

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

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NEWS-SHEET No. 12 - OCTOBER, 1976.

The Annual Meeting of the Toowoomba Bird Club took place on 8th October at 17, Herries St., Toowoomba. The required office bearers for the coming year were elected and arrangements for the Club's first bird count were finalised. Further details appear in the Secretary/Treasurer's report elsewhere in this issue.

Despite the windy conditions on the day, the bird count was successful in that we achieved our objective of establishing base line information against which future counts may be measured. 123 species were recorded, including several new birds for the area. A starting point has now been established.

The results of the count and the annual bird report will be published by the year's end.

We have received, from Reg and Chris Eley, an account of a birding trip to Birdsville. Space limitations will not permit publishing the account in one issue of this news-sheet, but the first part appears this month and the balance will follow.

Because of an impending transfer to North Queensland, Rod Hobson was unable to accept nomination as Editor/Records Officer. The Club thanks Rod for the job he has done and your new Editor hopes he can continue in this capacity nearly as well.

Ron Hopkinson,
Editor.

NEW TOOWOOMBA BIRDS.

¹⁶⁰ Nankeen Night Heron (*Nycticorax caledonicus*). 10.10.76. Glen Lomond Creek.
Rod and Kerrie Hobson.

A single, mature specimen with the black cap and chestnut upperparts which distinguish this species.

Another specimen observed on the Western side of the area on 10.10.76 by John Coman.

¹⁶¹ Owlet-Nightjar (*Aegotheles cristatus*). 19.10.76. Warwick Highway, Hodgson Vale.
Rod and Kerrie Hobson.

Solitary bird observed in headlights on side of road. General colour a warm brown. Bill small, broad and hooked and surrounded by conspicuous bristles. When put to flight bird flew with weak "moth-like" flight and barred tail was then observed. Bird appeared small and delicate.

¹⁶² White-breasted Wood-swallow (*Artamus leucorhynchus*). 10.10.76. "Naliandrah",
Withcott. Alan & Sylvia Graham.

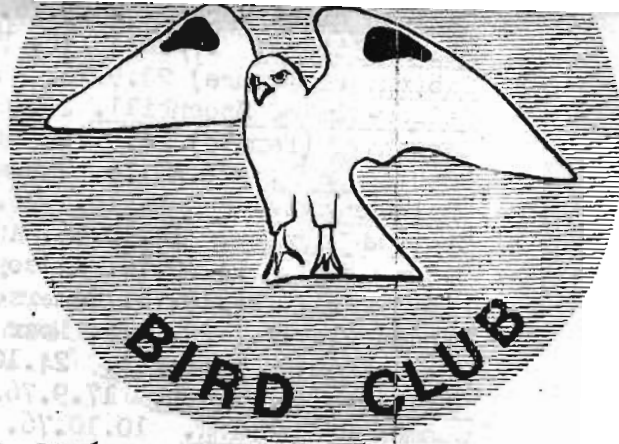
A single stocky, dark grey and white bird with long wings and black tipped blue beak. Dark grey upperbreast, throat, head, upper side of wings and tail. White breast, rump and underside of wings. Typical wood-swallow flight on being disturbed. Flying in company of Fairy Martins, against which the larger size of the wood-swallow is clearly evident.

¹⁶³ Masked Wood-swallow (*Artamus personatus*). 10.10.76. Blanchview Tip area, South of
Warwick Hwy. on Withcott-Blanchview Rd. Alan & Sylvia Graham.

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163 Masked Wood-swallow (*Artamus personatus*). 10.10.76. Blanchview Tip area, South of Warrego H'wy. on Withcott-Blanchview Rd. Alan & Sylvia Graham.

Two individuals sitting on fence wire allowing approach to within 30 metres. Upperside almost uniformly grey with black face and throat. Distinctive white around mask and in tail. Pale breast and underparts. Size about 8" (20cm). Showed long wings and typical wood-swallow flight on being disturbed.

MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES.

