LBJ.

Interviewees also mentioned the propensity of birders to travel specifically to see birds and to suffer if needed, in the pursuit. Researchers (Cole & Scott, 1999; Lee et al., 2014; Scott & Lee, 2003; Scott et al., 2009; Scott & Thigpen, 2003; Sekercioğlu, 2003) classified a birder as serious or otherwise about birding by the number of trips taken specifically to see birds. Scott et al. (2005a) mentioned the seasickness that birders suffered on pelagic trips in mountainous seas.

Two criteria were not mentioned by interviewees in their definition of a birder, but were included by researchers. One was membership of birding organisations (McFarlane, 1994) and the other the propensity of those serious about their chosen leisure to participate with peers or role models rather than novices or beginners (Bryan, 1977; McFarlane, 1996). The ABA was generally regarded as representing the social world of serious birding (Cooper & Smith, 2010; Scott et al., 2005a; Weidensaul, 2008; Wilds, 1994) and many studies were carried out on its members by Scott in partnership with various other researchers. The present study found that more birders/listers in the present study were members of the Audubon, the organisation for birdwatchers than the ABA, a body for listers (Cooper & Smith, 2010).
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The birder/birdwatcher dichotomy begins to unravel when interviewees’ definitions are considered in the light of their personal behaviour as highlighted both in the interviews and the questionnaires which most answered. Similarly, participants who identified as birders or birdwatchers did not always act in correspondence to the definitions; many (interviewees and survey respondents) displayed features of both ‘birders’ and ‘birdwatchers’. For example some participants who identified as birders did not list while others who referred to themselves as birdwatchers did (one who identified as a birdwatcher had a list of over 8000 species). Most participants, no matter how serious they were about birds, liked to see colourful species and all birds rather than new or rare ones, while some who identified as birdwatchers liked to see, and identify, LBJ’s. Some participants who were serious birders also reported that they watched birds at home. The birdfeeder in Figure 6.1 was in the garden of a birder. Thus they displayed the ‘passive’ behaviour thought to belong solely to those who identified as birdwatchers, according to researchers (Connell, 2009; Cordell, et al., 2008; Isaacs & Chi, 2005; Prior & Schaffner, 2011). Like birders, participants who identified as birdwatchers liked to travel to see birds (including species new to them).

Most birders combined birding with business or pleasure trips and prioritised a guide with knowledge of birds. Many birdwatchers took specific birding trips and also wanted a guide who knew about birds, although they differed on other parameters. Birders, for example, wanted a guide who focused on hardcore birders while birdwatchers preferred a guide who could also show them ‘beautiful scenery’ and who could help them ‘connect to the natural environment’.

Figure 6.1 Male Purple Martins at feeder
Interviewees implied that birding was central to the lifestyle of birders (after all if it were not important why ‘suffer’ just to see and list new birds!). Yet many of those who identified as birders did not know exactly how many species they had recorded (including some with substantial lists). Furthermore, while exact comparisons could not be drawn the number of birds on respondents’ lists appeared to be lower than that recorded by, for example Scott et al. (2009), in their study of ABA members, again indicating that perhaps those who participated in this study did not prioritise listing. There were participants, however, who appeared to partition their serious birding from the activities and travel with a spouse less or other-interested in birds and listing. This will be discussed later in the chapter.

Also challenging the concept of centrality, most participants in this study, no matter how serious they were about birds, participated in other leisure activities, both at home and while travelling. Other pastimes mentioned included photography, scuba diving, and seeing and identifying wildflowers. Birders, like birdwatchers also wanted to see a range of other wildlife when travelling, thus supporting similar findings in other studies (Cordell et al., 2008; Cordell & Herbert, 2002; US Fish & Wildlife Survey, 2006, 2011). Some were also committed to aspects of birds other than listing (for example bird physiology or behaviour).

There were some areas within the study that demonstrated a clear difference between birders and birdwatchers. For example many more participants who identified as birders were willing to suffer or put oneself at risk, to see new birds. Some interviewees mentioned that ‘birders’ coped with great discomfort or even risk to see a new bird, while ‘birdwatchers’ liked to watch in comfort and safety. Their comments were supported by the finding that more survey respondents who identified as birders and listers had felt in danger while birding, than birdwatchers and non-listers, some finding themselves at risk of serious injury or even death. Risk is a feature of perseverance, a criterion of serious leisure (Stebbins, 2004). Although a few authors have mentioned risk in the context of serious or hardcore birding (Salzman, 1995), Scott et al., 2005a; Seong-Seop & Scott, 1997) risk like serious discomfort, defines extreme leisure (Anderson & Taylor, 2010; Austin, 2005; Fine & Holyfield, 1996). In this study a significant proportion of both birdwatchers and non-listers reported that they had felt in danger as well, some through accompanying more serious spouses on birding trips, Yet those birders who had found themselves in danger while birding, were no more likely than birdwatchers to go chasing a new bird that had turned up in their state, most putting work and family first.
One finding reported on elsewhere in the literature (Floyd, 2006; Kaufmann, 1997; Seideman, 2004; Wilds, 1994) was the consideration of some interviewees that ‘birders’ were socially acceptable but ‘birdwatchers’ were not, an attitude probably reflected in the propensity of participants to refer to themselves as birders when they behaved more like birdwatchers. Some participants in this study distanced themselves from birdwatchers. One interviewee went to some lengths to avoid using the term by insisting that she and her spouse were “enthusiastic amateurs”. Some even used negative language in describing ‘birdwatchers’ as had been used in depicting Audubon members (Seideman, 2004), and yet, on many parameters, there was no clear distinction between ‘birders’ and ‘birdwatchers’. Even some who decried the latter group, behaved more like birdwatchers in some ways. As one interviewee said, perhaps one could be both a birder and a birdwatcher, depending on circumstances.

The results of the present study indicate that the categories of ‘birder’ and ‘birdwatcher’ are not a dichotomy but form a continuum, thus supporting Shen and Yarnal’s (2010) argument that leisure forms a continuum from casual to serious rather than a pair of dichotomies. Findings in the present study support that argument in relation to serious birders and those considered to be casual about the activity (at least in terms of listing), or birdwatchers. They also demonstrate that listing does not necessarily define a birder nor the absence of listing, a birdwatcher.

To recapitulate, this study found that while interviewees considered that ‘birdwatchers’ and serious birders differed, many participants, both interviewees and survey respondents, fitted the criteria for being both ‘birdwatchers’ and serious birders, indicating that as one participant stated, perhaps one could be both a birder and a birdwatcher. Shen and Yarnal (2010) argued that leisure forms a continuum from casual to serious rather than a pair of dichotomies. Findings in the present study support the argument that a continuum exists between serious birders and those considered to be casual about the activity (at least in terms of listing), or birdwatchers.

6.1.3 Female and male participants

This sections focuses on male and female participants and the similarities and differences between them found in this study and the comparisons with the existing literature. Interviewees were not asked to define birding through the lens of gender, and so this section mainly deals with the results of the questionnaire and the paired cohorts of male and female.
The present study found that most female respondents to the questionnaire identified as birders, and that most of those who referred to themselves as birdwatchers were also female. While most female respondents listed they were fewer in number than males, and their lists appeared shorter. Their major motive for watching birds was feeling a special connection with nature, although they prioritised birds when travelling. Fewer female respondents than males felt they were in danger while birding. As with male respondents new birds were a major reason as to why a country was a favourite of women respondents and why they wanted to visit particular countries. The qualities they sought in a guide differed somewhat from those of males, female respondents prioritising being treated as equals, connections with nature, scientific knowledge and relationships. They expressed dislike of guides who focused on hardcore birders. Female interviewees reported episodes where they felt uncomfortable birding in a group or discriminated against by guides and other birders, and they worried about such criticisms reaching the ears of those concerned.

The present study found, as with other research, that male respondents were more serious about listing than females (Cooper & Smith, 2010; Lee et al., 2014; McFarlane, 1994, 1996; McFarlane & Boxall, 1996; Moore et al., 2008; Sali & Kuehn, 2007; Scott et al., 2005b; Scott et al., 2005c; Scott, Thigpen & Kim, 1996). Still, most female respondents kept lists, including most of those who identified as birdwatchers, thus modifying the claim by interviewees and researchers such as Cooper and Smith (2010) that birdwatchers were non-listers.

Interviewees commented that birdwatchers were passive about watching birds, and as most who identified as birdwatchers were women, those comments reflected beliefs about women’s birding behaviour. That women’s leisure was more home-based than that of men has been reported by several researchers (Deem, 1982; de Fontenelle & Zinkhan, 1993; Scott and Godbey, 1992, 1994). Cooper and Smith (2010) reported that proportionally more women than men were members of Garden BirdWatch. The present study of birders in a committed relationship found that most participants, both male and female, watched birds in their own homes or nearby areas at times, thus extending comments like those made to McDonald (2013, no page number given) calling women “kitchen window birders”, to men as well.

More male respondents than female prioritised seeing ‘new birds’ and competing ‘with other birders’, motivations supported by comments from both male and female respondents and interviewees. Both male and female interviewees mentioned competition in relation to male birders, often with a hint of disapproval. One male interviewee said that men could turn birding
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“into a macho completion”. Another compared male and female birders to “different animals” because of their different approaches to birds; men being heavily involved in listing competitions while women wanted to simply “enjoy the birds”. Survey respondents rated competitive birding the least popular motivation in a list of eleven reasons for watching birds. Moore et al. (2008) had written of the reluctance of female birders to become involved in intense competitive birding/listing events. However the low rating of competition for male survey respondents indicated that listing events were not an activity in which they participated to a great extent. Whether the focus on such events affected female or male participants’ involvement in bird festivals or birding organisations that focused on listing, is not known.

While competition was not of great significance to study participants status did appear to be important, and was implied by the preference of interviewees and respondents to be called ‘birders’ rather than ‘birdwatchers’. Indeed some interviewees went to some lengths to avoid using ‘birdwatcher’ in relation to themselves, one instead using the term ‘amateur birder’ to describe herself and her spouse’s birding activities. Researchers have highlighted the importance of status to men at leisure (Katz-Gerro & Sullivan, 2010; Moore et al., 2008) as opposed to women (Huberman et al., 2004). Birding ability also added status according to one male interviewee who explained that birding was the one area in which he could be an ‘expert’. His comment adds to the conclusion of Moore et al. (2008) that birding gave men the opportunity to demonstrate their skills of identification. Birding ability depended on the ability to find and identify birds and some male and female interviewees identified suffering and even risk-taking in the pursuit of a new bird as a quality of birders.

Some male interviewees considered suffering part of the criteria being a birder, and they and survey respondents related tales where they had suffered much discomfort and even risk while birding. More male respondents than female reported that they had felt in danger while birding. Female interviewees spoke of accompanying their spouses on trips where they suffered discomfort in the form of inclement or hot weather and inhospitable or boring habits. Some ventured into situations that they considered risky. These findings were indirectly backed by Seong-Seop and Scott (1997) who reported that those most likely to avoid risk were those who were less able (or likely) to identify birds, who owned less birding equipment, and travelled less to see birds, a description which applied to many women. Danger, to some male participants, appeared to add more excitement to their birding trips, one even adding a prone smiley face to his comments about situations where he could easily have been seriously injured or died. Most studies on serious, hardcore, and extreme leisure and risk-taking behaviour
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concentrate on individuals and males (Anderson & Taylor, 2010; Austin, 2005; Fine & Holyfield, 1996; Ronay & Kim, 2006; Stebbins, 2004), with very few mentioning women (for example, Celsi, et al., 1993). This study extended such literature to couples.

