

JANUARY 1985

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



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Annual Subscription

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

Activities

Field outings and Monthly Meeting - 4th Sunday of each month, usually leaving from Pigotts' car park at 7.30 am

Camping trips, film and slide evenings.

News-Sheet

Published monthly, before the outing. Articles have a deadline of the last day of the month, and should be mailed to the Editor.

EDITORIAL

1985 - What does it hold for us all? Another Bloomfield road? More clearing of rainforest on Hartley Creek, south of Cooktown for tin mining? Continuation of the logging of the Conondale forest? Or just the total destruction of the eastern escarpment here in Toowoomba? What does the word SANCTUARY seem to stand for? Very little, where money is to be made.

We can't turn back the clock, but surely we can stop the continued destruction. We must be able to bring pressure to bear on the local and neighbouring Councils and in turn on Governments to keep places like the eastern escarpment and Gowrie Junction hills for future generations.

"Greening Australia" is a wonderful concept, but for every tree we plant, how many more are destroyed? - and with them the total environment. 'For the fact is that man's future will be decided - is being decided right now - by his attitude to the environment. I don't state this as a debating point but as a fact.' (Bill Ord, Wildlife Australia, June 1983)

What can we do? Look, and listen, read, but most of all, talk. Tell people what is happening to our land, our flora and fauna; teach our children to love this lovely land, to look after it. They, most of all, will reap the harvest of our complacency.

History has been changed many times by the so called common people, you and me, so let's make 1985 the year of change, and get to work.

ANGELA KILMARTIN

The Executive has drawn up a set of guidelines for Field Days and Outings which we hope will make these trips more enjoyable for us all.

Hoping to see many Birdo's on the 27 January for the Goomburra outing.

GUIDELINES FOR LEADERS OF OUTINGS AND CAMP-OUTS

The following points may be of help:-

For Outings:

1. Leader to arrive 10 mins early.
2. Introduce members and visitors if unknown to each other.
3. Check and organise transport. When convoys are necessary make sure that members know correct procedure, i.e. keep in sight of cars ahead and behind so that no-one gets lost.
4. Leader should be familiar with area visited and know of suitable stopping places for morning tea etc.
5. Keep the day's bird checklist and write the report.

FOR CAMP-OUTS, in addition to the above:

6. Book camp-sites if necessary.
7. Organise evening activities and camp fire etc.
8. Have a permanent sign to hang up, "Toowoomba Bird Club".
9. Organise walks or spot-lighting etc.
10. Be the last one to leave the camp-site or else designate someone else to do it and ensure site is left tidy etc.

ANN SHORE

WADERS for BEGINNERS

Angela Kilmartin joined me for a Q.O.S. Beginners Outing to learn about waders at Beachmere last October. As far as waders were concerned, I was pretty good at identifying oyster-catchers, and on a recent Redcliffe holiday I'd actually sorted out Turnstones, the Ruddy ones, because each day they obligingly worked the little beach across the road from where we were staying. But the rest of the small waders ... they're all medium grey on top and paler underneath, aren't they.

However, thanks to Noela Marr who organised the outing, and her spot at Deception Bay south which is a high-tide roosting area for waders, we came to grips with some four more: Black and Bar-tailed Godwits - larger birds with longer bills, the Bar-tailed's bills being turned up at the end, while the Black's are straight; Grey-tailed Tattler - it's still best if I have someone to identify this one for me; and Greenshank, a slim medium-sized wader with a longish slender bill.

Ian Venables then very kindly led us, on our homeward journey, to some wader spots at Scarborough, Redcliffe and Clontarf, the last one being beside the very busy highway. The three of us sat with our backs resting on our cars and our feet on the beach, with the waders in a modest rocky outcrop almost too near for binoculars. Here was a rewarding collection: a Pied Oyster-catcher, an Eastern Golden Plover or two, some Grey-tailed Tattlers (which we still recognised then), a bevy of Red-necked Stints (the tiniest of all the waders, I think) with a few Crested Terns taking a nap while waiting for the tide to drop.

Angela and I have "booked up" Ian Venables to lead a Toowoomba Bird Club outing in March, at which I for one hope to really crack the system of these infuriating but fascinating little birds.

Gloria Glass

APOLOGIA!

With regard to my article on birds I saw on the Newell Highway, from Miles to Goondiwindi, I was queried by someone much more experienced than myself in bird observing on sightings of the Musk Duck and Hoary-headed Grebes.