Australian Pelican. 27.9.76. In flight over Queen St., Brisbane. CB.
Darter. 10.10.76. "Naliandrah", Withcott. AG, SG. 11/12.10.76. Withcott. AG.
Nankeen Night Heron. 25.9.76. Lockyer Ck. Helidon. IC.
Black Bittern. 17/24.10.76. Flagstone Ck. I.W.S. REH.
Jabiru. (immature) 28.9.76. Near Grantham. IC.
Yellow-billed Spoonbill. 20.10.76. Withcott. AG, SG. 2.10.76. (three) Herries St. CB,
Garganey. (female) 26.9.76. Cecil Plains. JW, RW. EJ, WJ.
Crested Hawk. 24.10.76. Wappa Falls. RGH, KH.
White-breasted Sea Eagle. 24.10.76. Lake Clarendon. REH.
Spotted Harrier. 14.10.76. Aubigny. RGH.
Brown Quail. 24.10.76. Kilcoy. RGH, KH.
King Quail. 24.10.76. Somerset. RGH, KH.
Banded Plover. 29.9.76. Near Helidon. IC.
Black-fronted Dotterel. 24.10.76. Tent Hill Creek. REH.
White-headed Pigeon. 17.9.76. Grenier St., Toowoomba. RGH.
Common Bronzewing. 10.10.76. (two) Blanchview. (one) "Naliandrah", Withcott. AG, SG
Red-winged Parrot. 5.10.76. Bonshaw. RGH.
Oriental Cuckoo. 10.9.76. Pittsworth. SW.
Pallid Cuckoo. 15.9.76. Pittsworth. JW, RW. 11.10.76. Curzon St., Toowoomba. EJ, VS.
17.10.76. Leslie Dam. MJ, DH. 24.10.76. Flagstone Ck. I.W.S. REH.
Rufous-tailed Bronze Cuckoo. 10.10.76. (two) "Naliandrah", Withcott. AG, SG.
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Indian Koel. 16.10.76. Helidon. AG, SG.
Channel-billed Cuckoo. (four) 16.10.76. Helidon. AG, SG.
Barn Owl. 17.10.76. Flagstone Ck. RGH, KH.
Spine-tailed Swift. (two) 21.10.76. Echo Valley. AG.
Azure Kingfisher. 10.10.76. Rocky Ck., Withcott and Flagstone Ck. AG, SG.
Blue-winged Kookaburra. 24.10.76. Near Lake Clarendon. REH.
Rainbow Bee-eater. 25.10.76. Gallant's property, Withcott. AG, SG.
Dollar Bird. 2.10.76. McLeod St., Toowoomba. AG, SG.
Tree Martin. 17.10.76. Withcott. WJ, EJ.
Leaden Flycatcher. 17.10.76. Herries St., Toowoomba. WJ, EJ.
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Striped Honeyeater (nesting). 17.10.76. Leslie Dam. MJ, DH.
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Nutmeg Mannikin. 28.9.76. Chermside. RGH.

(CB: Chris Bianchi. AG: Alan Graham. SG: Sylvia Graham. IC: Ian Cowan. REH: Ron Hopkinson. JW: John Walter. RW: Ruth Walter. RGH: Rod Hobson. KH: Kerrie Hobson. SW: Sue Walter. MJ: Marilyn Jacobs. DH: Dianne Hayden. EJ: Eileen Jolly. WJ: Bill Jolly. VS: Vera Simon.)

LETTER FROM AMBY, 17.9.76. - REG ELEY.

I should like to put my view concerning Jabiru dips fish observation, Kerrie Hobson T.B.C. No. 10 August 1976.

If members watched 'One Northern Summer' A.B.C. 2 16.55 16/9/76 they would have observed nesting Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) trying to feed an overlarge fish to the young. When the adult realised its fish could not be swallowed by the young, it repeatedly flew over the water to dip the fish, only to have the young still unable to cope with the food. This performance was continually repeated.

The commentator said the reason is unknown, but, the point should be remembered this fish was continually in contact with the ground. Now as anyone who has done fishing knows, a fish on the ground picks up a lot of foreign matter, but when the fish is washed it becomes clean and slippery and this means easy insertion through the throat of a bird.

Should any member have other ideas, I, like Kerrie Hobson would like to hear them.

As to other birds dipping food, the Noisy Miner (*Manorina melanocephala*) and Blue-faced Honeyeaters (*Entomyzon cyanotis*) that we feed here, using the bottle method, both very often dip ants and other insects into the nectar mix before swallowing them. Most birds connected with a water habitat will regurgitate morsels for the young, this being covered with slime.