A few male interviewees and survey respondents considered that women lacked the perseverance needed to be serious birders because of their reluctance to accompany their menfolk on gruelling birding trips, although it is more likely that ‘suffering’ as one male participant put it, for the sake of adding a tick on one’s list, was of little relevance to women, as Moore et al. (2008) had reported. The primary motivation given by female respondents for watching birds was to feel a special connection with nature (although most male respondents felt similarly). Interviewees commented that women were more concerned with connecting with nature than men. Table 4.10 showed that more women wanted a guide who could help them connect to the natural environment and conservation as a largely female interest was noted in other studies mentioned in the Literature Review (for example Cooper & Smith, 2010; Czech et al., 2001; Kellert, 1996; McFarlane, 1994; Miller & McGee, 2000). This study found that most respondents, regardless of gender, joined a birding or other organisation because of its conservation policy, suggesting that men were as concerned as women.

Because of the link between leisure and tourism (Carr, 2002) these results suggested that participants’ travel could be regarded as “bonafide” ecotourism (Fennell, 2014). Yet there appeared to be conflict with the desire to pursue and list new birds, particularly for male participants that worked against such a classification. In responses to the question on guide qualities, fewer male respondents than female wanted a guide who respected the country, and more wanted a guide who focussed on hardcore birders. Stellars told of the behaviour of a male birder who flushed a wren that they had been taking care not to disturb, labelling his behaviour “Australian rules birding.”

Several interviewees of both genders mentioned that male birders wished to ‘conquer’ wildlife, a theme repeated by a female respondent who compared the attitude of such male birders to Steve Irwin and his desire to catch dangerous animals, also describing all as wanting to “conquer” wildlife. Yet ‘conquering wildlife’ can be misconstrued as caring. While working on a wildlife television series in western Arnhem Land, my Kunwinjku relatives and I noticed that the presenter tried to catch every reptile he saw, telling us that he did so because he “loved” wildlife. We pointed out that he was actually terrifying the animals.
Uncaring attitudes towards wildlife were not confined to men. Interviewees of both genders expressed frustration when photographers or other birders disturbed a bird before they could identify and thus list it. The flexibility of both genders’ attitudes towards conservation was expressed in Stoll et al.’s (2006) paper on the cranes of Platte River and by the viewpoint of, mainly women, on feral (Peterson et al. 2012). However, it seems likely from these papers and comments made by interviewees and survey respondents that women related to particular wildlife species or even individual animals, a finding borne out by Watson (2010), and that men were concerned about groups of animals, or species, or conservation in general. Ceballos-Lascurain was concerned at the use of ‘ecotourism’ to describe tourism or sport carried out with little concern for the natural environment (Ecoclub.com, 2006). To Fennell (2014, p. 103) it was imperative that ecotourism was that it caused “minimum disturbance and impact”. It appears from the present study that there is scope to enhance the principles of ecotourism in regard to birders, using as a vehicle their wish to connect with nature.

Interviewees did not mention the ownership of aids to identification and listing such as binoculars, telescopes and field guides as criterion for being a birder although several researchers did so (see McFarlane, 1994; Moore et al., 2008; Sali & Kuehn 2006; Scott et al., 2009). Female survey respondents reported spending that their spending on optics increased when they married. A female survey respondent observed that anyone with the money to buy equipment, travel and hire a guide, could have a big bird list thus agreeing with Cordell & Herbert (2002) that men’s relatively longer bird lists were due to their greater ability to afford good optics and field guides, and go on birding trips. Her comment demonstrated the fallacy of using discretionary spending as a measure of seriousness about birding as mentioned by Scott et al. (2005c).

There was no significant difference between genders on types of vacation that they preferred, including specific birding holidays, nor on favourite countries or those they would like to visit. Neither female nor male respondents preferred organised tours, although only women gave reasons for their response; some reported that they did not like the intensity and focus on listing of serious birding tours. Thus they indirectly supported Curtin and Wilkes’ (2005) finding that serious bird tour operators had encountered demand for more generalised tours and extended Moore et al.’s (2008) statements on the reluctance of women to be involved in intensive listing events, to tourism. Listing was again raised in the responses to the question on guide qualities, with female respondents differing significantly from male participants on their feelings about guides who focused on ‘hardcore’ birders. Some also commented adversely on the attention
that guides paid to such birders, one stating that she found it “especially annoying”, again extending the research by Curtin and Wilkes (2005) on intensive birding tours, to women. The continued existence of stereotypes about birders, have implications for authorities and business in their efforts to establish and manage bird-related travel and ecotourism product, and for birding and natural history/conservation organisations who run events and tours.

One important area of difference between male and female respondents was in discrimination, an issue raised by a number of researchers (see Henderson et al., 1989; Hunter, 1992; Tanner, 2011). For example, Mrs. Hove spoke of a tall guide who expected her to have the same view of a bird in a tree as he, and Dr. Weines told of his wife’s encounter with a guide lacking in empathy and sensitivity on her tour of the Amazon. Mrs. Menzies experienced ‘macho’ behaviour directed at her by another client on a birding tour. The subject of prejudice against women birders was raised by a number of authors, male as well as female (see Dunne, 1994; Lee et al., 2014; McDonald, 2013; Moore et al, 2008; Moss, 2003).

Often the discrimination was indirect, and rather than there being open criticism of women, it was ‘birdwatchers’ that were disparaged as happened with participants in this study, two examples being the interviewee who compared birdwatchers to Miss Hathaway of the Beverly Hill Billies and another who stated that birdwatchers were “a disagreeable stereotype”. These responses, both from female interviewees, supported findings by researchers (Clarke & Critcher, 1985; Henderson et al., 1989; Messerschmidt, 2015; Wearing, 1998) that women also acted to enforce the status quo. Another example of indirect bias was the implication that ‘birdwatchers’ were ‘passive’, that ‘wait-and-see’ birding was of lesser value than all-out pursuit. Such attitudes were supported by prominent birders such as Kaufmann (1997) and Oddie (1995), those researchers who categorised birders on their ownership of the equipment and funds that enabled them to list (for example Cole & Scott, 1999; Connell (2009, McFarlane, 1994; Sali & Kuehn 2007), and organisations like the ABA that promoted the pursuit and listing of species (Floyd, 2006; Wilds, 1994). Wearing et al. (1994) and Hall (1985) wrote of the resistance of women to the accepted view of them as ‘passive’, a term also used to describe ‘birdwatchers’. Bo Beolens (2013, p. 1, 2) has pointed out the bias of male guides is not just directed at women, but to clients unlike themselves, whether they be of the opposite gender, or who are unfit or disabled, or seniors.

Like males, female respondents prioritised a guide who could show them new birds, but they also wanted a guide who could help realise their wish for connectedness to nature. Others
highlighted a broader perspective than male respondents, for example the desire for a guide with knowledge of fauna other than birds and for a guide with ‘scientific knowledge’ thus supporting Miller and McGee (2000), who found that more women than men wanted to learn about wildlife. Kellert (1996) had argued that men had greater scientific knowledge than women but did not mention women having a greater desire to learn.

Some female respondents prioritised the wish to be treated as equals by a guide reflecting the experiences revealed by some female interviewees of instances of discrimination or disparagement they had encountered on birding trips from guides and other birders. All who had such experiences were worried about those they complained about hearing of their comments. Lagache (1993) and Mayes and Pini (2010) mentioned the unwillingness of women, involved in a social world dominated by men, to raise the issue of discrimination, both at leisure and work, Mayes and Pini (2010) stating that silence on the part of the women so treated meant they could not moderate the way that others thought about them. This study extends the findings of Mayes and Pini (2010) in two ways, firstly to the serious birding world where judging by attitudes to women birders reported by Dunne (1994), McDonald (2013) and Moss (2003) female interviewees felt it more socially acceptable to keep their criticisms to themselves. Secondly, the present study records the response of spouses of these female interviewees, thus extending the literature to couples. The reactions of spouses to the ill-treatment of their wives will be discussed in the section on couples.

There were many similarities in this study between female and male profiles. Most female and male participants referred to themselves as birders and kept bird lists, and both cohorts generally liked to watch the same groups of birds. Both male and female respondents also shared several characteristics of what could be construed as casual leisure or ‘birdwatching’ as well as serious leisure, or ‘birding’. For example, many female and male respondents did not list; similar proportions of both genders belonged to the Audubon; they liked to watch ‘all birds’ rather than new or rare birds, and were motivated more by a ‘special connection with nature’ than seeing ‘new birds’ or competition. Conservation was a primary reason why both male and female survey respondents joined particular organisations. Most survey respondents of both genders prioritised their family and work responsibilities over chasing new birds, and generally prioritised the combining of birding with business and holiday travel.

Both male and female respondents preferred to travel independently of a tour group, although when travelling internationally most used a mix of international and local tour operators and
guides. Both male and female respondents were interested in visiting a country to see birds and other fauna (and flora, although more women were interested in plants than men). Neither cohort prioritised the wish to meet Indigenous people while travelling although they gave ‘nice’ or ‘friendly’ people as a reason for considering a country their favourite, this finding suggesting that sociability was of more importance than culture. Survey respondents’ favourite countries were mostly located in Central and South America, followed by Australia. Reasons for the preference for these first two regions were close proximity and species diversity. Also, at least some of the participants spoke Spanish (one reason why Brazil might not have been popular as other countries was that the national language there is Portuguese). Australia was also popular because of its unique fauna (and flora) and also because it is an English-speaking country.

While there were no obvious gender differences in countries that respondents considered their favourite or which they would like to visit, such countries were mentioned either in comments to the survey or in interviews. One interviewee went to Ghana while his wife visited Ohio, another liked the Pacific Islands while his spouse travelled to the cities of Europe; she liked to shop while her husband preferred to watch birds (he also guided groups). Another spoke of his failed attempts to persuade his wife to visit the Pantanal (South America) and the interior of Australia. Some respondents commented that they preferred cities while their spouse liked to be surrounded by nature, and vice versa. One male respondent even commented that he refused to enter quilting shops. Several female interviewees and respondents stated their dislike of particular places because they found them risky or boring, or conditions uncomfortable in that the terrain was difficult to traverse or the inclement or otherwise unfavourable. These findings extend the literature on avitourism from individuals to couples.

These similarities in male and female motivations, priorities and interests demonstrate a blurring at the boundaries between those who could be categorised as serious about the activity and those who were casual, thus supporting Shen and Yarnal’s argument (2010) that leisure forms a continuum from casual to serious rather than a pair of dichotomies. Another dichotomy also appears to exist, that between the rule-based serious leisure and social serious leisure, as Scott and Godbey (1992; 1994) found in their studies of contract bridge clubs; members who played the game socially and those who played for competition were committed, one to the rules-based game and the other to the social aspects. Some participants in this study, mostly men, were serious about formally listing birds, while others, particularly women, appeared just as committed to using birding as an excuse for getting outdoors, or as a vehicle for connecting with nature or with their partner. Consequently, ‘casual leisure’ can be construed to mean
‘casual about listing’. It does not necessarily mean casual about birding as a way of connection. A third continuum also exists, that between the interests and priorities of male and female participants in this study. Therefore, a number of continua exist, between serious and casual leisure, between different types of serious leisure, between male and female interests, and between birders and birdwatchers. These findings indicate a series of interconnected continua, thus extending Shen and Yarmal’s findings (2010) from the single continuum to multiples.

To recapitulate, this section discussed the behavioural profiles of male and female participants, both interviewees and respondents and interpreted and evaluated the results in the light of other research. It found several differences between the genders, but many similarities as well. Rather than forming a set of dichotomies the profiles merge into each other, forging a continuum.

6.2 Theories relevant to couples who travel and watch birds together

The findings reported in the previous section indicate that researchers must explore leisure and tourism activity through the lens of the couple relationship, rather than simply as an individual pursuit. Therefore, a number of social theories have relevance for this study. They are social identity theory, identity fusion theory, dyadic power theory and Interdependence theory.

