



"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

After the bleakness of winter when only the most dedicated of Birdos braved the cold and frosty mornings, the renewal of spring is wonderful. The smell of the bush and the fresh new growth, the rebirth of Nature has begun.

To Birdos, this means the return of our migratory species and the joy of those first sightings for the season. The unexpected is always just around the corner - a flower in bloom, a baby bird, or the well-being when you watch the sun rise in the tingling crispness of the new day - these are the joys that can never be taken from us. We have only to open our eyes and look - and, best of all, it's free!

Thank you for all the kind messages, cards and visits I received during my stay in hospital. They were very much appreciated.

Angela Kilmartin

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NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to the Toowoomba Bird Club to new members Enid Beal, Diana Beal, Susan Muller and Rachel and Robbie, and Dorothy Thompson.

LIBRARY NOTES - September 1985

The Bird Observer, August 1985, No. 643.
The Australian Bird Watcher, June 1985, Vol.11, No.2.
The Sunbird (QOS Journal), June 1985, Vol 15, No.2.

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Alcohol a ^{July} 19, '85 problem for pub parrot

LONDON: A parrot has been banned from an English pub for being drunk and disorderly.

The bird ran into problems when he switched his drinking tastes from beer to spirits.

Fred the parrot has developed an unhealthy taste for Bacardi and Coke above beer and has been banished to the beer garden of his pub in Bridgewater, Somerset.

He has even taken to sipping customers' drinks and pecking those who complain, a London newspaper reported.

At night he is reported to stagger around the bar knocking over bottles and setting off the burglar alarm.

"Fred's always been mischievous but now he's too much to handle," his landlord said.

Good samaritan helps Pardalote

THE morning after the last high tide, a Kinka Beach man, out for a walk along the sand, heard and saw one of Australia's smallest birds, a little 10cm gem called a Pardalote, behaving in a distressed manner.

He then noticed that a fall of sand, no doubt caused by the tide, had covered the entrance to its nesting tunnel.

Being the good samaritan he undoubtedly is, he did not pass by unheeding, but gently scraped away the sand.

The relieved parent bird lost not time visiting its nest once he had departed.

A caring attitude to life is not just the prerogative of the female of the human species.

— Molly Crawford, Natalie Place, Kinka Beach.

CLUB OUTING to GOWRIE JUNCTION 25 August 1985

A larger than usual group assembled for the journey to the Gowrie Junction property of new members Enid and Diana Beal. We were to "mess about on the hill" until lunch time, then to visit Gowrie Creek hoping for waterbirds in the afternoon. Diana had been asked to make sure some koalas were there to be seen too!

Mess about on the hill we did, sighting numerous small birds - thornbills, finches and wrens. Then, while some members were busy watching the first Rainbow Bee-eater of the season, others were enthralled by a Red-capped Robin, which was eventually seen by everyone as he darted to and from a succession of vantage perches after insects. He was definitely the Bird of the Day.

The Red-capped was not the only robin, for later the call of the Eastern Yellow Robin was heard, and this somewhat unlikely bird for the area was sighted in a more thickly wooded part of the hill.

Diana did produce her promised koala, and later Kath Blackburn discovered another one for us to see and Lesley to photograph. And that was not the end of animal life seen, for one of the dogs drew our attention to an echidna, and Cath McGrath struck up quite an acquaintance with another echidna down near the creek during the afternoon.

Plant life in this dry soft-wood scrub also came in for interest and identification, including the *Acacia decora* in full flowering splendour, *Alyxia ruscifolia* with tiny but richly perfumed flowers and orange berries, the Wonga vine *Pandorea pandorana* throwing its snowy mantle over so many trees and shrubs.

After lunch near the house and sighting of the Spiny-cheeked Honey-eaters there, we were led as promised to Gowrie Creek, inspecting on the way the newly planted corridor of koala fodder trees. Quail were flushed from the paddocks and ducks, herons and cormorants from the creek. Cisticolas and Pipits were also seen.

It was altogether a very enjoyable birding day with some good walking thrown in. We are all grateful to Enid and Diana for sharing their birds, dogs and property with us.

Gloria Glass

Members present: Lesley Beaton, Diana Beal, Enid Beal, Frank and Nancy Belcher, Kath Blackburn, Gloria Glass, Marilyn Jacobs, Cath McGrath, Susan Muller with Rachel and Robbie, Lyn Rowan, Ann and John Shore and Dot Thompson.