I should imagine the fish this Jabiru dipped, were too large for the throat.

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Yours sincerely,

Reg Eley.

A BIRDING TRIP TO BIRDSVILLE.

This trip started out as a quick decision. Plans were made, where to camp and the route to take. But with help from the shell map and the desert we found we had to improvise along the way, and a most enjoyable, unexpected birding trip occurred. Our starting date was 7/8/76, and we only stopped one night at each camp-site. We had intended staying out longer but I contracted the 'wog' and we had to finish the trip early.

Some birds we hoped to find we could not, and others we did not expect turned up. Over the round trip literally thousands of birds were observed, but we managed by the skin of our teeth 151 species overall, with 14 new species that we can add on to our list, these are:-

Australian Bustard *Eupodotis australis*. The first of this species to be observed, was a pair just west of Canterbury; 1 male was seen at camp four; a group of 16 were observed 3 miles north of camp 4; these were reluctant to take flight, and presume this to be a 'display' ground; 3 were seen between Monkira and Morney, all birds in undulating grassland habitat.

Flock Pigeon *Histriophaps histionica*. 1 bird flew low and slow, the facial markings distinctive between Monkira and Morney. Another flew over low, a few miles further on. An interesting feature about this bird's flight is that the tail appears short, and the wings stubby giving it an owl-like appearance, the flight was very slow wingbeats, interspersed with a glide with upheld wings, that is so short the bird appears to miss a beat. Both birds were found in grasslands with eremophila bushes.

Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush *Cinclosoma cinnamomeum castaneothorax*. 1 male observed on sparse heath covered stony slope, with dead tree litter between Ardoch and Thargomindah. A pair were found on an open stony hill between Dynever downs and Cannamulla. This species will fly and perch in low bushes. Besides the call recorded in books, we noticed these birds are more inclined to utter a high pitched 'peep'.

Halls Babbler *Pomatostomus halli*. 1 bird observed in a dry gully lined with casuarina at Morney, and another heard calling a few hundred yards off; a pair were found nesting between Dynever Downs and Eulo. The nest was small for that of a babbler, placed in a eucalypt sapling 10 feet from the ground, in a dry gully on the edge of mixed woodland with an understorey of shrubs. One bird was seen to enter the nest, and after a period of 5 minutes two birds emerged, this is the most silent of the babbler group but all the birds we observed did utter a more stacato, higher pitched call resembling 'chacka-chacka-chacka-chak'.

Chestnut-crowned Babbler *Pomatostomus ruficeps*. 5 were observed on open ground, with only the barest of tree litter and heath. 12 more were observed in a similar habitat, all between Toompine and Thargomindah. We found this species to be more of a ground loving habit than other babblers.

Black-backed Wren *Malurus melanotus*. Our first view of this species was in mixed stunted woodland, when we found 6 family parties all with a fully plumaged male in attendance, 15 miles east of Lake Dartmouth, all were within 100 square yards, our other observation was another family group between Adavale and Bulgroo.

Whiteface *Aphelocephala leucopsis*. A group of 5 were observed on open, stony heath, in a mixed flock with Yellow-tailed Thornbill, Buff-tailed Thornbill. In flight the Whiteface can be told from the others by a light rump and more green coloured back and wings. We also found a trio between Eulo and Cunnamulla on the roadside and in low open heath. We also discovered this species, unless observed from close quarters cannot readily be identified, if you are not acquainted with it.

Orange Chat *Ephthianura tricolor*. Our first encounter with this species was just west of Mt. Leonard, in open stony desert with small bushes, they then appeared as one of the more common birds, right through to Morney. They were more abundant than Crimson Chats, being observed at all habitats.

Gibber-bird *Ashbyia lovensis*. First seen between Windora and Farras Creek. Then observed in all open and vegetated habitats, we found them abundant and a pair or more will fly off the roadside every few hundred yards. Only once did we find this species in a mixed flock with other Chats.

Wedgebill *Psophodes cristatus*. The first four were seen quite unexpectedly, on the roadside between camp 2 and Lynwood. They resemble babblers in flight, the tail band being very distinctive, on landing the tail is fanned downwards. About 20 observed at Lake Bindegolly in open eremophilla heath.

