



NEWS-SHEET No. 104

AUGUST 1984

"To encourage the observation
and study of birds of the
Toowoomba area"

toowoomba bird club

Postal Address

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Club Officers

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Annual Subscription

Ordinary/Family membership \$8.00
Student membership \$4.00

Activities

Field Outing and Monthly Meeting - 4th Sunday of each
month - usually leave from Pigott's Car Park at 7.30 am.

Camping trips, film and slide evenings.

News-sheet

Published monthly, before the outing. Articles have a dead-
line of the last day of the month and should be mailed to
the editor.

EDITORIAL

As a supplement to the Q.O.S. nesletter this month came an advertisement for a birdwatching week at Carnarvon National Park. I drool as I read the programme - spotlighting, audio visual identification, photography, birdbanding, etc.

But, WHEN? 7th - 13th October! UGH! Zap go any ideas I had of participating. Being a teacher I must holiday during school vacations. Many of these recreational courses are outside that time.

The RAOU runs some particularly good ones at their Bird Observatories and they're economically priced. Can I get to any of them? Not a spider's whisper of a chance. I'd love to attend one on bird studies at Rotamah, Victoria. That's in the first week of the Spring vacation, again I miss out as teachers have to work for the first three days and the course is only four days long.

My spirits are not dampened, and I'm eagerly awaiting the announcement of the December courses. They do have some in December, don't they?

Members interested in any of these courses should contact me for more information.

Lesley Beaton, Editor

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N e w T o o w o o m b a B i r d

241 SPOTLESS CRAKE (Porzana tabuensis) 8.8.84

In creek, about 5 km east of Withcott on Spa-Iredale Road,
Pat McConnell, Michael Atzeni.

Dark grey underparts; darker upperparts; pink-red legs; bright red eye; dark greyish bill. Extremely secretive, but very vocal when tape recording of their call was played, a single sharp note being the most common call. (See article.)

A CREEK FULL OF CRAKES

Following up a "crake-like" call heard by Pat McConnell at the above location two days earlier, Pat and I visited the reed-filled creek armed with a tape recording of this species' call, but not having much faith that this very small and secretive bird was the 'owner' of the call Pat had heard previously.

To our surprise, the birds responded to the call, but it took about 45 minutes before we obtained our first glimpse. To obtain better views we placed the recorder on reeds where cattle had pushed through. This meant the crake had to pass over a flattened section of the reed bed when checking the source of the recording. We obtained several glimpses of this secretive bird as it darted from one section of cover to another. At least ten different birds were heard calling in the time we were there.

Without our tape recording, it is unlikely we would have seen this seldom-observed species. However one wonders just how common they possibly are, and furthermore how long they have been present in this area.

A CREEK FULL OF CRAKES CONT'D

We certainly plan to survey other reedy areas in the Toowoomba/Helidon region, and to check any successful areas regularly. The probability that other species such as the Australian (Spotted) Crane and Lewin's Rail, not yet on the Toowoomba Bird Club list, are in the area has inspired an eagerness to find these species. Pat is currently organising a tape recording of the Lewin's Rail through friends in Brisbane.

Anyone interested in seeing the Spotless Crane should contact me on 35 9433.

Michael Atzeni

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THE RON COLPUS MEMORIAL LIBRARY

After the recent death of member Ron Colpus, his sons Tony and Pat have donated Ron's collection of bird and nature books to the Toowoomba Bird Club. On behalf of the Club, I wish to thank Ron's family for their generous gift. Lesley has covered the books and it is hoped that members will make use of this Library. Various books will be brought to outings and meetings where members will have the opportunity to borrow them. Titles include:

Australian.

A Field Guide to Australian Birds I - P. Slater
A Field Guide to Australian Birds II - P. Slater
Complete Book of Australian Birds - Reader's Digest
What Bird is That? - N. Cayley
Australian Bush Birds - H. Frauca
Foliage Birds - G. M. Adams
Bird Wonders of Australia - A.H. Chisholm
Birds of Victoria: The Ranges - Gould League
Australian Waterfowl
Water Birds of Australia - G. Beruldsen
Australian Nature Studies - J. A. Leach
Grey Headed Albatross (mounted color photo)