Social identity theory is supported in this body of research in that participants and their spouses form an identity separate from their personal identities, and evaluate themselves in terms of all three, namely that of ‘birder’ or ‘birdwatcher’ and the shared relationship. Homogenisation of culture, beliefs and values, a criterion of social identity theory (Reicher et al., 2010; Stebbins, 1996, Vasconcelos, 2007), appears to occur within that third identity, when spouses feel they have more in common with their partner than with others, even those of the same gender (Burke, 2006; Herzog, 2007; Jackson, 1998; Levenson et al., 1993). Personal identity is expressed in the identities that participants gave themselves, and in the centralisation of birding at times, such as when particular male participants took a birding trip alone or with peers. Female participants also demonstrate the survival of their personal identity in following their own interests, travelling without their spouse, or by refusing to accompany their spouse on birding trips unless their wishes are respected. That fluidity between the centrality of the self and the centrality of the couple relationship, also suggests social identity theory which posits that there is a continuum between an individual’s personal behaviour, and that of the group to which they belong (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).
Identity fusion theory, where the personal and social selves unite, but the personal remains salient, is also relevant (Reeve & Johnson, 2013, Swann et al., 2012). In identity fusion the attachment to the in-group (either the couple or the birding world) can be so strong that it affects the personal, whereas in social identity theory members of that in-group may be relatively interchangeable. Given the strength of the couple bond it seems that identity fusion theory would be more relevant. Within that shared identity there is no clearcut schism between male and female interests, or between those committed to birding and those who use it as a vehicle for demonstrating commitment to nature or to other people including their spouse.

Dyadic power theory considers relative power and control in a relationship, and the tendency of a less dominant partner to only express frustration in their speech or by their refusal to negotiate. Dyadic power appeared to play a part in some of the relationships analysed for this study. For example some male interviewees did not appear to understand, or did understand but ignored, their spouses’ preferences, expecting them to fit in with their concept of birding. Their spouses demonstrated reluctance or resistance in response, by not using couple language and by displaying a reluctance to watch birds with their partner, and yet this theory does not fit perfectly for the following reasons; a spouse’s degree of power may vary depending on their level of interdependency, and that level may fluctuate depending on where they are travelling, in a familiar country or otherwise. The more powerful spouse’s situation may also change through retirement or disability, or be modified, as was seen in this study, because of their preference to watch birds with their spouse. All these factors may lead to a more equitable sharing of goals. Therefore, these findings extend that theory, although it may be that another is needed to express a continuum within that of dyadic power.

Other theories examined included interdependence theory and gender role theory. Interdependence theory, which hypothesises that spouses will discontinue unrewarding relationships, might have been relevant in some relationships mentioned by participants, where a couple separated because of the discrepancy of an interest in birding. However, couples might also prefer to stay together because of increasing interdependence, even where the relationship is relatively unsatisfactory (Givertz & Segrin, 2005). Gender role theory holds that individuals are stereotyped to behave as male or female. However, committed couples in this study appeared to identify more with their partner than with others of the same gender, for example, by both identifying as either birders or birdwatchers. Consequently, this theory appears to be of limited value.
Kwang (2010, p. 8-9) identified three couple identification models as discussed in the Chapter 2, the Literature Review. Two models display unequal influence (the third being where couples have more or less equal influence). In one the personal self is passive, becoming “almost entirely informed by the couple identity”, but with high commitment to the relationship. The other model is the converse, with low relationship commitment – the cost of leaving the subsumed partner being low.

Figure 6.2, shows the individual genders, one of female participants (also representing the two cohorts dominated by women, that is non-listers and birdwatchers) and the other male (also
representing the two cohorts dominated by men – listers and birders) depicted by the outer portions of the two ovals, combining in a third and central identity that indicates the shared identity (and interdependency) within a committed relationship. The evidence for that third identity among participants is a) the existence of ‘couple language’, exchange of banter and other language indicators, and the indication by interviewed couples that they know what each other is thinking without dialogue; b) the existence of a joint bird list where a species is not recorded until both have seen it (the “half-bird”); c) the lesser importance of the bird list as indicated by participants not knowing exactly how many birds they had recorded; d) participants’ inclination to watch all birds rather than rare or new birds (this being even the case among those with the longest lists); e) the disinclination of even keen listers to drop everything to go chase a new bird in their area, and f) the preference of most participants to watch birds with their spouse. The couple relationship was also displayed in the willingness of both male and female participants to modify their behaviour in order to watch birds and travel together. Interdependency was indicated by the exchanges between interviewed couples on how they contributed differently to a bird trip.

“Listing activity more central” in the male section of Figure 6.2 refers to the greater tendency of male participants in this study to focus more than females, on the pursuit, identification and listing of new and rare birds, and related behaviours such as putting themselves at risk while birding, participating more in specific birding tours, and preferring guides who concentrated on ‘hardcore’ birders. Yet, as discussed in the present study, this situation might only prevail at certain times, for example when men go on specific birding trips without a less- or other-interested spouse.

Female participants, as shown in Figure 6.2, were more interested in non-listing activities and in using birding as a vehicle for feeling a connection to nature or to other people (generally their spouse as demonstrated by the comments in the survey questionnaire). Still, their value to spouses in being able to spot birds and identify features that demarcated different species, and provide support while travelling, was addressed by a number of male participants. So while female participants had shorter lists and not paid much heed to their identification skills, as pointed out by Moore et al. (2008), the present study demonstrates their value in helping a partner add to their list.

Several facets of the present study indicate the presence of a continuum between male and female participants, and those who identified as birders or birdwatchers. They included the
following points: a) both genders listed, as did many birdwatchers; b) male survey respondents were more often members of the Audubon to the ABA; c) male participants who identified as serious birders watched all birds and often liked to see pretty or showy birds, while female participants were often interested in bird identification; d) both male and female participants, and birders and birdwatchers put work and family responsibilities before chasing a new bird that had turned up in the area, and e) female participants as well as those who identified as birdwatchers also liked to see new birds and take specific birding trips.

The top arrow in Figure 6.2 depicts dyadic power in the resistance/reluctance to birding with a spouse shown mostly by female respondents in this study. However, this arrow could well be double-headed in that male respondents’ preference to watch birds with their spouse, could gives their partners some power in return. The lower arrow demonstrates the tendency of both male and female respondents in this study to accommodate spouses more or less serious about birding, or with different interests or priorities. It appears likely that when a couple is travelling together, birding will be of secondary importance if the relationship and the activity clash, or there is a conflict between the formal birding social world and a partner, as was demonstrated by female interviewees’ comments about their negative experiences with guides and other birders. The response of both male and female participants, including anger and a fear of disclosing names of perpetrators, suggest one reason why couples might prefer to travel independently of a tour group. These findings support Harrison’s (2003) contention that joint happiness might be more important for a couple travelling together, than that of individual contentment, thus adding support for the model of fused identity.

The two outer portions of Figure 6.2 represent the personal identities of spouses. While they overlap in the middle to form a third or shared identity the outer portions represent those vestiges of self not subsumed by the third or shared identity. The central overlapping portion of the two ovals displays that shared identity as well as a continuum between spouses of different degrees of interest and dedication to birding (and thus could also apply to same-sex couples). It also represents accommodation and negotiation on the part of participants with a less interested or other-interested or handicapped spouse, and interdependency, and therefore this study’s finding that even spouses with low shared identity could be interdependent while travelling together; at such times there will be high commitment to the relationship whoever dominates (what is not shown in the diagram is the fluidity of centrality of the relationship which can vary depending on whether spouses are travelling together. As mentioned
previously, participants on a sole birding trip or travelling with peers might regard birding as more central at such times).

To recapitulate, a number of theories are relevant to this thesis’s findings, but mostly a form of fusion identity theory. Dyadic power theory is also important where there is unequal power within the relationship but its extent may be modified by degree of interdependency between spouses.

6.3 The role of couples and the couple relationship

The primacy of the couple relationship affected the behavioural profile of birders as presented by existing research by changing the lens through which participants viewed birding, from an individual to a couple perspective. Firstly, it seemed to influence how participants identified themselves and the language that interviewees in particular, used with each other; secondly it appeared to shape the size, and constitution of the bird list through the propensity of some couples to have a joint list, the change in opportunities to pursue new birds and the environments in which participants chased them, and travel behaviour. Male participants, in particular, preferred to watch birds with their spouse, whatever their interests, and many changed their behaviour to facilitate their involvement.

The language of interviews, in particular ‘couple’ language, inclusive pronouns and shared banter demonstrated the closeness or otherwise of spouses, as reported by (Sillars et al. 1997). Some couples highlighted the communication that occurred between them without the need for much dialogue, as mentioned by Evertsson and Nyman (2009). For example Dr. Stellar commented that he and his partner preferred to watch birds by themselves: “we’re always together and we know exactly how we do things together (Dr Stellar)”. Other couples demonstrated that they knew what their partner was thinking by finishing their sentences. Mr. Hove said that when he and his spouse were birding they didn’t “usually think about stress things” … Mrs. Hove then interjected, … “bills”!

Some participants’ identity appeared to be influenced by that of their spouse. A few male interviewees serious about birding but with less interested or experienced spouses, did not care what they were called, thus appearing to demonstrate a shared identity (Acitelli et al., 1999) or ‘role-taking’ (Burke & Cast, 1997). For some the couple relationship also influenced the size of the bird list. Some kept a joint list, meaning a bird would not be recorded until both had seen it (the “half-bird”), thus shortening the list and confining it to birds that both could see. The
lack of specific totals to already comprehensive bird lists, respondents’ reluctance to prioritise the pursuing a new bird that had turned up in their state, and the inclination of 80% of survey respondents to watch all birds rather than rare or new birds. would also have influenced the length of the list.

Fewer male respondents who serious birders were members of the ABA, despite it being a listing organisation (Cooper & Smith, 2010; Scott & Lee, 2009; Wilds, 1994), and its consideration as the premier body for serious birders (Weidensaul, 2008). The Audubon appeared to be more attractive to participants possibly because it allowed for a range of approaches from humanising wildlife to the Serious Bird Alert and possibly fewer competitive listing events than the ABA; respondents and interviewees, including those serious about the activity, reported a range of interests other than listing, some of which they shared with their spouse. The sharing of birding interests was demonstrated in the present study, among respondents and interviewees with all levels of birding interests. Survey respondents, particularly males and those who were ‘serious’ birders, preferred to watch birds with their spouse and actually did so, over half reporting that it brought them “closer together”. Even when they noted that their spouse was less interested or less skilled in birding 88% still prefered to watch birds with them, and overall 96% of survey respondents watched birds with their spouse when they travelled together. These findings disagreed with other studies (for example McFarlane, 1994; McFarlane, 1996; Scott et al. 2005a) that serious birders were less likely to watch birds for social reasons, and with peers rather than those they regarded as less skilled or interested.

Participants often modified their behaviour to encourage their spouses to join in, a finding which extends that of Albers-Miller and Landers (2006) who reported that extreme leisurists in a committed relationship participated in more than one sport and concluded that this was a result of spouses sharing activities, but did not mention any modification. It also extends research by Schindler et al. (2010) which concluded that spouses often collaborated to help a partner reach a goal of more importance to one partner. This present study extended that conclusion to leisure and tourism, but also found that the opposite also obtained; that male birders modified their behaviour to fit their wives’ goals.