Black Honeyeater *Certhioryx niger*. 1 female and 2 males viewed at camp 2 feeding on blossoming eucalypt. 1 male observed 15 miles west of Quilpie on epacris heath. Between Quilpie and Thargomindah about 10 birds of both sexes observed, always on heath or sparse eucalypts. We first heard a male call from a distance of 150 yards, and it sounded like a soft high pitched 'ping', but when to within 30 yards it

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Pied Honeyeater *Certhionyx variegatus*. Only one male of this species was observed, sitting on a low dead tree for nearly 5 minutes, this bird was found at exactly the same area as our first Whiteface and Chestnut-br. Quail-thrush. In flight this species could easily be overlooked through its similarity to the White-winged Triller.

(cont/d.)

A BIRDING TRIP TO BIRDSVILLE (cont/d.)

Masked Woodswallow *Artamus personatus*. The first we saw of this species was a mixed flock with White-browed Woodswallow feeding honeyeater fashion on the blossoms of a flowering eucalypt at camp 2. From that moment on it became a very common bird on the trip.

Budgerigah *Melopsittacus undulatus*. The first small flock was observed at camp 2 and from that moment on this became another very common species throughout the trip. This is the first time we had seen this species in its natural habitat, as I do not count aviary escapees in the Brisbane area.

Chris also observed her first Black Falcon and Little Corella.

Apparently the west had had some rain prior to our trip, as there was luxuriant plant growth, a local tells us that the best time for wild flowers is September.

Some unusual sightings must surely be the following: Osprey at Lake Dartmouth, Plumed Egret at Windora, Crested Grebe at Windora, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper at Windora, Royal Spoonbill on the river at Birdsville, Little Cuckoo-shrikes were found to be not uncommon at Monkira, Olive-backed Oriole at Monkira, Dusky Woodswallow (5) at same site as Halls Babbler nest, Pied Currawong at 20 miles west of Adavale.

Although we consider the new species and experience valuable the show must go to our camp at Monkira, when in the evening a vast flock of Black Cormorants flew overhead in small to large formations, numbering 1800 the Little Black being the minority. The next morning they flighted back again, accompanied by 5 Brolgas, 30 Pelicans, and 1200 Little Corellas. While in the paddock 8 Brolgas performed the 'dance of the Brolgas', this we discovered by investigating those strange noises. Later in the day we witnessed a flock of Little Corellas numbering about 3000, with about 500 Galahs, this vast congregation was 500 yards long by 30 yards wide, they were all on the ground, and stretched across the road, forcing us to stop. These were seen just west of Morney.

Every habitat imaginable was investigated in our search for birds. An interesting feature was a Purple-backed Wren nest in a clump of mistletoe, it had a slight tunnel entrance on one side, it was 4 feet off the ground, and contained 2 eggs that could be seen without touching the nest. This was at Lake Bindegolly.

Over most of the journey the roads are good, and out west could put a few suburban councils to shame. The only bad piece was shocking, that was from Adavale to Bulgroo, we had hoped to travel from Adavale to Windora in one day, but the road is nearly non-existent, and after losing the muffler 4 times in 2 miles I took it off and the trip was finished without it. The store owner told us that no-one had got through in months, the last one to try was pulled out by horse and cart!