On consulting my diary, I find the Musk Duck, and also the Pelicans, were sighted south of Goondiwindi. The Hoary-headed Grebes were sighted between Miles and Goondiwindi. I can only think that the unusual amount of rain at that time may have accounted for their appearance there.

In our travels, Roy and I vary from doing 50 km, or less, per day, to 400 km. Unless a location is pinpointed on our map - so-and-so creek - or by signposts, ie, Haynes Lagoon, south of Goondiwindi, we cannot state an exact location when we make our daily list of bird sightings. In this case my absolute delight at the beauty of the billabongs and the numerous birdlife we saw made my writing more lyrical than accurate. I feel I should have stated "Newell Highway, Miles and southwards".

However, the incident in question has served to pinpoint what Lesley has stated many times: our Toowoomba Newsletter is widely and seriously read and we must be accurate in our statements.

My thanks to the reader who queried my statement, and my apology for its inaccuracy.

Peggie Beaton

OUR ROVING REPORT

Roy and I spent two weeks at Kalbarri on the fringe of the National Park, and I am afraid bird-o-ing took second place to wildflower-o-ing! Never have I seen such a carpet of colour. Flowers of every conceivable colour and species, and every day we found a new one to look at. When we left, the wild hibiscus were coming in to bloom - pale pink, white, lilac, deep blue, yellow - again a medley of colour.

But the time came to move on, and we decided to go further north to Exmouth on the North West Cape. The last 220 km of this journey is a flat expanse of scrub and bush which seems to be trying to compete with the Nullarbor as the "Great Treeless Plain". Neither Exmouth nor its caravan park appealed to us, and we left next morning a little disgruntled at our wasted time and effort. But all was not lost. We had been on the road about a quarter of an hour when we startled a jabiru which took off up a gully.

We stopped and wandered into the bush. I was ahead of Roy, and going around a bush, I stopped dead, "Roy, oh, Roy - Crimson Chats!" I might have been a Knight of the Round Table seeing the Holy Grail! But we had been looking for these - up to now - elusive birds for quite a while, and here they were busy flitting all around us.

Then a flight of at least 100 Budgerigars flew over and settled in the bushes. Another first for us. And a flock of about 20 Little Corellas settled a little further on. We had seen these latter in flight but never had a chance to identify them totally. I wandered on to be recalled by Roy to help identify a brilliant black and white bird flying around singing happily. We could not place it - not a Pied Honeyeater, nor a Peewee, not a Magpie - our list of black and white birds became a little wilder - definitely not a Jabiru nor Pelican!

We were then caught by another bird. We tracked it down, a female Chiming Wedgebill, but we could not see the male, although we could hear the question, "But did you get drunk? But did you get drunk?" being asked us from all angles. No! we hadn't! but a cup of coffee would be nice. Roy went to look at some wrens nearby as I returned to our van. And on the way I saw a Spinifex bird looking as if it was still posing for its photo in the Readers' Digest.

Over our coffee we identified our elusive black and white bird - a male White-winged Triller in full courting fig, looking not a bit like his portrait in the R.D.

Later on, we were to see our male Chiming Wedgebills sharing a bath with some Crimson Chats in a wayside puddle, whilst Zebra Finches drank and preened in the shallows. Red-tailed Black Cockatoos were also enjoying a drink further along the road.

Altogether we had seen three species of honeyeaters, variegated and splendid wrens, budgerigars, corellas, wedgebills, crimson chats, jabiru, white-winged triller, masked woodswallows, spinifex bird, zebra finches, red-tailed black cockatoos, brown falcon, black kite, and all the "penny ordinaries" of crow, magpie, willie wagtail, b.f.c.s., etc, etc.

Peggie Beaton

4th November - Sighted a Little Friarbird chasing and pecking a White Faced Heron as it tried to land in our front yard (after rain). The Heron let out a one-syllable duck-like sound each time it was pecked in flight. It didn't land either, decided to leave the territory. Have witnessed (in our own yard), the Little Friarbirds chasing crows, butcherbirds and even our old dog. No doubt the chasing of other birds is territorial behaviour, but we wonder about the incidents with the dog.

Last summer one particular Little Friarbird regularly dive-bombed Brutus, almost daily, weeks on end (and not only in the one area of our yard), sometimes it seemed the bird seeked the dog out for a game, it would swoop low, missing Brutus by inches and of course he would bark and chase after it, only to be swooped again when he turned his back. One day Brutus and I were running around the yard playing (chasing each other), the Little Friarbird seemed to come from nowhere and interrupted our game, kept swooping Brutus repeatedly (dive-bombing, gaining height, dive-bombing etc), until he was chased. It certainly was a funny sight. We're now waiting to see if the same playful bird returns to the area - many Friarbirds already have.