The findings of this study supported but also extend Heberlein and Kuentzel’s statement (2008) that marriage could interfere with serious leisure as demonstrated by the couple effect on the size of the bird list. The relationship between spouses with dissimilar interests and skills
hindered their listing of birds, for example those species that could only be found in hard-to-reach or dangerous places, or with much persistence and yet it also aided them in adding overall to their bird list, as was demonstrated by Mrs. Gowe’s discovery of the Hudsonian Godwit and Dr. Hamit’s statement that Mrs. Hamit was a “good spotter. Eubanks (2007) and Schaffner (2011) reported that those who relied less on birding aids such as optics and field guides picked up subtle cues as to a bird’s identity, not readily identifiable by the limited view provided by binoculars and telescopes. According to several studies, women tend to own fewer optics and field guides than men, and therefore it follows that they may be better in some ways at bird identification than those so equipped (this would also hold for those men who do not regularly use binoculars). Eubank (2007) was writing about the need for experts to put away their optics to develop these other skills. The present study extends his and Schaffener’s (2011) findings as well, to those less interested in listing, namely women and birdwatchers, and couples.

Spouses helped with a partner’s serious listing of birds in other ways as well; one survey respondent mentioned that his spouse helped him keep his dozens of lists in order. Other survey respondents, and also interviewees, who were not so serious about seeing new birds, mentioned that they helped keener spouses carry equipment and backpacks, or just provided company, rising early or putting up with serious cold, heat or seasickness to be with their partner. A spouse’s support was particularly important for those whose partners mentioned difficulties with hearing or eyesight or arthritis, and even more serious disabilities, and participants mentioned how they adjusted their behaviour to help. These findings suggest that without the couple relationship birding for these couples would have been more constrained. Again these findings extend that of the birding literature from individuals to couples.

To recapitulate, being in a committed relationship appeared to influence participants’ profiles, by modifying the role that birding played in their lives. The couple relationship lessened the emphasis on listing as simply an individual goal. For some participants listing and birding in general became a venture in which both spouses participated. And while there were features that separated the profiles of men and women, and ‘birders’ and ‘birdwatchers’ they appeared to be on a continuum within the couple, an expression of the third, and shared, identity found within a committed relationship (Stanley, 2011).

6.3.1 The nature and meaning of couples’ birding experiences as travel

The second objective of this study was the exploration of the nature and meaning of couples’ birding experiences as travel. Interviewed couples stated that when they travelled together each
could provide different but complimentary skills that helped make a trip more successful and safe. Some provided details of the ways that they supported each other. For example one would navigate or drive while the other provided the food and drink or one was better at socialising with local people or spotting difficult birds. If one was sick or disabled the other could be trusted to look after them. Some mentioned that the support of a reliable and trusted companion helped make a trip safer thus adding another dimension to Yoo’s (2014) finding, in her study of spouses and international conference travel, of the importance of the presence of a partner, someone to depend on. Female interviewees noted or implied that a supportive spouse was also helpful in a tour group if they could not see a bird that another was pointing out, or as a buffer if they were subject to discrimination from guides or other birders, or were being pushed too hard by an eager guide. Another interviewee commented that a spouse was more likely to look after one than anyone else in a group. One couple interviewed for this study stated that they preferred to share a birding experience with each other rather than a group of people they did not know as well as each other, while another pair spoke of being inseparable.

Spouses often appeared to collaborate on a partner’s goal as Schindler et al. (2010) had found in their studies of sufferers of prostate cancer. One survey respondent mentioned that his spouse helped him keep his dozens of bird lists in order while other spouses helped to carry equipment and backpacks or just provided company, some rising early or putting up with serious cold, heat or seasickness to be with their partner. But a spouse did not even need to be present to offer support. Some interviewed couples displayed empathy when a partner on a sole birding trip or a trip with other birding companions was less than successful. This was particularly obvious in the case of one male participant whose opinion of his wife’s birding efforts did not seem particularly high, and yet when a birding trip with other men turned out to be unpleasant he phoned his wife for emotional support.

In summary, this study found that married participants preferred to watch birds with their spouse, and indeed watched birds more with their partner than with others. They collaborated on a goal even when it meant more to one than the other. When traveling together both contributed to the success and safety of a trip with complimentary skills and abilities or even just emotional support, and in the presence of discrimination by a guide or other birders, a male spouse in particular could offer support.
6.3.2 Differences between spouses in the context of birding leisure and travel

The third objective of this thesis was to identify intra-couple differences, gendered and otherwise, in the context of birding leisure and travel. This study found that participants and their spouses often had different priorities, motivations and interests. Some identified themselves differently from their spouse or reported that they had dissimilar birding interests or that one was more or less serious than the other. Some reported different best experiences while birding and suffered stress or relief from stress under different circumstances. Female participants reported that they were discriminated against, while males did not.

Differences between spouses took a number of forms, some of which appeared relatively benign while others had the potential to cause division. For example, some respondents identified themselves differently from their partner. Most stated that their partner was less serious about birding, and just under half of all survey respondents reported dissimilar birding interests to their spouses’ most citing difference in attitudes towards listing or levels of seriousness. Interviewees reported different best birding experiences to their spouse. Some wanted to pursue new or rare birds while their spouse preferred a more holistic experience. Some stated that they found birding stressful while their spouse found it relaxing. Female participants reported being subject to more discrimination than males.

Forty-four percent of the 25 couples where both spouses answered the questionnaire identified themselves differently (or one gave now answer) while just under half of survey respondents reported that they and their partner had dissimilar birding interests. The most common differences between spouses, also mentioned also by interviewees, were that one listed and the other did not or that one was more or less serious about birding than the other (that is in the way most studies on birders considered ‘serious’, by pursuit, identification and listing); over 80% of male respondents reported that their spouse was less serious about birding. There were other differences between spouses on level of discomfort and risk they were willing to put up with, their reasons for visiting a particular country, what sort of trip they took – whether it was organised or not, and the qualities they sought in a guide when they did use one.

Survey respondents who recorded dissimilarities with their spouse regarding birding interests were less likely to either visit festivals or take specific birding holidays, the generic holiday leading one to suspect that they took the option that would please both. Dissimilar spouses were also less likely to take risks than those who reported that their partner had similar birding interests, possibly because the couples with similar interests felt supported when venturing into
unfamiliar territory. However, dissimilar spouses were also less likely to watch birds together while travelling and to visit the same places as those spouses who shared birding interests with their spouse. More respondents who reported dissimilar interests, and stated that they would travel without their spouse. Still, this did not mean that couples with dissimilar birding interests were not close or did not share an identity. I stayed with one couple who often travelled to separate international destinations, for several days while in the US and spent several days guiding another couple. These spouses had quite different travel interests and yet both couples were very close to each other. They, like other interviewees, had common interests in other areas of leisure and travel, one couple professing an interest in archaeology and wine. Most had children and grandchildren.

Many couples who were interviewed demonstrated differences in their motivations for watching birds. Mrs. Cheams loved being outdoors and experiencing the beauty of birds while her spouse liked the ‘sport’ of chasing birds and the intellectual stimulus involved. The Shells differed in that one spouse was solely interested in birds while his wife also liked flowers. Mrs. Gowe preferred shopping and reading while her husband was a serious birder involved with all aspects of the birding social world. Several interviewed couples, whether they demonstrated a shared identity or not, reported that they were dependent on each other while travelling, often in different ways. Mrs. Lorte’s dependency on her spouse was instrumental while his was largely affective (Levin & Rabrenovic, 2012). Mrs. Lorte, in highlighting for example, the importance of an extra pair of eyes and ears when birding, made that extra help not spouse-specific, but something that a tour group or friends could have provided while to Mr. Lorte the trip was about not only birds but also the relationship.

Some differences between spouses had the potential to impact more negatively than others on their birding leisure and travel. These were differences in stress, the emphasis organised events and tours (and sometimes spouses) placed on the sort of birding men preferred, and discrimination on the part of other birders, guides and sometimes spouses to women and birdwatchers.

Interview participants and survey respondents reported that birding could both cause and relieve stress. Both positions were supported by studies, some of which stated that leisure relieved stress (Braunsberger & Trocchia, 2011; Decker et al., 2012; McFarlane, 1994; Qian et al., 2014), as did tourism, as Chang (2014) found in her study of seniors and domestic nature-based tourism. Conversely, Sheard (1999, p. 184), in his study of birding as sport, and Oddie (1995),
a well known UK birder, noted that birding could also increase stress because a wanted species may fly away before one had the chance to identify it. Some interviewees had expressed stress when companions had disturbed birds before they had had a chance to list them.

This present study extends the existing research on leisure/tourism and stress in three ways. Firstly, some interviewees were stressed because they could not see a bird obvious to others (the ‘bush blindness’ referred to by the Stellars). While this was not necessarily an issue if they were alone or accompanied by a private guide, such ‘bush blindness’ could be a bone of contention in a group according to some female interviewees. Secondly, some female interviewees talked of discrimination they faced from guides or other birders, situations that they found stressful.

The third way in which the present study extends existing research on the topic of stress in leisure/tourism is that it gives a couple perspective. Interviewees often had different experiences of stress from their partner. One interviewee mentioned that he was stressed by birding with his spouse (although he still preferred to watch birds with her). Conversely, she reported that birding with him or a group stressed her because she could not locate a bird that others could see. Some female participants found themselves in situations that potentially caused stress even though they did not mention the word. For example some male participants expected their wives to venture with them in pursuit of birds, into territory that the women regarded as, uncomfortable and even risky.

One interviewed couple differed in their opinions on the behaviour of another couple in a group they toured with in an overseas country, and while neither mentioned the term ‘stress’ it was obvious to me sitting in their living-room with them, that the encounter caused such feelings. The male interviewee said the couple had made unreasonable demands on the group and the guide. His wife, on the other hand, defended the pair stating that she and her husband had behaved in a similar way in the past (although having guided the pair in the Top End I could not find any similarities between their behaviour and that of the couple they described).

Another difference that participants dealt with was that of status. Male birders/listers had higher status than women/birdwatchers/non-listers whose lower status has been demonstrated by the focus of both research and publicity on activities that men preferred, and their treatment by representatives of the formal social world. Female participants, both directly and indirectly, were the subject of discrimination from guides and other birders. Having witnessed and also experienced such behaviour I expect that these interviewees found such experiences stressful.
A very few male interviewees referred to their spouse as a ‘birdwatcher’, the naming occasionally accompanied by criticism of her level of dedication to birding or birding skills. It is feasible to assume that female participants were stressed by these comments on the part of their spouses. One of the potential differences within couples was in their expectations of a guide. For example, more male survey respondents wanted a guide who focussed on hardcore birders while more female respondents wanted a guide who respected the country, could help them relate to the wildlife, knew about fauna other than birds, and had some scientific knowledge. Yet many birding tours, as noted by Che (2003) and Curtin and Wilkes (2005) cater only for those most serious about seeing new birds and listing. While these papers are quite old (and I could find none newer), I can relate some more recent, relevant experience. As a birding guide I had much experience with prominent international tour companies most of which only catered for serious birders. On some such trips I was ordered by the tour leader not to talk about, nor show clients anything, but birds. Other international tour leaders said that anyone interested in anything other than birds should not be on their tour. In line with Curtin and Wilkes’ (2005) finding that there had been a growing demand for more generalised tours I have been asked, over the last few years by tour leaders to provide information on all fauna as well as flora, and a range of other topics. Previous chapter.

While Schindler et al. (2010) wrote of couples working together to achieve a goal, they also reported that for others goals might remain different, either because spouses wished to demonstrate their independence through retaining their personal goals (Berg et al., 2001; Dion & Dion, 1993; Fine & Holyfield, 1996), or because they had developed new ones with changing circumstances, such as retirement or children leaving home. Grunebaum (1979) found that retired men sought to spend more time with their wives who, feeling newly independent after children had left home, preferred to spend their time doing things without their spouse. This study supported Grunebaum’s (1979) finding in that more male respondents preferred to watch birds with their wives than the other way around. Female respondents gave various reasons for not birding with their spouse including that it lacked ‘magic’, or caused ill-feeling when husbands criticised their partner’s birding abilities or dedication.