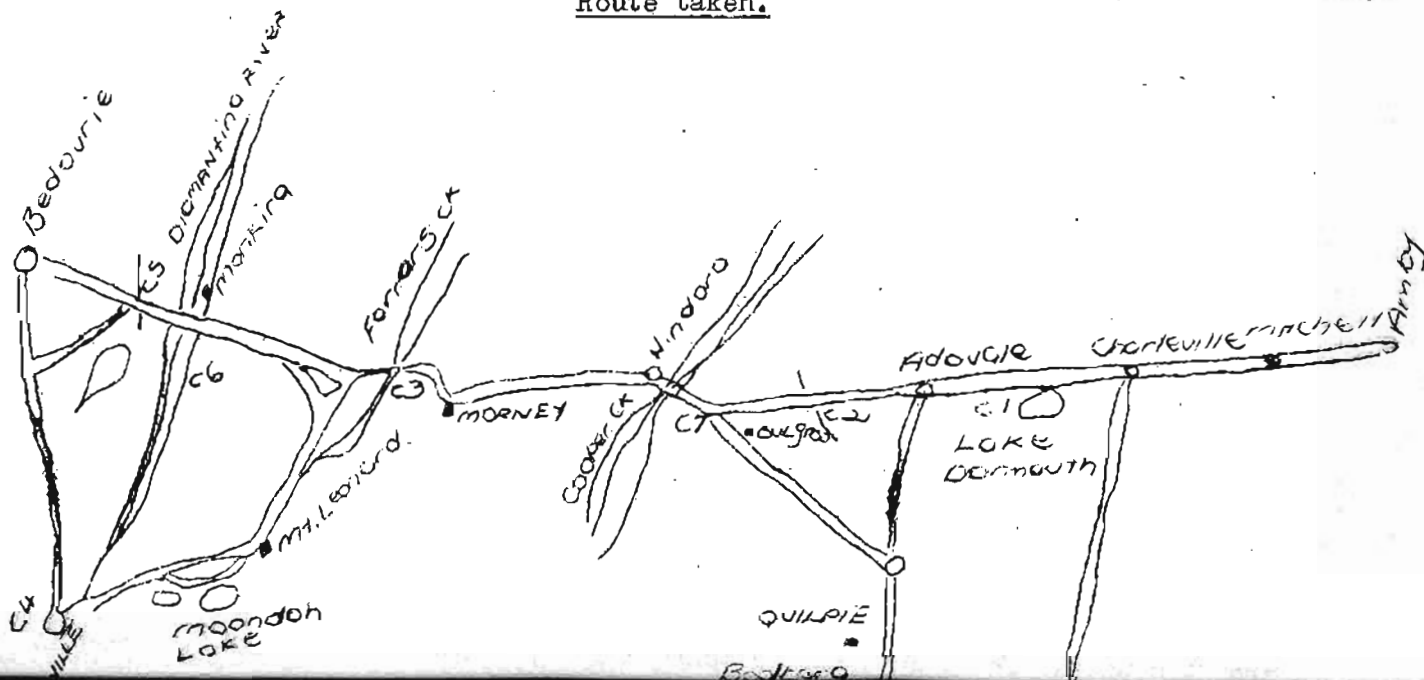
But to compensate for that we did record 91 species on that stretch, 5 of which were new to us.

If you intend going west do it now before the road becomes lined in the typical Aussie way, with empty stubbies!

Reg & Chris Eley.

(to be continued)

Route taken.



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Apparently the west had had some rain prior to our trip, as there was luxuriant plant growth, a local tells us that the best time for wild flowers is September.

Some unusual sightings must surely be the following: Osprey at Lake Dartmouth, Plumed Egret at Windora, Crested Grebe at Windora, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper at Windora, Royal Spoonbill on the river at Birdsville, Little Cuckoo-shrikes were found to be not uncommon at Monkira, Olive-backed Oriole at Monkira, Dusky Woodswallow (5) at same site as Halls Babbler nest, Pied Currawong at 20 miles west of Adavale.

Although we consider the new species and experience valuable the show must go to our camp at Monkira, when in the evening a vast flock of Black Cormorants flew overhead in small to large formations, numbering 1800 the Little Black being the minority. The next morning they flighted back again, accompanied by 5 Brolgas, 30 Pelicans, and 1200 Little Corellas. While in the paddock 8 Brolgas performed the 'dance of the Brolgas', this we discovered by investigating those strange noises. Later in the day we witnessed a flock of Little Corellas numbering about 3000, with about 500 Galahs, this vast congregation was 500 yards long by 30 yards wide, they were all on the ground, and stretched across the road, forcing us to stop. These were seen just west of Morney.

Every habitat imaginable was investigated in our search for birds. An interesting feature was a Purple-backed Wren nest in a clump of mistletoe, it had a slight tunnel entrance on one side, it was 4 feet off the ground, and contained 2 eggs that could be seen without touching the nest. This was at Lake Bindegolly.