Indian

The Book of Indian Birds - S. Ali
Animal Life - Bhatt

British

Hamlyn Guide to Birds of Britain & Europe - Bruun
The Bird Table Book - Soper
British Birds: Thrushes & Blackbirds - Willett
Birds & Their Young (Player)
Natural History of the Garden - M. Chinery

Marilyn Jacobs, President

--ooOoo--

To Michael, re his article, in the June 1984 Newsletter. I have found that a stay of 2 days in almost any locality "turns out" about 30 birds without actually going out to bird-watch. The balcony of my son's unit in St. Lucia, Brisbane, where we were staying, gave us about 40 birds, including Rainbow Bee-Eaters, Black Bittern, Pheasant Coucal, Hooded Robin, Brahminy Kites and a short walk up the local "Village" of St. Lucia gave us 5 Crested Hawks in a little group - one perched on the roof rack of a parked car.

PEGGIE BEATON

NOTES from "ROSENEATH"

In January of this year, I married Bruce and settled into farming life south-west of Pittsworth. At the same time we became members of the Bird Club and started taking notice of the birds in our closer home-block areas.

Here is a short list of the birds we've seen this year (1984). Some are visitors and others are permanent dwellers.

Non-passerine - Australasian Grebe*, Pacific Heron (?), White-faced Heron, Sacred Ibis, Straw-necked Ibis (seasonal), Royal Spoonbill, Magpie Goose, Wandering Whistling-duck*, Pacific Black Duck(?), Hardhead, Stubble Quail*, Dusky Moorhen(?), Masked Lapwing*, Crested Pigeon*, Galah*, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo*, Pale-headed Rosella, Harrier(?), Australian Kestrel, Little Eagle(?), Swift Parrot(?), Pheasant Coucal*, Barn Owl*, Tawny Frogmouth*, Laughing Kookaburra.

Passerine - Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike*, Willie Wagtail*, Noisy Miner*, Double-barred Finch*, Common Mynah*, Grey Butcherbird*, Pied Butcherbird*, Australian Magpie*, Pied Currowong*, Torresian Crow*.

* Permanent dwellers; (?) Unsure sightings.

Di Muirhead

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OUTING to WITHCOTT NORTH - 22 July 1984

"Cloudy, with a little mist" was the report from Withcott as four of us from fog-bound Toowoomba, with Pittsworth members Diane and Bruce Muirhead, gathered at Pigotts car-park for our monthly outing.

We were joined in Withcott, with fig-birds calling nearby, by Ann Shore and her French Godson, Marc Espitalie, at Ann's house in Jones Road for her to lead us to some of her favourite local haunts. As gentle rain was by then falling, it was a good day to test out our Editor's assertion that bird-watching in showery weather can be rewarding.

We set off along Jones Road, and turned into Oaky Creek Road, stopping to watch Wood Duck grazing in a dry-ish grassy paddock, their long dark necks craning up to see what the disturbance was. Pale-headed Rosellas were feeding there too, and Grey-crowned Babblers were heard, to be confirmed with sightings later in several places.

Gittins Road was also explored, along Gatton Creek with its sandstone northern bank. A good number of birds were seen, notably a White-faced Heron intent on feeding in the stream, a Rose Robin with his breast partly pink, a Kestrel perched in a dead tree, a party of Varied Sitellas feeding as they moved quickly through the tree-tops. And a puzzle for the "experts" - was it a Whip-bird calling, or did that 'ping' at the end of the call indicate a mimicking Grey Shrike-thrush?

FIELD DAY REPORT CONT'D

Back to the four-ways again, this time turning up the continuation of Jones Road, to go to Lorraine and John Wilson's place for morning tea. Lorraine later led us along mown and raked "creep-up-on-em" paths through their bush, but sad to say we didn't find the two frogmouths she had watched only the day before. However, around their house there were many small birds - Jacky Winters, Grey Fantails, Speckled Warblers, Yellow-rumped and Buff-rumped Thornbills, White-throated Gerygones, Rufous Whistler, with calls of Fan-tailed Cuckoo and Shining Bronze-Cuckoo - to add to our list, and a Yellow-billed Spoonbill which circled overhead, seemingly puzzled about us.

On the return journey, Double-barred Finches were seen feeding in a large flock with other small birds.

And wet-weather birding? You may draw your own conclusion from the list of birds seen on the outing!

Members present: Michael Atzeni, Lesley Ball, Don Gaydon, Gloria Glass, Diane and Bruce Muirhead, Ann Shore.