In summary, survey respondents and interviewees often differed from their spouses in their degree of seriousness about birding, interest in pursuing birds and listing, their motivations for birding and travel, their preferences to watch birds with their partner, and in the experiences that gave them pleasure or otherwise. Some participants, men in particular, appeared to lack insight into their spouses’ abilities and lack of desire to cope with unfriendly terrain and
unpleasant weather and risk, just to see a new bird. Spouses’ different attitudes towards birding and travel were reinforced by their different motivations and experiences, and were sometimes expressed in polarised attitudes towards watching birds and travelling together.

### 6.3.3 Dealing with couple difference

The fourth objective was to understand how couples dealt with the differences in birding interest, level of interests and priorities, between themselves.

For a relationship to survive it needed to remain central. Therefore, couples dealt with difference, and in a number of ways. Participants who were serious birders encouraged the involvement of a less or other-interested spouse by changing or moderating their behaviour. Less interested spouses also modified their behaviour so that it more closely fitted that of their spouse. They negotiated ways of meeting the interests of both or compromised or agreed on compromises. They collaborated on tours and commiserated with partners who had unpleasant experiences while travelling without them. Some cooperated with little sign of negotiation seeming to know each other’s thoughts.

For a relationship to last both partners needed to ensure the relationship was central (Schoebi et al., 2012) rather than the leisure activity. If one spouse had a serious leisure interest and the other was not involved or not supportive, then that interest could impose a social cost on committed relationships, as Butler (2010) found in her study of women equestrians, and Heberlein and Kuentzel (2008) in theirs on male boaters. A small number of survey respondents noted that they were no longer with a partner who did not watch birds, and one interviewee, Mrs Lortes, considered that unless birding was important to the lifestyle of both partners, marriage breakup was inevitable.

This study found that participants whose birding identity, interests, priorities or physical capabilities differed from those of their spouse, still preferred to watch birds with them, and that many modified their behaviour to encourage their spouse’s involvement in the activity. To encourage a less interested or other-interested spouse’s involvement respondents to the questionnaire serious about birding explained more about the birds, or focused more on easily seen, attractive or spectacular birds and less on cryptic-coloured LBJ’s or shy species. They walked at a pace that matched their spouse’s and they ate at nicer restaurants and stayed in better accommodation; Kwan, Eagles and Gebhardt (2008), found that married couples
constituted the largest cohort stayed in the most expensive types of ecolodge in Belize while single visitors more frequently stayed in budget accommodation.

Less interested interviewees and survey respondents reported that they also modified their behaviour. For example, Mrs. Tang went to some effort to learn to identify birds, viewing her success as a best experience. Some female participants went birding when they felt they should be home working while others put up with discomfort on birding trips and sometimes risk in order to be with their spouse. These findings extended those of Schoebi et al. (2012) that behaviour modifications were necessary to maintain a relationship, by placing them in the realm of leisure and tourism.

Participants also negotiated ways of meeting the interests of both parties. One couple chose to spend one trip birding and the next on a cultural tour while another arranged to watch birds one day and visit museums or the opera the next. Dr. Busad stated that he and his wife took cruises with friends who did not watch birds, and that both modified their activities to fit in with each other. A female respondent who also participated in the interviews wrote that she and her spouse compromised in that she took “scary” trips to please him, and they both visited “less scary” places to please her. Some survey respondents who reported that they and their spouse had dissimilar interests took fewer specific birding trips, for example combining birding with a general holiday or business travel. Such disparities may also have been responsible for the change in birding tours from intensive to more generalist that Curtin and Wilkes (2005) wrote of.

Some male interviewees who were serious birders had to compromise more to encourage their wives to join them on birding trips after originally taking them on trips that they did not enjoy. For example, Drs. Busads, Hamits and Vines had expected their spouses to be as willing as they to trudge in very hot or inclement weather over rough terrain, or wait patiently in ‘boring’ landscapes while their spouse searched for a desired bird, or traverse bridges with handrails made of barbed wire all for the same purpose, to see a particular bird. A few female participants had even suffered injury while birding with spouses. Sometimes the experience was so unpleasant that they refused to accompany their spouse on future trips unless they took their spouses’ interests into account. Mrs. Hamit, for example, spelled out the interrogation of her husband to ensure that any future trip he proposed would suit her. Other female participants also negotiated the conditions under which they would accompany their spouse on a birding trip, for example better accommodation or not being expected to rise early. Their husbands
agreed to the new conditions. These findings extend those of Heberlein and Kuentzel (2008) who, although they mentioned the reluctance of wives to join their boating husbands, when they were treated as subordinate, did not mention compromise or negotiation.

Where a spouse was handicapped in some way, or unwell, survey respondents and interviewees did not mention negotiation, but reported that they simply fitted in with their birding and travel desires. Sometimes it was not easy, as one woman with a desperately ill spouse confided. He could no longer travel and did not want her to travel either. Under such circumstances many participants of both genders attempted to help their partners achieve an individual goal, such as seeing a new bird. This finding supports that of Schindler et al. (2010) on goal collaboration in couples where it meant more to one than the other. The present study has extended their conclusions to leisure and tourism. With birding couples it seemed that collaboration could take the form of either physical or emotional support. The Weines demonstrated that couples could share a feeling of happiness when a goal sought by one of them – seeing a particular bird – was reached. Participants could also commiserate when their partner, birding without them, had a miserable time, as did Drs. Whise and Weines and Mrs. Hove. As discussed in Chapter Two, empathy appears to be key to spouses’ satisfaction and their sense of being understood by their partner (Cohen & Cohen, 2012).

This study did not necessarily agree with Ahlstrom’s (2009) pronouncement that couples with conflicting interests were less likely to cooperate. Participant couples with pronounced differences in birding interests and priorities generally cooperated so that both could enjoy their leisure time or trips together, although a few, like the Busads and Hamits, took some time to reach that position. Some cooperated with little sign of negotiation, each appearing to know their partners’ desires and limits with little dialogue. For example, birds were a very important part of Dr. Gowé’s life while for Mrs. Gowé they were not. Still, both were quite at ease with their differences even though it seemed they rarely watched birds together or travelled as a couple for that purpose. Mrs. Gowé’s husband, a birding guide, only invited her along on a bird tour when he was convinced it would be a ‘good trip’ and she generally left him out of her shopping trips. Some participants whose interests were dissimilar to those of their spouse, reported that when travelling with their partner, they hired a local guide who could fulfill both their interests. Dr Busad, who had stated that he was happy to ‘suffer’ to see a new bird, unlike his wife, was one of those who hired a private guide who could attend to both their interests.
The Stellars, too, appeared to know one another’s desires intimately, commenting that they knew “exactly” what the other wanted when they were birding together. Although she was happy to accompany him to watch shorebirds, all of which appeared virtually identical to her, and go birding in bracing cold weather which she hated, he knew when she had reached her limits and then took her home. Evertsson and Nyman (2011) concluded that lack of overt negotiation as may be seen with the Gowes and Stellars was the result of couples continually discussing and negotiating various issues in the course of their daily lives over the years, until it happened effortlessly, as did their ability to accommodate and adapt to each other. Such relationships appear indicative of a shared identity central to their lives (Acitelli et al., 1999; Acitelli, 2007; Stanley, 2011; Swann et al., 2012). The findings of the present study extend the conclusions of these research papers on couples to tourism.

Some results from the present study indicate that centrality of the relationship is not always foremost for it to survive. Several participants, most of them male, took birding trips without their spouse indicating that one partitioning of serious birding from more generalist trips was one way of dealing with intra-spousal difference in birding interest. On those trips they birded long hours (one interviewee said her husband and father-in-law birded once for fourteen hours), put up with discomfort and sometimes took risks to see new species. This sometimes involved international travel. For example Dr Busad commented in the survey, that Mrs. Busad travelled to a US city while he flew to Africa.

Another difference that participants dealt with was that of status. Status was demonstrated by the focus of both research and publicity on activities that men preferred such as the pursuit, identification and listing of birds, particularly rare and new species. This study found that male participants, whose wives had an unpleasant birding experience, when they were not present, used appropriate humour or empathy towards their partner, and sometimes anger at guides and others who behaved inappropriately. This fits with identity fusion theory which in describing the “social glue” of groups within groups also draws a picture of a tightly bonded couple within a birding organisation or tour group (Reeve & Johnson, 2013, p. 317).

Female participants who complained about the discriminatory behaviour of guides or other birders became quite worried about their criticisms reaching the people concerned. This situation appears similar to that mentioned in Lagache (1993) and Mayes & Pini (2010) for example when women divers or those in the mining industry were afraid to speak up. Reporting on the disparagement of women seen to be involved in social worlds dominated by men, they
stated that the women involved were expected to keep their criticisms to themselves. The present study extends such findings to both couples and tourism.

Some male participants also demonstrated discrimination toward their spouses by referring to them overtly or implicitly as a ‘birdwatcher’, the naming sometimes accompanied by criticism of their partner’s level of dedication to birding or birding skills. While these women rarely defended themselves in a forthright manner it appeared from their language, for example, the lack of inclusive pronouns and refusal to always accompany their husband on birding trips, that they were not happy with their spouse’s attitude. Interviewees so treated by their partners (including one man who, while not disparaged, appeared to feel pressured to watch birds with his spouse) also demonstrated resistance in the form of comments often made later in the interview that were aimed at their spouses (albeit sometimes obliquely) resulting, in most case, with their spouses moderating their behaviour.

In summary, participants dealt with differences between them and their spouse by modifying their behaviour, by negotiation, and by partitioning serious birding interests. Male participants in particular, tried to arrange their birding travel through negotiation and compromise so that both spouses enjoyed their time away. Their efforts indicated that the spousal relationship was generally more central than birding to participants’ lives, particularly for men.
CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION

*I found myself suddenly neighbor to the birds; not by having imprisoned one, but having caged myself near them*” (Henry David Thoreau, American essayist, poet and naturalist, 1919, p. 95).

This thesis has focused on US couples who watch birds and travel internationally with their spouse, with birding being part or all of the reason for travel. The findings of this study provide insight into the leisure and travel behaviour and experiences of a sub-population, that of committed, heterosexual couples, which has attracted little attention in the birding leisure/avitourism literature. The key findings laid out in 7.1. Sections 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4 are an integration of the research objectives that demonstrate how they collectively address the overall aim. The original contributions to knowledge and implications of the study are discussed in sections 7.5 and 7.6 followed by identification of the limitations of the study (7.7) and pathways for future research in this area in section 7.8.

7.1 Key findings

Key findings in the present study that were relevant to the objectives were extensions to existing leisure and tourism research or the application of a leisure or tourism perspective to existing research in other areas were:

a) the addition of a female and couple perspective to existing birding research;

b) the preference of male birders, in particular, to watch birds with their spouse no matter what her level of interest or expertise;

c) the application of a leisure and tourism and couple perspective to work and health studies;

d) the extension of a continuum between the genders and between birders and birdwatchers.

e) disagreement with the finding (for example McFarlane, 1994; McFarlane, 1996; Scott et al. 2005a) that serious birders were less likely to watch birds for social reasons, and with peers rather than those they regarded as less skilled or interested. The present study found that male participants in particular preferred to watch birds, and did so, with their spouse;

f) that, while a committed relationship could interfere with serious leisure in the form of collecting bird sightings for the bird list, spouses were also important in helping a more serious partner add to that list.
g) it extended findings on stress in leisure and tourism, adding a couple perspective.

h) it extended findings on compromise and negotiation and goal collaboration to leisure and tourism;

i) it extended findings on discrimination and the silencing of women to birding leisure and tourism.

