

JUNE 1985



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

toowoomba bird club

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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 leave 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

First of all I must say thank you to Lesley as she will be distributing this Newsletter as I am going on holidays, birding of course.

June marks the start of the Duck and Quail shooting season, something that I find personally distressing. It's not only the "open season" ducks and quail, but all the other protected birds that are shot or worse still left wounded.

The Bird Observers Club, in an article on the Freckled Duck, a protected species, stated that if the mortality this year compares with that of the Bool Lagoon S.A. shoot in March 1980, when 500 of an estimated 700 birds died, and that of March 1982 when some 800 of an estimated 3000 Freckled Ducks in Victoria were shot, it will be more than the population can stand, as a national count of Freckled Ducks in January 1983, during a severe drought, recorded a total of 7926 birds.

Habitat destruction is another cause for concern, not only with the Freckled Duck, but also with our other endangered species.

What is the answer? Education - we must help people to change their attitude to these bloodsports.

ANGELA KILMARTIN, Editor.

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MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES

- Red-capped Robin 25.4.85 DDIAE Staff Club MJ, SP
- Red-capped Robin 25.5.85 Harristown Cemetary JD
- Red-capped Robin 5.5.85 Cecil Plains Road, Dalby JS, AS
- Red-capped Robin (m & f) 29.4.85 Glenvale State School LB, JB
- Eastern Spinebill 12.3.85 Mabel Street AK
- Musk Lorikeet 11.3.85 Mabel Street AK
- Buff-banded Rail (Juv) 8.3.85 Withcott JS, AS
- Red-whiskered Bulbul March 85 Botanical Gardens, Sydney JS, AS
- Wandering Whistle-duck 24.3.85 Sandgate JS, AS
- Collared Sparrowhawk 5.5.85 Cecil Plains Road, Dalby JS, AS
- Glossy Black Cockatoo 25.4.85 Caloundra turnoff, Bruce H'way JS, AS
- Red-necked Avocet 15.5.85 Dyers Lagoon JS, AS
- Little Wattlebird 26.4.85 Hervey Bay JS, AS
- Whistling Kite (7) 14.4.85 Hoods Lagoon LB, JB
- Budgerigar (12) 4.5.85 Clifton turnoff New England Highway LB, JB
- Ground Cuckoo-shrike (3) 21.5.85 Boundary Rd, Glenvale JB, LB
- Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater 25.4.85 Jct Stockyard Ck & Sawpit Gully Rd JB, LB
- Little Lorikeet (15) 1.5.85 Mabel Street AK
- Jacky Winter 13.5.85 Mabel Street AK
- Regent Bowerbird (f) 10.5.85 Mabel St AK
- Channel-billed Cuckoo 13.5.85 North Street AK
- Whistling Kite 16.5.85 West & Stenner Streets AK
- White-headed Pigeon Mar & Apr 1985 Middle Ridge GG
- White-headed Pigeon (20) 19.5.85 West & Taylor Streets GG
- White-headed Pigeon 28.4.85 Mabel Street AK
- Cicada-bird 27.4.85 Mabel Street AK
- Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (3) 21.5.85 Mackenzie Street GG
- Pallid Cuckoo 11.5.85 Flagstone Ck Road GG
- Port Lincoln Parrot (aviary escapee?) 19.4.85 Stenner St east GG, HMCK

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| JB John Ball | GG Gloria Glass | SP Sandy Pottinger |
| LB Lesley Beaton | MJ Marilyn Jacobs | AS Ann Shore |
| JD Joe Deuble | AK Angela Kilmartin | JS John Shore |
| | | HMCK Helen McKilligan |

MAY OUTING REPORT - LAIDLEY VALLEY

Five cars journeyed to Laidley where we met Graham and Ann. First stop in Laidley yielded Brown Goshawk, an Azure Kingfisher and a variety of waterbirds, with more waterbirds at a dam beside the road on the way to Mulgowie.

A Spotted Harrier caught the eye of Michael a bit further on, and Ann and Michael flushed it for us. A Restless Flycatcher was also seen there.

Many of us had never been down that road before and found the area most beautiful with the picturesque cliffs of Mt Castle. Graham and Craig led us on a very pleasant walk through private property by courtesy of the Honorary Ranger of Mt Mistake National Park.

Everyone was interested to have such a good view of the Musk and other Lorikeets.