Species recorded: Little Pied Cormorant, Pacific Heron, White-faced Heron, Sacred Ibis, Straw-necked Ibis, Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal, Black-shouldered Kite, Australian Kestrel, Brown Quail, Masked Lapwing, Bar-shouldered Dove, Crested Pigeon, Galah, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Cockatiel, Pale-headed Rosella, Laughing Kookaburra, Rainbow Bee-eater, Richard's Pipit, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Red-capped Robin, Eastern Yellow Robin, Rufous Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Grey Fantail, Willie Wagtail, Golden-headed Cisticola, Superb Fairy-wren, White-browed Scrubwren, Brown Thornbill, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Yellow Thornbill, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Striped Honeyeater, Noisy Friarbird, Noisy Miner, Lewin's Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, Mistletoebird, Spotted Pardalote, Striated Pardalote, Silvereye, House Sparrow, Zebra Finch, Double-barred Finch, Common Starling, Figbird, Australian Magpie-lark, Dusky Woodswallow, Grey Butcherbird, Pied Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Pied Currawong, Torresian Crow. (55 species)

BIRDVILLE

On 27th July 1985, Brian Foulis, Terry Reis and myself headed out to Birdsville, a bit dubious as to what birds the trip would bring as the state of the country can influence what's about.

Having been to Windorah before, we didn't do much birding until we passed this area. The first stop west of Windorah turned up Gibberbird and Red-browed Pardalote. From here on, the birding got progressively worse, and we began to wonder if we had chosen the wrong year to come out. However, the area south of Birdsville had received some rain and there were birds and wildflowers everywhere.

Things improved for us, and we got our first look at Flock Pigeons. Six birds were seen near a small waterhole just off the side of the road. We set up camp not far from here, and with the sun setting had our first views of Letter-winged Kites, their underwing pattern and tern-like flight making them instantly distinguishable from the less graceful Black-shouldered Kite. During this day eleven different species of hawk were seen.

The following morning started with a search for Grey Grasswrens. Grasswrens can be difficult to find, but the Grey because of its limited habitat is easy, and we obtained good views within an hour. Their habit of singing from on top of lignum makes for good viewing. During this time, a flock of about twenty Flock Pigeons flew over.

Next on the list to be looked for was the Eyrean Grasswren. We considered this the bird of the trip and didn't want to miss it. Two hours of searching yielded nothing except eight Pied Honeyeaters (which we were very pleased to see, of course!). However, soon after, we came across a single Grasswren which we got good looks at as it darted in front of the dune vegetation, turning now and then to observe us.

Next on the list was Banded Whiteface which we hoped to see further down the road. To cut a long story short, we missed these, but in the area saw Eyrean Grasswrens, Pied Honeyeaters, Black Honeyeaters, an Australian Dotterel, as well as Cinnamon Quailthrush which were seen fairly often on the trip. The drive back to Birdsville yielded eleven more Australian Dotterels.

Other highlights of the trip included Black Falcon (six in all), Swamp Harrier (south of Birdsville), Plumed Pigeons (near Betoota), and Grey-headed Honeyeaters in flowering gums west of Quilpie.

Pat McConnell

MEMBERS BIRD NOTES - SEPTEMBER 1985

Barn Owl	5.4.85	Raff and Bridge Sts,	J. Deuble
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	31.8.85	T'ba Ed Centre,	Baker St, John Ball & Lesley Beaton
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	25.8.85	Gourie Junction,	Ann Shore
Flock Pigeon	29.7.85	South of Birdsville,	Pat McConnell
Eyrean Grasswren	30.7.85	"	"
Grey Grasswren	"	"	"
Pied Honeyeater	"	"	"
Grey-headed Honeyeater	1.8.85	100 km W of Quilpie,	Pat McConnell

"Oh, to be in England"

Yes, there's much to be said for visiting England in the springtime when all the countryside is clad in the brightest greenery imaginable and the hedgerows are full of hawthorn blossom and edged with the delicate lace-like flowers of cow parsley while the air is full of birdsong. You are wakened in the mornings by the dawn chorus around 4am and the songs continue for much of the day, only dying away at nightfall. So many songs and calls that it is easy to forget that the British Isles boasts less than half the number of birds that are known in Australia and many are smaller and far less striking in appearance.

Spring was late in England this year (1985) and accompanied by weeks of rain and little sunshine after a particularly severe winter. The migrant Cuckoos, Swallows, Martins and Swifts had only arrived shortly before me in late May. The first calls and sightings of Britain's only visiting Cuckoo are always eagerly acclaimed and though, as one old saying goes, "One Swallow does not make a summer", nonetheless it too is greeted with joy.