5th November - We have a plant attached to a tree-trunk with an old stocking (which is freying considerably). On this morning an Oriole treated me to a fine display of 'bird absailing' de down the tree-trunk while holding, in its beak, a piece of stocking and stretching it until the section broke free. Orioles only recently returned to this area and obviously busy nest-building already.

(more of the Oriole) - Late one January afternoon I found myself searching in a tall-grass area for a bird who was calling out in panic - was an Oriole chick - about one meter off the ground and sideways clinging onto a clump of grass. Obviously it had fallen out of the nest (or so I thought), which was in a nearby tree, basket shaped and hanging from the end of a branch amongst leaves - only 10' from the ground. Another chick was still in the nest. A ladder was fetched and placed beneath the tree and that's when I found myself being harrassed by the parent bird who continually swooped me, hissing like a cat. This strange hissing sound and swooping continued until I left the area (which was after the chick was put back into the tree, perching beside the nest, as it wouldn't get into it. Apparently the chick was old enough to leave the nest afterall, perhaps having its first flying lesson which ended in a crash-landing. This turned out to be the case, next morning both chicks were being taught to fly (and taken well away from the nest area).

10th November - Overcast day, 7.15am, woken by a pair of chattering Pale-Headed Rosellas at our bedhead window. The male bird trying to perch on the cross-bar of the flyscreen, unsuccessfully (the cross-bar being inside). The female landed on the window sill and began pacing up and down while watching her own reflection. I kept still and observed their antics, thoroughly enjoying my 'bird's eye view' - sorry, just couldn't resist that - the pair then checked out the windows in the second bedroom and nearby downpipes and guttering, chattering all the time. Maybe looking for a nest site? The following morning the pair returned - same antics. Two days later they were still interested in the guttering, and downpipes beneath facias.

Seems they have found alternative accomodation. They certainly are very beautiful.

My parents live at Camp Mountain, Brisbane (near Samford), they have a dam on their property and Wood Ducks frequent the area, usually nesting on the ground. This year it appears the ducks decided to go high-rise, as they were frequently seen entering and exiting a hollow limb of an old dead gum tree. Recently Mum and Dad observed a group of Kookaburras (6 in all), taking turns at entering the hollow limb where the ducks had taken up residence. Each kookaburra stayed inside the limb a considerable time before the group finally flew away. Since then the ducks have not been sighted in or near the gum tree.

Lorraine Wilson

Does anyone know whether Figbirds also eat buds or flowers?
Certain coral trees I drove past regularly last winter and
spring seemed to combine large numbers of Figbirds with
small numbers of flowers.

Gloria Glass

I have a male Superb Blue Wren in my garden that, at the change of
season, flies around with a yellow cassia petal in his bill, trilling
loudly. Has anyone else seen behaviour like this?

Angela Kilmartin

FIELD DAY FOR JANUARY

Date - SUNDAY, 27 JANUARY 1985

Place GOOMBURRA FOREST PARK

Assembly Point - Pigott's Car Park

Time - 7.15 am for departure at 7.30 am SHARP

Goomburra, east of Allora in the mountains, is always a pleasant
outing with both open forest and rainforest. On a recent trip, 111
birds were listed, including Red Wattle-birds.

Please bring your lunch, and spend some time with your fellow Birdo's.
Anyone who wishes transport, please phone Ann on 303207 or
Gloria 382404 (evenings).

HOBBY - N - CRAFT SPECTACULAR

TOOWOOMBA SHOW GROUNDS

15 to 17 FEBRUARY 1985

As our stall at the Hobby-N-Craft forms our main membership drive
for the year, it is vital that our stand be manned. One member of
the Executive will be working at each shift, and we are asking that
Club members volunteer to help. All that is needed is a love of birds
and a willingness to help. You may find you get more out of it than
you put in!

TIMES	FRIDAY 15 February	Saturday 16 February	Sunday 17 February
	5 pm - 9 pm	9 am - 12 noon	9 am - 12 noon
		12 noon - 5 pm	12 noon - 5 pm
		5 pm - 10 pm	

Volunteers please ring Marilyn or Ann to arrange times to work.
FREE PASSES PROVIDED to volunteers.

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Don't forget January is Seasonal Species Survey Month.

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