We had difficulty hearing each other for the powerboats at the Dyers Lagoon picnic tables where we had lunch, but were rewarded by the sightings of Avocets and Pink-eared Ducks.

We wish Ann a safe and enjoyable holiday in England.

Members present: Michael Atzeni, Nancy & Frank Belcher, Joe Deuble, Gloria Glass, Marilyn Jacobs, Cath McGrath, Lyn Rowan, Margo and Sandy Pottinger, Ann and John Shore, Graham and Craig Welden.

Species sighted: (Note: * indicates 'also at Dyers Lagoon', while ** indicates ONLY at Dyers Lagoon')

Australasian Grebe, Little Black & Little Pied Cormorants, White-faced Heron, Cattle, Intermediate & Great Egret, Strawnecked Ibis, Royal** and Yellow-billed* Spoonbills, Black Swan**, Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal*, Pink-eared Duck**, Hardhead, Wood Duck, Black-shouldered Kite, Brown Goshawk, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Spotted Harrier, Australian Kestrel, Dusky Moorhen, Purple Swamphen, Eurasian Coot*, Masked Lapwing*, Red-kneed Dotterell*, Black-fronted Plover, Black-winged Stilt*, Avocet**, Feral Pigeon, Crested Pigeon, Galah, Rainbow, Scaly-breasted and Musk Lorikeets, Cockatiel**, Crimson Rosella, (Southern Boobook Owl at Grantham, dead), Pale-headed Rosella, Azure Kingfisher, Laughing Kookaburra, Welcome Swallow, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Rufous Whistler, Restless Flycatcher, Willie Wagtail, Grey-crowned Babbler, Golden-headed Cisticola, Noisy and Little Friarbirds, Noisy Miner*, Mistletoebird, Striated Pardalote, House Sparrow, Common Starling, Common Mynah, Olive-backed Oriole, Figbird, Australian Magpie-Lark, Grey* & Pied Butcherbirds, Australian Magpie*, Pied Currawong, Torresian Crow. (64 species)

Marilyn Jacobs

SOUTH AFRICAN SOJOURN

John and I recently took a trip to South Africa, partly to visit relatives, and mainly to have a holiday. During our travels I hoped to get a bit of birding in, as we intended to stop at some national parks, especially Kruger.

My brother and his wife lived in Johannesburg and we spent a couple of days there before setting out further afield. The rand decreased in value meanwhile, and it gave me the chance to pick up an invaluable book on birds. I had already been lent "Roberts Birds of South Africa" - the field guide. To this I added "Where to Watch Birds in southern Africa" by A. Berutti and J.C. Sinclair. This was published in 1983 and I was hooked as soon as I saw that the first chapter was titled "From beginner to twitcher."

This book is a gem for the birdo entering the unknown territory of southern Africa. It takes a good birding locality, gives its habitat; directions on how to get there plus a small map; lists the birds that are particularly seen there, giving tips such as "... on the concrete bridge over the Black Umfolozi ..." (Berutti and Sinclair, 1983, p.177); explains permits where necessary, including addresses of where to obtain them; lists available accommodation with addresses and telephone numbers; and lastly, names any publications relevant to that area. I'm sure I saw more birds because of this information.

In the three weeks we were there I identified 122 species. Then there were all those "that got away" - such as the swifts, swallows and martins that didn't settle long enough for me to get a good sighting, the larks that all look the same, and the twenty different species of cisticola!

I was ecstatic with what I did see, however, and John even got a thrill out of much of the birding we did. It's difficult to limit the highlights to a few as everything was such a delight.

One memorable occasion was on the road to the Royal Natal National Park. A male Long-tailed Widow was displaying by the side of the road. His long tail feathers which are a characteristic of his breeding plumage were about 400 mm (16 ins) long. He was chasing a little brown female. She'd pop out of the tall grass, fly a few metres then drop down again. Meanwhile he'd fly after her in a very ungainly manner, his long tail seeming to drag him down as he lumbered in her wake barely skimming the grass, until he took a rest on the fence wire. His red wing patches glowed against the black of his other feathers.

I think the little birds have given me far richer memories than the more conspicuous ones. For example, the little family of Rock Martins nesting under the entrance arch at the Blyde River Canyon National Park, the young faces peering down at us until the parents came to push food down their throats. Then there was the Red-billed Firefinch fossicking amongst the rocks over the roaring Blyde River, its colour an indescribable deep, dusty pink.