Species List: Little Pied Cormorant, White-faced Heron, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Pacific Black Duck, Wood Duck, Aust. Kestrel, Feral Pigeon, Bar-shouldered Dove, Crested Pigeon, Galah, Pale-headed Rosella, Fan-tailed Cuckoo (H), Shining Bronze-cuckoo (H), Laughing Kookaburra, Richard's Pipit, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Rose Robin, Eastern Yellow Robin, Jacky Winter, Rufous Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Grey Fantail, Willie Wagtail, Eastern Whipbird, Grey-crowned Babbler, Superb Fairy-wren, White-browed Scrubwren, Speckled Warbler, Weebill, White-throated Gerygone, Brown, Buff-rumped and Yellow-rumped Thornbills, Varied Sitella, White-throated Treecreeper, Striped Honeyeater, Noisy Miner, Lewin's, Yellow-faced and Brown Honeyeaters, Striated Pardalote, Silvereye, Double-barred Finch, Common Starling, Common Mynah, Figbird, Aust. Magpie-lark, Grey and Pied Butcherbirds, Aust Magpie, Pied Currawong, Torresian Crow. (52 species)

Seen in Margaret Street on the way to Withcott - White-headed Pigeon.

Gloria Glass

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MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES

Grey Goshawk, 2.7.84, Jubilee Park, DG
Black Falcon, 25.4.84, Lower Euston Rd, West Toowoomba, DC, DG
Broad-billed Sandpiper, 18.3.84, Thornside, MA, DG, BF, TR
Silver Gull, 12.7.84, Drayton, JD
Topknot Pigeon, 2.7.84, Cnr Margaret & Mary Sts, Toowoomba, DG
Eastern Rosella, 7.5.84, City Golf Course, DG
Eastern Rosella, 23.7.84, Coronation Park, Harristown, MA
Papuan Frogmouth, 14.7.84, Kuranda, BF, PM, TR
Noisy Pitta, 25.2.84, Redwood Park, DG
Large-billed Scrubwren, 8.7.84, Picnic Point, DG
Regent Bowerbird, 25.2.84, Redwood Park, DG
Regent Bowerbird, 2.7.84, Jubilee Park, DG
Regent Bowerbird, 27.7.84, Mabel Street, AK

MA - Michael Atzeni; JD - Joe Deuble; BF - Brian Foulis;
DG - Don Gaydon; AK - Angela Kilmartin; PM Pat McConnell;
TR - Terry Reis; DC - Dean Collins.

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 * FILM EVENING *
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 * Date: Monday, 20th August 1984 *
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 * Place: Main Room, Toowoomba Education Centre, Baker St *
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 * Time: 7.30 pm. *
 * * * * *
 * Films: "Island Invaders" - Noddy Terns on Heron Island. *
 * "Hide and Seek" - the intricacies of filming *
 * birds and other wildlife. *
 * * * * *
 * Both films belong to Bob Dorricott who is a *
 * member of the Toowoomba Ciné Society. Bob *
 * will be showing the films and will be available *
 * for any comment afterwards. *
 * * * * *
 * Members, please bring a plate for supper. *
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 * Any visitors will be warmly welcomed. *
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AUGUST FIELD OUTING

Date: Sunday, 26th August 1984 Place: Pumicestone Passage
 Assembly Point: Apex Lake, Caboolture
 Time: 9.00 am.

Rod Hobson will be our leader, taking us to some of his birding spots in the Toorbul and Donnybrook area.
 You will need to give yourselves at least 2 hours to get to Apex Lake at Caboolture, either via Brisbane or Somerset Dam.
 Please phone 35 8594 or 30 3207 to let us know you're coming.
 Visitors welcome.

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PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

The Darling Downs Naturalist. August 1984. (Newsletter of the Toowoomba Field Naturalist Club)
 Queensland Ornithological Society Newsletter. August 1984
 The Sunbird. Vol. 14. No. 1. March 1984. (Q.O.S. Journal)
 Urimbirra. July 1984. (Chinchilla Field Naturalists' Club)
 Magpie Geese seem to have attracted a lot of interest lately. Roy Hando writes in Urimbirra of the geese around Chinchilla. Whereas Q.O.S. is interested in any records of the geese in S.E. Queensland.
 All the above material may be borrowed from Michael.

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