Over most of the journey the roads are good, and out west could put a few suburban councils to shame. The only bad piece was shocking, that was from Adavale to Bulgroo, we had hoped to travel from Adavale to Windora in one day, but the road is nearly non-existent, and after losing the muffler 4 times in 2 miles I took it off and the trip was finished without it. The store owner told us that no-one had got through in months, the last one to try was pulled out by horse and cart!

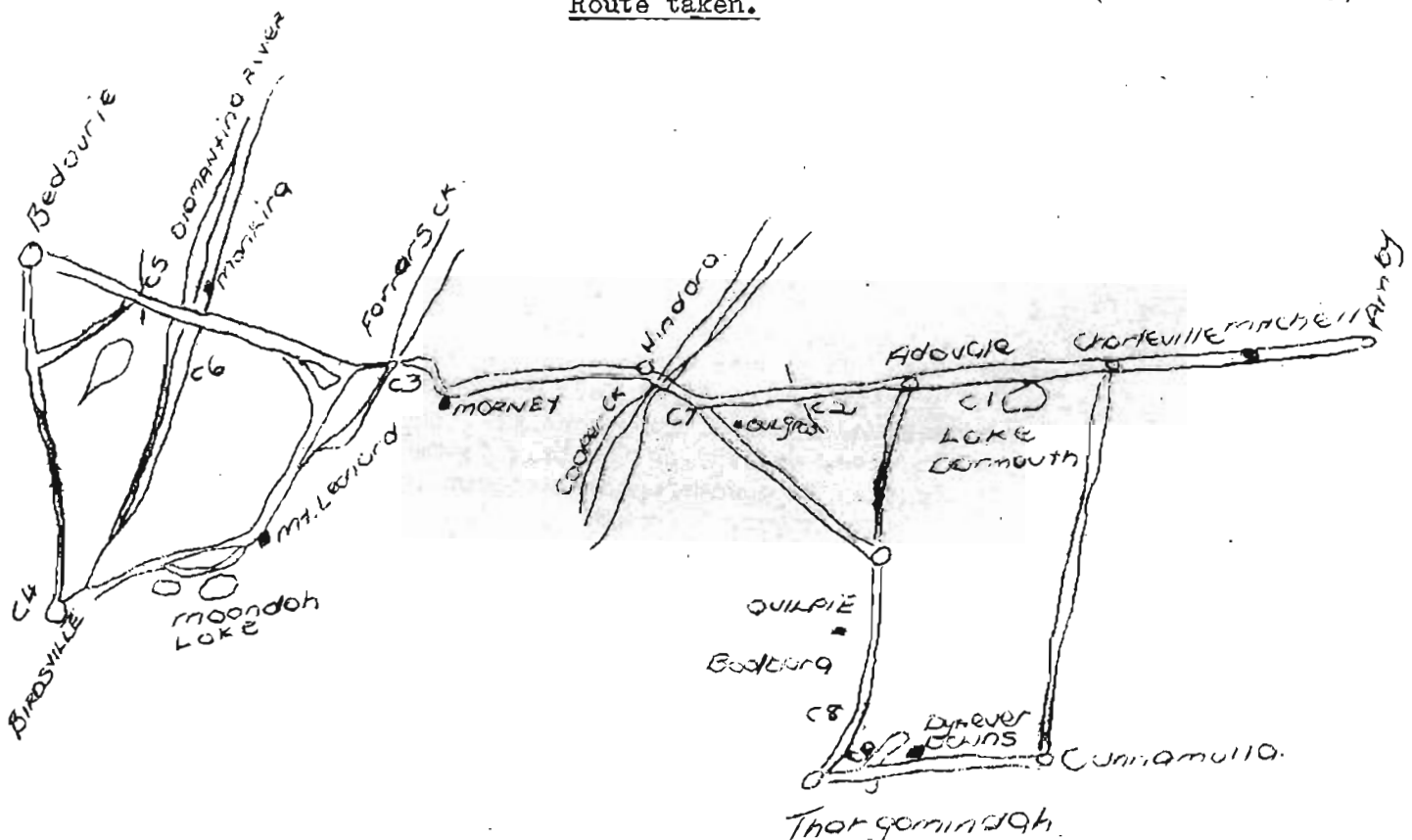
But to compensate for that we did record 91 species on that stretch, 5 of which were new to us.