7.2 Profile of US birders in a committed relationship and the relationship role

The first part of the first research objective was addressed using quantitative data from the questionnaire to construct a demographic profile of US birders in a committed relationship and who travelled internationally with seeing birds being part of all of the reason. Both the quantitative and qualitative data were utilised to form the behavioural profile. The profile is important because it underscores and expands that developed by other researchers in the areas of birding, leisure and tourism, and health and work, and provides crucial understanding of a largely unexplored phenomenon, that of couples who watch birds for leisure and as a reason for travel. Analysis found that the demographic profiles of respondents to the questionnaire differed in some respects to those reported in other research (for example Cole & Scott, 1999; Lee et al., 2014), in that participants were older and better-educated than those mentioned in other studies. However, few existing studies compared the demographics of female and male birders.

Analysis demonstrated that the behavioural profiles of committed participants and couples differed from the dichotomy of serious/casual birder or serious birder/birdwatcher drawn by other studies, in that participants of both genders demonstrated features of both serious birders and ‘birdwatchers’ and serious and non-serious leisure. These features, including joint listing with a partner, the organisations they joined, their motivations for watching birds, the sorts of holidays they took and many of the qualities they expected from a guide. Bird lists appeared to be shorter than in other studies, one probable reason being that those participants serious about listing did not seize every opportunity to chase a new species; at home most prioritised both work and family responsibilities over pursuing new birds opportunistically. This finding was also reflected in the relative lack of interest in rare and new birds, even among those with extensive bird lists.
While this thesis supported other studies demonstrating that men and women who watched birds did differ in some respects, for example in list-keeping and risk-taking and motivations for watching birds, it also found differences not explored in other studies. For example, participants were less interested in organised or specific bird tours than independent travel. It also explored the issue of birding as a male-dominated activity where women often felt they did not belong, or that they were being subject to overt or covert discrimination on the part of other birders and guides. This thesis also demonstrated that the bias directed against those who identified as birdwatchers, most of whom were female, could also be construed as sexist, and that it came from female participants as well as male.

Analysis of the results also found that, while there were features that separated the profiles of male and female participants, and those who identified as birders or birdwatchers, they also appeared to be on a continuum within the couple, in an expression of the third, shared identity found within a committed relationship. The shared identity represented an amalgamation of both gendered and other types of leisure interests, and both social and individual interests.

The role of the couple relationship in affecting the behavioural profile of participants is demonstrated in a number of ways; firstly, by the change in behavior brought about by its formation as reported by survey respondents; secondly the centrality of the couple relationship rather than birding as expressed by role-taking, couple language, participants’ expressions of empathy and interdependency, and the sharing of goals. The couple relationship lessened the emphasis on listing as simply an individual goal, but rather as a venture in which both partners participated, and which served as a vehicle for interconnection.

The findings expose the paucity of research on attitudes towards birding, apart from listing, and underscore the importance of further analysis of other perspectives of women, and men, as both individuals and couples.

7.3 The nature and meaning of couples’ birding experiences as travel

In relation to the the second objective, regarding the nature and meaning of couples’ avitourism experiences, this study found that male and female participants shared many similarities in the types of holiday they mostly took, and their preference for independent travel, although there were differences between those who listed and those who did not. Analysis also found that whatever their interests, spouses could both contribute to the success of a trip by virtue of their different skills and abilities, and the reassurance of reliability and support that the couple
identity and interdependency could bring. The couple relationship was also important in acting as a buffer against companions or guides who behaved in an insensitive way towards those they did not view as serious birders, thereby adding to the evidence that the relationship was central rather than the activity, and given the reluctance of participants to criticise those guides or companions, had the potential to shape spouses’ involvement in birding and travel through avoidance of such situations.

Researchers of serious leisure have reported that the couple relationship worked against serious involvement in an activity, and it may well be that the presence of a spouse with whom one has a committed relationship results, for example, in a moderation of risk-taking behaviour that could result in the sighting of new species. This study also showed that partners played an essential role in the continuation of their spouse’s birding, whatever their level of expertise or interest; this study previously mentioned a survey respondent whose spouse helped him handle 37 bird lists, the tale of the ‘wet godwit’ spotted by a spouse who recognised it as different although she was not a serious birder, and the numerous others whose hearing was failing or had some other form of disability, and relied on their spouse’s abilities. However, the converse was also found to exist in this study; the skills and abilities of the serious birder may add another dimension of birding to a spouse who is not so involved.

7.4 Intra-couple differences in the contexts of birding leisure and travel

The third objective was to identify differences between spouses that could affect their birding leisure and travel. Data analysis found that men and women watched birds in ways that differed according to their primary motives for bird observation (that is whether birding was a casual interest, or a goal in itself or a path to another goal, for example connection with nature or friends or family). More men than women met the criteria for birding as serious leisure as described in other studies that is by commitment, perseverance and achievement in the form of pursuit, identification and listing. Conversely, more women than men demonstrated behaviour in relation to birds and birding that had the attributes of casual leisure, such as needing few skills and not being the source of a sense of achievement. Yet women were serious about birding as well, in similar ways to men in that they pursue, identified and listed birds, but also in the activity serving as a tool of connection to conservation and nature, or to a spouse, or both. And implications that women were ignorant because they did not prioritise bird identification and listing (Moore et al., 2008) is belied by the predominance of female respondents in this
survey who wanted a guide with ‘scientific knowledge’ and ‘knowledge’ of other fauna, rather than just one who could lead them to ‘good’ birds.

Data analysis also shows that one of the qualities women wanted of a guide was for them to be treated as equals and yet in the social world of serious birding, it seemed that no matter how dedicated they were, and whether they listed or not, women were considered unserious about the activity, or not doing it ‘correctly’. Only women reported discrimination on the part of guides and other birders, although as Bo Beolens (2013) has pointed out, disabled people and others also encountered such prejudice. The standing of the birding social world may have been reflected in the stress felt by some female interviewees that they were not birding correctly, and their fears that their criticisms might reach the birders and guides they complained about.

A very few male participants also displayed ignorance and misunderstanding of, and impatience or even unhappiness with, a spouse who did not enjoy taking birding trips which involved discomfort and even ‘suffering’. After such experiences, spouses were more reticent about future trips.

### 7.5 Getting along: Couples’ negotiation of their birding travel

The fourth research objective was to understand how couples negotiated their birding travel. From analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data it was apparent that most participants, including serious birders, preferred to watch birds with their spouse, but also that male participants, including those with spouses reluctant to watch birds with them, wanted their spouse’s company more than females did. In many cases they modified or moderated their behaviour in order to encourage a less serious or other-interested partner to accompany them on birding trips. Given that serious listing (that is listing to the point where one put up with serious discomfort or even risk) was more central to men’s leisure and travel than women’s it appeared that male birders needed to make the most adjustments in order for their spouse to accompany them. One adjustment in particular, was that male participants exhibited greater concern for safety for their partners when travelling, a concern that contradicted the risk-taking of some when they took trips without their partners.

While some participants discussed the negotiation and compromise that enabled them to take trips together that both enjoyed, others demonstrated little need to negotiate, both partners knowing what was acceptable to their spouse. Such knowledge of their partner appeared to be
an incremental process borne of the length and closeness of the relationship and the existence of a couple identity.

While there were obvious differences between male and female respondents and interviewees, analysis of the data showed a blurring of such differences between genders and between spouses, reducing dichotomies such as that between serious and casual leisure and different types of serious leisure to polar points on a continuum. Differences between spouses in some participant couples were complimentary strengths that helped to make trips more enjoyable for both.

7.6 Implications of the study

This study appears to be the first to critically examine the demographics and profiles of married couples who watch birds and their relationship in the context of birding for leisure and for travel. It analyses the responses of couples in a setting supplied by the international context and foreign environments and guides and operators whose practices cater mostly to male individuals. The present study fills important gaps in the literature of couple relationships, and of leisure and travel in the context of avitourism/wildlife tourism/ecotourism.

This study challenges the dominant profile of the serious birder as a male who pursues new and rare birds, taking trips that are solely about birding, and sometimes putting himself at risk for that next new bird. This study highlights the profile of the female birdwatcher to whom birding is a connection to either nature or her partner, or both, and the continuum between the two. It draws a new perspective of the bird list as, not just as a measure of competence, but also as a tool for enhancing the couple identity. It challenges the perspective of the birder (female and male) as locked into a certain style recognised as birding ‘correctly’. A key finding is the length and breadth of the effect of the couple relationship on birding for leisure and travel.

The present study has implications for women and couples at leisure and travel, and the organisations, authorities and businesses that serve them. Birders have long received information on guides and destinations by firstly word of mouth, and then the internet. The recent growth of the sharing economy as well as the increased visibility of women in the US augers well for long ignored female birders and for couples, and not so well for those organisations, authorities and businesses still focused on the individualist male birder/lister.
These findings also have implications for research dealing with birding leisure, avitourism and ecotourism in that they demonstrate the existence of important, but largely invisible voices – not only those of women, but men, seniors, the disabled and others who do not fit the profile drawn by Bo Beolens (2013), of the guides running the trip that suits them, not their clientele. In the social world of birding women have been largely ‘invisible voices’ as have others such as disabled and Indigenous people. There is a need for inclusion of their and other perspectives in both avitourism and ecotourism research, to modify the Western/male-centric dichotomy of utilitarian/aesthetism views of the natural environment, and add balance and counter-balance to the connection to wildlife, by legitimising a combination of utilitarian, familial and spiritual motives.

These findings contribute to the debate on serious leisure, for example the findings of Scott and Godbey (1992; 1994) that what was taken to be casual leisure (McFarlane, 1994; Stebbins (2001; 2011; 2015), – involvement in an informal recreational activity for the sake of social/familial relations which largely took place in people’s homes (Scott & Godbey, 1992, 1994) – could be serious. The present study has extended the knowledge of the contribution of women to birding as raised by researchers such as Cooper and Smith (2010), Lee et al. (2008) and Moore et al. (2008), by adding a couple perspective. As well it indicates that attitudes towards what has been deemed casual leisure, could affect both partners with possible ramifications for birding organisations and the tourism industry.

The findings also contributed to the theory of social identity. Participant couples demonstrated three identities, two personal and one shared. Homogenisation was displayed in the proclivity of couples to adopt the same identification, that is, either birder or, less commonly, birdwatcher. Identity fusion theory was demonstrated in the attachment to the couple relationship which shaped birding behaviour, particularly that of male participants, except perhaps when they took birding trips without their spouse, suggesting the presence of a continuum.

Dyadic power theory was demonstrated by those participants who expected a less, other-interested spouse to fit in with their birding desires. Nonetheless, dyadic power was not all encompassing, given the desire of most participants, particularly men, to watch birds with their spouse no matter what their level of interest in the activity, and therefore this theory is modified by the social identity theories. A continuum would demonstrate the shifting nature of dyadic power theory depending on the level of dependency within the couple.
The present study has important implications for further research on women who watch birds and couple relationships, leisure and travel. It also has implications for those governments and business in their efforts to develop, build and manage avitourism/nature-based travel and ecotourism product, and for birding and natural history/conservation organisations. Although serious birders may spend more money annually than casual birders or ‘birdwatchers’, on trips, they may not provide valuable return tourism once they have seen the species they seek (Curtin & Wilkes, 2005), and their numbers are relatively small. The study has implications for the culture of birding and avitourism, by exposing the need for changes within organisations, government and the market to accommodate women, couples and other alternative voices. Just because women’s leisure interests may be relatively invisible that does not mean that they do not exist or can be ignored. Miller and McGee (2000) pointed out those employed in managing wildlife may not be aware that men and women’s values concerning wildlife differ. Moore et al. (2008, p. 101) also noted the ramifications that such ignorance may have for most US birders visiting parks:

Women make up more than half of the 46 million birdwatchers in the United States and this number is very likely to rise as the population ages. It is incumbent of planners, wildlife and conservation program managers, and researchers to consider and engage this important segment of this popular and growing activity whenever possible. This will take effort because most planners and managers are themselves men, and inclined to approach their responsibilities from a male perspective.