I stayed in the country, mostly in south-eastern England where Blackbirds were busy in the hedges, many feeding young; Chaffinches sang their rather brief repetitive song from higher vantage points; from beyond came the gentle calls of the Collared Doves and the "Don't scold so, Sukie" coos of the Wood Pigeons; the cawing of Rooks and above all the clear rising song of the Skylarks. In one village House Sparrows were nesting in the stove outlet-pipe on my host's house, House Martins were inspecting possible home sites under the eaves and Blackbirds were bringing up a family in the garage. I observed the cock Blackbird landing on the house roof before descending to the garage only to be harassed time and again by a dive-bombing Swallow! Was the Swallow too lazy to catch the wriggling mouthfuls of flies etc himself and thought to avail himself of a cheap meal? Swifts could be seen and heard as they screamed around buildings in the village in the long light evenings. Why does the Australian Swift never "scream" as his European counterpart does?

It was noticeable that the smallest birds were in lower numbers, than I had expected. A few Blue, Great and one Long-tailed Tit but only one Wren heard but not seen. A few Robins; Greenfinches; Spotted Flycatchers; Pied Wagtails and a sweet-singing Linnet. The odd Song Thrush and more rarely a Jay. No doubt, sadly, many had fallen victim to the hard winter.

Staying up near Worcester, a Blackcap delighted me singing his beautiful song from the top of an apple tree in an old orchard. Each morning he sang from the same perch, then moved to another a little further off and then further away again, probably Territorial vantage points. Everywhere there seemed to be an over-abundance of jaunty Magpies hopping around or giving their harsh cackles in woods and gardens alike. Although striking in their smart black and white plumage (though very different in shape and character from their Australian namesakes), they are not beloved of those who treasure their garden birds as they are predators and well-known for taking both eggs and nestlings.

Starlings and Crows were always in the background. I heard the occasional calls of Pheasants; saw Kestrels hovering near the motorways; Coots, Moorhens, Mallards, a Grey Heron, a family of Canadian Geese and Mute Swans on inland waters while Herring Gulls and a Black-backed Gull near the Severn estuary made up my list of everyday sightings in what was an enjoyable but did not primarily pretend to be a birding holiday.

2. SEPTEMBER Beginners' Outing

Date: Sunday, September 15, 1985
Place: Ramsay
Assembly Point: Pigott's Car Park
Time: 7.15 am for departure at 7.30 am sharp
Leader: Lesley Beaton
* N.B. Date change due to Carnival of Flowers

R.A.O.U. Congress and Campout

September 27 to October 4, 1985

Bird Club Outings for R.A.O.U. Congress

Sunday, September 29, 1985

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - CHANGE OF VENUE

The date is WEDNESDAY, 9 OCTOBER 1985, and the time 7.15 for start at 7.30 pm sharp.

The place is Marilyn and Sandy's place - 'Brandy-wine', 21 Sylvan Court, Toowoomba.

There will be an illustrated address by guest speaker Don Seaton from the National Parks and Wildlife Service at Toowoomba - "Birds of Central and Coastal Queensland".

Members, please bring something for supper.

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QUEENSLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY BIRD COUNT - 12 & 13 October 1985

Give your name to a member of the Executive (see front cover) and take part in this Q.O.S. project which increases our knowledge of birds and their distribution.

TENTH ANNIVERSARY SOCIAL

Date: Sunday, October 27, 1985
Place: Top picnic ground of Ravensbourne National Park
Assembly Point: Pigott's Car Park
Time: 7.15 am for departure 7.30 am sharp
OR at Ravensbourne any time during the morning
N.B. 7.00 pm b.y.o. BBQ lunch

4. NOVEMBER Final Outing for 1985

Date: Sunday, November 24, 1985
Place: Nancy & Ron Gooding's property, Killarney district
Assembly Point: Albion Street traffic lights (first set of traffic lights on New England Highway) in WARWICK
Time: 8.15 am
Leaders: Nancy & Ron Gooding (phone 644 231)

5. DECEMBER Film Evening & Break-up

Date: Tuesday, December 10, 1985
Place: Toowoomba Education Centre, Baker Street
Time: 7.15 pm for 7.30 pm start
Films: Three short films -
"Migratory Birds in Korea"
"Fairy Penguins"
"Kingfisher"
and main feature -
"Great White Bird" (Canadian)

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