Probably the most surprising was the Blue Waxbill. The first one we saw was pecking around the gardens at Satara, one of the accommodation camps at Kruger National Park. The bird was so dainty and the light sky-blue of its breast so delicate, yet clearly seen from quite a distance.

The Malachite Kingfisher sparkled as it perched low down amid the reeds. We saw it as we forded a river early one morning. At Skukuza (the main accommodation camp at Kruger and the Park headquarters) there was a large fig tree outside the restaurant and overlooking the Sabie River from a high embankment. There were literally hundreds of yellow Weavers living in this tree. They would swoop down in large flocks to the reeds below or to the edge of the sandbanks to drink. Their nests hung from the branches, festooning the tree like Christmas decorations. The constant twittering and movement kept the tourists agog.

On our last day we were taken to the Korsman Bird Sanctuary, about a twenty-five minute drive from the centre of Johannesburg. It's a small lagoon in a residential suburb which is largely maintained as a breeding sanctuary. There is a high wire fence to deter interlopers, human and otherwise, though parkland around the perimeter given ease of viewing. It was here we saw our first non-captive flamingoes, but once again the small birds took the spotlight. The fringe of the lagoon was lined with reed beds, and the Red Bishops were breeding in abundance. Roberts' description is perfect for this scene, "... males fly airily about over the reeds, their plumes puffed out, in slow, bumble-bee-like flight ..." (McLachlan & Liversidge, 1982, p.573). They made me think of little beacons blinking in and out of the reeds.

Our trip will be indelibly impressed on our memories - the astounding wildlife, the magnificent scenery, and of course ... the birds.

Bibliography

Berruti, A. & Sinclair, J.C. (1983) Where to Watch Birds in southern Africa. Cape Town. C. Struik (Pty) Ltd.

McLachlan, G.R. & Liversidge, R. (1982) Roberts Birds of South Africa, 4th edition. Cape Town. The Trustees of the John Voelcker Bird Book Fund.

Lesley Beaton

FIELD DAY FOR JUNE

Date: Sunday 23 June 1985 Place: HOGARTH'S SWAMP, PITTSWORTH
Assembly Point: Pigotts' Car Park
Time: 7.15 am for departure at 7.30 am SHARP

This trip is subject to rain falling in the meantime. The swamp is dry at present, and if it remains dry an alternative outing will be arranged.

FIELD DAY FOR JULY 1985

Date: Sunday July 28 1985 Place: Blanchview and Airdale
Assembly Point: Pigotts' Car Park
Time: 7.15 am for departure at 7.30 am SHARP

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ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS UNION

presents

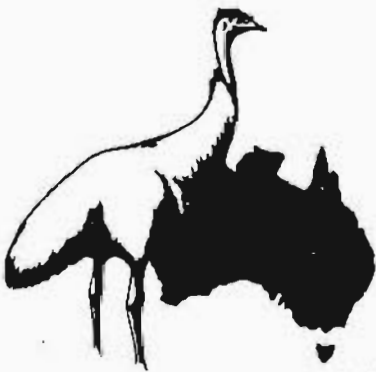
1985 ANNUAL CONGRESS

(27-29 September 1985)
and

CAMPOUT

(30 September-4 October 1985)

CALL FOR PAPERS AND INTENTION TO ATTEND



We have decided against having a theme for the 1985 Annual Congress. Strong themes in the past have doubtless attracted contributions and often much interest, but they have also deterred potential contributors through the mistaken belief that papers outside the theme were not wanted.

For the 1985 Congress, we urge contributions from all ornithologists, whether they consider themselves amateurs or professionals.

Ornithology is one of those rare sciences in which amateurs can be more knowledgeable than professionals in many areas. Both amateurs and professionals in Australia are now contributing substantially to a wide variety of ornithological topics: populations, distribution, community ecology, breeding biology, feeding, migration, behaviour, physiology, taxonomy, field identification, banding, computer applications, techniques of photography, cinematography and sound recording, art and education, and many others of broad interest.

The Annual Congress is the place to share knowledge. Papers are not always the end result of a completed study. They may present a single idea. Often it is those papers that generate most discussion.

A Congress should be an exchange of information and ideas. So let us hear of your current interests.

The Congress is to be held at the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education, TOOWOOMBA and Campout at 'Bullamon Plains', THALLON, Queensland.

Approximate registration for Congress - \$35 (3 days)
Approximate camping fee for 5 days - \$5