As this thesis demonstrates, if one spouse is affected adversely by their experience of avitourism then in view of the couple relationship, it is likely that both are affected. An avitourism industry that treats women as invisible and listing as the ‘correct’ way to watch birds risks losing their cliente, not only women, but perhaps the spouses who prefer to watch birds with them. The marginalisation of women birders may mean a couple reduce their use of organised tours, opting instead to travel by themselves. They may also, at times, hire a private guide, one with the expertise to serve the desires of both. Such couples look for a knowledgeable guide but also one who will treat both as equals. That person may well be outside the formal tourism industry. The avitourism industry and governments that concentrate on attracting ‘the lister’ or ‘the twitcher’ need to realise the primacy of that relationship, and to realise that joint happiness could well be the major priority when a couple travel together, rather than simply that of individual contentment and the attempt to fulfil that drive to see the next new bird. Failure to recognise the primacy of the relationship as, for example, is demonstrated in this thesis by the desire of male birders to watch birds with their partner, has ramifications for all businesses and
CONCLUSION

governments involved in bird-related events, avitourism, ecotourism and wildlife tourism in general. In particular it will adversely affect those serious listing tours of the kind that Curtin and Wilkes (2005) wrote about.

Another implication of this study is the possible effect avitourism has on the sharing economy. Long before the establishment of BirdingPal and fatbirder.com birders sought information on guides through friends, colleagues and the birding/conservation organisations to which they belonged. Therefore, the implications for marketing to meet the desires of birding couples may best be done through both these well-established informal links complimented by the mechanisms of the burgeoning sharing economy. There is likely to be resistance from the formal tourism world and the mechanisms already in place that ensure the continued dearth of female and Indigenous guides, for example. Given the potential ramifications for bodies that focus on the interests of male birders it is in the interests of stakeholders such as birding organisations, governments and businesses involved with avitourism to do what they can to remove the stereotypes.

The findings of this thesis can be extrapolated to many others at leisure or travelling – disabled people, seniors, and families with children, and couples in other areas of tourism, and people of other nationalities, namely Australian and British and possibly Chinese as well because of the importance of personal, collaborative relationships to Chinese people too (De Crème, 2015; Faitar, 2006). Some of the literature explored on attitudes toward women came from Australian and British sources. Perusal over many years of sites such as the birding-aus chatline have demonstrated firstly, the focus on identification and listing, and secondly, women’s overall lack of involvement. My personal experience as a birder, a guide and the author of bird books, has demonstrated that birding in Australia is still male-dominated. This may change with the growing Asian birding market and the burgeoning sharing economy.

7.7 Limitations of the study: Final reflections

This study posed some challenges, namely that of researching couples who watch birds and travel from the other hemisphere. The lack of research on women who watch birds and couples, in particular, left gaps in the knowledge that I was not sure the present study could fill.

I was able to reach a suitably-sized sample for the survey questionnaire, although the use of snowball sampling has limitations in that it is not based on overall population statistics and respondents are self-selected, thereby resulting in a non-representative sample of the
CONCLUSION

population. For example, the participants in this study were mostly seniors and it may be that a younger sample would show quite different results.

There were difficulties in finding enough people to agree to an interview, mainly because of the limitations mentioned earlier, for example, that of potential interviewees not being available because they were travelling or by not signing or returning consent forms. Telephone interviews were out of the question for some who had hearing difficulties. Another limitation of both questionnaires and interviews conducted by email, as some were, is that they do not allow for observation of participants. However, my insider knowledge, both as a married birder and a friend or acquaintance of many couples interviewed, was of value. The lack of research on women who watched birds and couples in particular left gaps in the knowledge that I was not sure the present study could fill. Only the research available on couples, mostly in health and leisure studies, plus my three decades in the industry, enabled me to complete this work.

Other limitations involved the actual questions, for example the desire to agree regardless of what was being asked and the tendency of female participants to understate and the opposing trait in men to overstate. I realised too late that the survey could have been improved, while my questions were checked in a pilot study the tyranny of distance along with poor internet connections and my inexperience meant they were not as clear as they could have been. That the list of needed improvements is not longer is due to friends and colleagues in the US who perused the questions before I launched the studies. The multi-method approach gave me some leeway to make good some of the mistakes listed above, but probably the opportunity to make more (fortunately I cannot think of any outstanding at the moment).

7.8 Directions for future research

Being an exploratory survey of birding couples this study has exposed gaps in the literature, namely the dearth of research on non-listing, non-lethal, bird-related activities and travel, and women and couples. ‘Birdwatching’ as serious leisure is worthy of as much study as ‘birding’ has been, both in relation to its contribution to the knowledge of bird behaviour, the knowledge of human/avian relationships, and the role of the activity in the couple relationship. The desire to connect with nature is strong; indeed among most participants in this survey it was paramount, as was the preference of those who took part to watch birds with their spouse, and to moderate or modify their behaviour to encourage their participation. Serious leisure as a vehicle for commitment in a relationship, role-taking among couples whose leisure interests differ, the role of interdependency in travelling couples, and the potential for the focus of
CONCLUSION

birding to change with development of the relationship, age, employment status, and to vary by
gender are all areas for future studies. There is also scope for further study on younger birders. Such studies may find that they travel differently to seniors, given the probable time, work and funds discrepancies between these cohorts, and the greater likelihood of them having dependent children.

Other potential areas for research are in investigations of the role that women and couples have played in the changing nature and fortunes of bird tour operators and ecotourism and formal wildlife tourism in general. Women and couples are economic forces to be reckoned with; given the relatively small number of birders involved in serious listing. Apart from the injustice of ignoring large segments of the population, it would be in the commercial interests of all involved in tourism to make the industry more attractive to both women and couples. The propensity of male participants in this study to join the Audubon rather than the ABA, and of the couple to travel independently of guides and avitour operators are other potential areas for research. There is no causative link in this study and therefore it remains a potential subject for follow-up.

The committed couple appears to be the crucible for bringing together the elements of casual and serious leisure and travel, and of leisure as a goal in its own right or as a vehicle for other goals such as connection to nature or to spouse. Within the committed relationship of two people the objectivity and utilitarianism of listing and its antonyms of subjectivity and connectedness, can meet and influence each other. The categories of serious/male/birder/lister and casual/female/birdwatcher/non-lister form a continuum between partners within a committed relationship, although changing stereotypes in the social world will only occur incrementally. Thus this research on spouses with differing interests and perspectives and types of understanding also demonstrates how they can be brought together thus introducing another area of potential research, the couple as a model of interaction between disparate modes of knowledge.

This thesis examined birding through the lens of the couple experience, and found that the couple’s relationship was generally central to a married birder’s lifestyle rather than the activity, and that when it came to serious birding, men in particular would change their behaviour to fit in with a less interested spouse. The tendency, particularly of male participants, to prefer to be with their spouse and moderate their behaviour to bring that about, also suggests a transition in the birding world. While birding as leisure and travel continues to present a largely objective
face to the world, in that listing still reigns, there are indications of transforming influences resulting in greater acceptance of bird-related activities more commonly enjoyed by women. These include a relegitimation of a broader view of avifauna as a vehicle for connecting to nature and to significant others. Perhaps this is the modification in core beliefs that Ridgeway and Correll (2004) stated was needed to bring about cultural change.

This study found that, given the primacy of the couple relationship, the desire to participate in activities and travel together, generally took priority among participants. Their shared identity and/or interdependency mean that travel, whether birding is involved or some other activity such as visiting a museum or watching some cultural event, is pursued through the lens of that relationship. Yet, tour operators, guides, organisations, and the managers and providers of tourism and recreational facilities catering for birders have ignored the centrality of such relationships.

The reluctance of women birders in particular to join in what they perceived to be male-oriented activities, and the perception that the pursuit, identification and listing of birds has more merit than quiet study, appreciation, birding to connect with nature or to spend time with a loved one, has ramifications for birding organisations and tour operators and park managers. Without change they may not lose not only women clients but their spouses as well.
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American birdwatching couples Survey  10/05/12 9:27 AM

Section 1: Cover Page

I invite you to participate in a PhD research project conducted by myself, Denise Goodfellow, a doctorate student at Charles Darwin University (CDU), Northern Territory, Australia.

The purpose of this study is to identify and gain understanding of the motives and characteristics of American couples who travel internationally to watch birds.

Do they influence each other’s behaviour and travel, and if so how? Does their behavior and interests as a couple differ from those of individual birders. Through your participation I hope to be able to cast some light on what appears to be a little researched subject.

The questionnaire should take forty minutes to an hour to complete.

I know of no risks to your participating in this research. For example, you will not be identifiable in the results, and your information will remain confidential. Participation in this study is voluntary. Even, if you decide not to participate, you are welcome to see the results of the research. If you withdraw, any data you have provided will not be used in the project.

Please contact me at goodfellow@bigpond.com.au if you have any questions or concerns about the questionnaire or this project.

For concerns after completing the questionnaire, (concerns, for instance, on how the data will be used), you may contact the Executive Officer, Charles Darwin University, NT, Australia, Human Research Ethics Committee on 61 8 89467064, or by email <cdu-ethics@cdu.edu.au>. She can pass on any concerns to appropriate officers within the University.

Thank you

Denise Goodfellow
**Section 2**

**Do you call yourself a?**

Birdwatcher

Birder

**How long have you been watching birds?** ___________________________________________

**Do you keep a bird list?**

No

Yes

If yes, how many birds are on your longest list? _______________________________________

**Do you belong to any birding or conservation groups?**

No

Yes

If yes, which ones? _________________________________________________________________

**If yes, why did you join this/these group(s)?**

Friends or family are members

Policy on conservation

Concentration on birds

Opportunity to join others for birding

Other (please specify) _____________________________________________________________
What types of birds do you particularly like to watch? (check all that apply)

- Raptors
- Colorful birds
- Songbirds
- Shorebirds
- Rare birds
- New birds
- All birds
- Other (please specify) ____________________________________________

What would you do if a bird never recorded before turned up in your state?

- Go immediately to find the bird no matter how far away it is
- Only go after the bird if it is within a few hours' drive
- Fit going after the bird around my work and/or family
- Ignore it
- Other ____________________________________________

How important to you are the following reasons for watching birds

- Not important
- Slightly important
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important

- To see birds that I have not seen before
- To test myself
- To experience risk
- To share an experience with those I care for
To compete with other birders

To be away from crowds

To feel a special connection with nature

To improve my birding skills and abilities

To teach others

To be in a spiritual place

To photograph birds

Other (please specify) ____________________________________________

Have you ever felt in danger while birding?

No

Yes. If yes, can you expand on this? ____________________________________________

Have you ever seen or known of anyone putting him/herself at risk to see a new bird?

No

Yes. If yes, can you expand on this? ____________________________________________

Section 3

This part of the survey is about people who watch birds with others

Do you watch birds with other people?

Never (go to Section 5)

Sometimes

Often

Always
If you watch birds with other(s), who do you most watch birds with?

Your spouse/partner

Friend(s)

Other relatives

Guide

Others (please specify) __________________________________________________________

If you watch birds with other people, what are the reasons (check all that apply)

Safety

Companionship

My companions and I have fun together

I find birding exciting and want my companion(s) to feel the same way

I find birding exciting and so does my partner/spouse/friend

My friends and I take some time to discuss our problems

My companion(s) concentrate on me more

I don't wish to feel left out

I am concerned about my spouse/friend/partner going alone

I like to compete

Birding brings my spouse/partner and me closer together

Other (please specify) __________________________________________________________

If you watch birds with people other than your spouse/partner, do you prefer that person(s) to be:

Someone with the same birding skills as you?

Someone more experienced than you?

Skill level does not matter
Someone less experienced than you?

Are you married or have a committed relationship with a partner?

No

Yes

If yes, how many years have you been together? ________________________________

Section 4

These questions are for those birders who have a spouse or partner. Others please go to Section 5.

On average, how much time a week do you spend on hobbies (excluding birding) with your spouse/partner?

No time

1-5 hours

6-12 hours

1-2 days

3 or more days

If you watch birds with your spouse/partner, how much time during the week would you spend watching birds together on average?

1-5 hours

6-12 hours

1-2 days

3 or more days

If you watch birds with your spouse/partner do you have similar interests eg do you both list new birds?

Yes

No. If no, how do your interests differ? ____________________________________________
If you watch birds with your spouse/partner, are they

A serious birder

A casual birder

Interested in all wildlife

Is your spouse/partner:

Less interested in birding than you?

More interested in birding than you?

If your spouse/partner is reluctant to watch birds do you try to persuade him/her to join in?

No

Yes

If you have a spouse or partner, does s/he travel with you?

No

Yes

If you and your spouse/partner travel together, do you watch birds together?

Always

Usually

Rarely

Never

If your spouse/partner travels with you, is s/he interested in the same activities as you (apart from birding)?

Always

Usually

Rarely

Never
If your spouse/partner travels with you, is he interested in visiting the same places as you?

Yes

Sometimes

No

If no, how do the places you wish to visit differ? __________________________________________

If your spouse/partner wasn't interested in birding, would you travel without her/him?

No

Yes

Do you prefer to have your spouse/partner watching birds with you?

No

Yes

If you watch birds with your spouse/partner do you ever change your behavior to fit in with him/her?

No

Yes

If yes, how do you change your behavior? ________________________________________________

Has your attitude towards birding changed because you watch birds with your spouse/partner?

No

Yes
If your attitude towards birding has changed because of your partner/spouse, in what way has it changed (tick all that apply)?

I now keep a bird list

I don't keep a bird list anymore

I am more careful about where I go birding and what I do there

I am less worried about where I go birding and what I do there

I buy more expensive birding equipment

I am more careful about what I spend on birding equipment

I worry more about safety

I worry less about safety

I socialise with other birders more

I socialise with other birders less

I see more of my friends

I see less of my friends

Other_________________________________________________________________________________________

If your attitude towards birding has changed, what do you think has influenced this? __________________________________________________________ __________________________
__________________________________________________________ __________________________

If your spouse/partner goes birding alone, do you every worry about him/her (circle one)?

Not at all worried

Slightly worried

Moderately worried

Very worried

Extremely worried
Section 5

These questions are about birding trips when you are away from home for at least one night.

When you take vacations, do you

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Usually</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Travel to birding festivals?

Take vacations specifically to go birding?

Go birding when on vacation or travelling

Have you travelled to overseas countries for birding?

No

Yes

If yes, what is your favorite overseas country for birding?

Why is this country your favorite?

What country would you most like to visit for birding?

Why would you like to visit this country (check all that apply)?

New birds

Interesting birds

Other interesting fauna and/or flora

Ancient cultures

Indigenous people I would like to meet

It is a safe country

People speak my language

Other (please specify)
Why haven't you visited this country?

Too expensive

Don't have enough time

Partner/spouse doesn't want to go

Concerns about safety

Haven't got around to it yet, but plan to do so

Other (please specify) _____________________________________________________________

What else do you do on birding trips (check all that apply)? Do you like to watch

Large mammals

Small mammals

Reptiles

Amphibians

Butterflies

Plants

Other (please specify) _____________________________________________________________

Do you like to visit

Historical sites

Galleries

Friends and relatives

Areas of great wildlife diversity

Areas of great natural beauty

People of other cultures

Other (please specify) _____________________________________________________________
Do you travel (circle those that apply)?

Never  Sometimes  Usually  Always

As part of an organized tour group?

Independently, that is, not with an organized tour group?

With friends or colleagues?

Alone or with a spouse/partner?

Are you more likely to travel with a guide if your spouse/partner accompanies you?

No

Yes/maybe

If yes or maybe, then why? __________________________________________________________

Is there any country(s) you would like to watch birds in, but haven’t because your spouse/partner didn’t wish to go?

No

Yes

If yes, what country/countries? ______________________________________________________

Section 6

This section is about guides.

Do you use guides or tour operators when birding in the US?

No

Sometimes

Often

Usually

Always
If you are birding in foreign countries, do you use

International tour operators or guides?

Local tour operators or guides?

A mix of the above?

Neither. **If neither, then why not?** _______________________

How important to you are the following qualities in a guide? (circle all that apply)

Not important Slightly important Moderately important Very important Extremely important

Knowledge of birds

Knowledge of other fauna

Scientific knowledge

A guide who treats you like an equal

A guide who focuses on "hardcore" birders

Who can show you beautiful scenery

Who is accredited

Who relates to the wildlife

Who treats the country with respect

Who introduces you to his/her family

Who helps you "connect" to the natural environment

A guide who lectures you

Who freely shares knowledge

Who is amusing

Who doesn’t talk too much

A guide with whom you feel safe
A guide of your own culture

Other (please specify) ____________________________________________ ____________________________________________

If you have used a guide, have you kept in touch with that guide afterwards?

No

Yes

If yes, why have you kept in touch? ____________________________________________

Section 7

What year were you born? ____________________________________________

What is the highest level of education you completed?

Primary school

Secondary school

College

Master's degree

Doctorate

Life experience

Other (please specify) ____________________________________________

Are you?

Employed

Homemaker

Semi-retired

Retired

Other (please specify) ____________________________________________
We would like to know where you live?

City/Town: ___________________________

State: _____________________________ [insert state]

ZIP/Postal Code: _____________________

Country: ___________________________

If you would like to receive the combined results of this survey, please fill in your name and contact details.

Name: __________________________________________

Email Address: ___________________________________

Please feel free to add any additional thoughts or comments you may have regarding birding travel. I am very interested in your thoughts and suggestions.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX B: RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

The Attitudes and Motivations of American Couples who Travel for Birdwatching

Name of researcher: Denise Goodfellow

Tick the box that applies, sign and date and return to the researcher. Please note that each person in the couple needs to complete and sign a separate consent form, and return to Denise either by scan, email, or fax.

- I agree to take part in the Southern Cross University research project specified above. Yes No
- I understand the information about my participation in the research project, which has been provided to me by the researcher. Yes No
- I agree to be interviewed by the researcher, as part of a couple, either by email, Skype or by phone. Yes No
- I agree to allow the interview to be recorded (if conducted by Skype or phone) Yes No
- I agree to make myself available for further interview if required. Yes No
- I understand that my participation is voluntary. Yes No
- I understand that I can cease my participation in the interview at any time. Yes No
- I understand that my participation in this research is anonymous. Yes No
- I understand that any information that may identify me, will be de-identified at the time of analysis of any data. Yes No
- I understand that all information gathered in this research is confidential. It will be kept securely for 7 years at the University. Yes No
- I am aware that I can contact the researcher or her supervisor at any time with queries. Their contact details are provided to me. Yes No
- I understand that this research project has been approved by the SCU Human Research Ethics Committee Yes No

Participant’s name: ____________________________________________________________

Participant’s signature: _________________________________________________________

Date: __________________________

Please tick this box and provide your email or mail address below if you wish to receive a summary of the results:

Email: ________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Remind couples about signing the consent forms individually and returning to me by email (scan) or fax.

If interviewed by email, each member of the couple will need to answer the questions together at the same time, but show who is typing (i.e., indicate name before answering).

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

a) Should I call you ‘birdwatchers’ or ‘birders’ or even birder’s companion?
b) If there a difference between these three terms, what do you think it is?
c) What other hobbies do you have?
d) What do you like about birdwatching?
e) What was your best/worst birdwatching experience?

BIRDWATCHING BEHAVIOUR

a) Are there any sorts of birdwatching behaviour that you wouldn’t do e.g. using tapes, disturbing nesting birds?
b) Are there any types of birders you don’t like to be with?
c) Does birdwatching help people’s stress levels?

GENDER DIFFERENCES

Do you think men and women have different attitudes towards birdwatching/wilderness?

AGE DIFFERENCES

a) Do you think that growing older changes birders’ attitudes/behaviour?

b) Do you think older birders without spouses/partners differ in any way from older birders with partners?

SPOUSE/PARTNER EFFECT

a) Should one try to involve an unwilling spouse/partner/friend in birdwatching? If so, how?
b) Does having your spouse/partner birdwatching with you make a difference? If so, what?
c) Do you and your spouse/partner ever have any disagreements about birdwatching, e.g. where to go? How do you resolve them?

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

a) Have you travelled to other countries for birdwatching?
b) If you have used a guide, did s/he treat you and others of the opposite sex, differently?
c) Have you ever used an Indigenous guide?
APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM

8 April, 2010

Ms Denise Goodfellow

Dear Ms Goodfellow

APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF ETHICS CLEARANCE, REF. NO. H09004

The Charles Darwin University Human Research Ethics Committee has approved your application for renewal of ethics clearance for your project titled An analysis of the motives and characteristics of American birdwatchers who travel as couples. Please find attached a notice of clearance.

The expiry date of ethics approval for your project is 25 March 2011. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that ethics approval is renewed prior to the expiry date. If further renewal is necessary, you will need to submit a progress report including a statement of compliance with ethical requirements, and detailing any proposed or actual changes to the project, which may affect its ethical acceptability. A Final Report will be due upon completion of the project. Renewal/Final Report forms may be downloaded from the Web at: http://www.cdu.edu.au/research/office/renewal_final_04.rtf or obtained from the Research Office.

If any significant alterations to your project are contemplated, or if any matters arise which may conceivably affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project, you are required to immediately notify the Human Research Ethics Committee.

Yours sincerely

Paxxy Purich
Executive Officer

for Professor Robert Wasson
Chair, CDU Human Research Ethics Committee
APPENDIX E: Page 240, Birds of Australia’s Top End


**BLUE-FACED HONEYEATER**

*Entomyzon cyanotis*

30 cm moderately common on outskirts of Darwin

Flight: an olive and white bird with a white patch on the dark underwing (a feature of the local race *albipennis*).

Call: an insistent, high-pitched, 'hweet' and a descending 'peeyr', often delivered at dawn. Both are absolutely penetrating at close quarters.

Breeding: Sept - Jan. Blue-faced Honeyeater nests in loose colonies, often re-using old nests of Grey-crowned Babbler or Magpie-lark, which are relined. More than one brood may be raised in a season. It breeds cooperatively, with birds other than the parents helping to raise young. Habitat: open forest, pandanus, wetlands, fringes of monsoon forest, rural gardens, orchards. Where found: throughout Top End and islands. Range: N, E and S Australia; New Guinea. Kunwinjku name: Madjirdmadjird. Other name: Banana-bird. Birdwatching hint: this species mostly avoids inner Darwin but is common in the rural area around orchards and in beer gardens of pubs, where it and the following species bug drinkers for potato chips. Common in our Palmerston garden where it searches the bark of Swamp Mahogany for insects after rain. Less common in drier areas but is occasionally found as far south as Warloch Ponds.

Author's note: Hilary Thompson and I calculated that a nestling we raised (see picture) peeped three million times in three weeks. We named it after the then Commissioner for Taxation, Trevor Boucher. This little bird became a substitute for tick wash and flea powder, as she would hop all over our dog Lily gleaning these pests, even probing around her nostrils and eyelids while our dog lay sleeping. After Trevor fledged we trained a domestic fowl to take over the position of Lily's gleaner! The plumage of Blue-faced Honeyeater resembles that of the much smaller White-throated Honeyeater, and this may not be because of convergence – according to a paper by Amy Driskell and Les Christidis the genus *Entomyzon* is closely related to *Melithreptus* (White-throated Honeyeater is the only member of this genus found in the Top End).³