If you intend going west do it now before the road becomes lined in the typical Aussie way, with empty stubbies!

Reg & Chris Eley.

(to be continued)

Route taken.



BRISBANE OUTING - 16.10.76.

A small party of members found six days convalescence following our bird count sufficient to allow them to embark upon another excursion, this time to join the Q.O.S. outing at Thornside.

We were fortunate enough to gain good views of many waders including some new birds for most members, and familiarisation for all with a number of species which we may never expect to add to our Toowoomba list.

Species observed at Thornside included:-

Australian Pelican	Greenshank
Pied Cormorant	Terek Sandpiper
Mangrove Heron	Bar-tailed Godwit
White Ibis	Knot
Brahminy Kite	Great Knot
Masked Plover	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper
Eastern Golden Plover	Curlew Sandpiper
Mongolian Dotterel	Red-necked Stint
Large-billed Dotterel	Silver Gull
Red-capped Dotterel	Gull-billed Tern
Turnstone	Caspian Tern
Eastern Curlew	Little Tern
Whimbrel	
Grey-tailed Tattler	(Also at Manly - Little Pied Cormorant Pied Oystercatcher).

Bill Jolly.

Extract from "Courier Mail" dated 23.10.76.

"AUSTRALIAN BIRDS SOLD"

LONDON: (AAP Reuter) - A case of 44 Australian birds brought \$2540 at auction here yesterday.

The 19th century specimens in a sealed glass case, included a Tawny Frogmouth, Golden Whistler, Little Wattlebirds, Spotted Pardalotes, various parrots, cockatoos and robins. The buyer was a private German collector.

(RGH)

OUTING FOR NOVEMBER, 1976.

Sunday, 14th November, 1976. Karinya Park, Irongate.

Meet at 8.15 a.m., Pigott's car park. John Walter (leader).

OUTING FOR DECEMBER, 1976.

Redwood Park, then to annual barbecue and get-together on Alan Graham's property - details to be advised.

NEW MEMBERS.

The club is pleased to welcome Graham Corbin, 11, Ocean Street, Toowoomba.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

Toowoomba University Centre
Eighth Report of the Curators
Calendar Year 1975.

The Darling Downs Naturalist,
November, 1976.

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(SECRETARY'S REPORT OVERLEAF).

SECRETARY'S REPORT OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 8TH OCTOBER, 1976.

The Club's Annual General Meeting was held at Bill and Eileen Jolly's home, 17, Herries St., Toowoomba, starting at 7.30 p.m. Eleven members and one visitor were present.

Our Constitution requires that an election of all Club officers be held during October of each year. At the commencement of the meeting four (4) signed nominations had been received as follows:-

	<u>Nominee</u>	<u>Nominator</u>
President	Bill Jolly	Sylvia Graham
Secretary/Treasurer	Alan Graham	Chris Bianchi
Editor	Ron Hopkinson	Bill Jolly
Records Officer/Librarian	Ron Hopkinson	Bill Jolly

As no further nominations had been received the above nominees were declared elected for the year commencing 1976.

The Treasurer's report for the year to 8.10.76. was presented at the Meeting. Income from Annual Subscriptions was boosted by several donations from members and the sale of Toowoomba-based Check-lists. The publication of our News-sheet accounted for the larger part of the expenditure for the year and it is envisaged that this will continue to be the main drain on our finances in the year ahead. In spite of the high cost of News-sheet production the club remained in the 'black' with a balance of \$0.53 as at 8.10.76.

	<u>Income.</u>		<u>Expenditure.</u>
	\$		\$
Subscriptions	47.00	Paper	15.21
		Stencils	20.59
Donations	17.07	Printing	24.15
		Stationery/Postage	6.69
Check-list sales	6.50	Phone	3.40
	<u>70.57</u>		<u>70.04</u>

Cash in hand \$0.53.

The last item for discussion at the Meeting was the organisation of the teams for the club's 1st Annual Bird Count to be held within the Toowoomba-based 10km rad on 10.10.76. Initially eight teams were formed and allocated areas in which to start their count. Any teams completing their area were requested to report to 17, Herries Street for re-allocation to another area and all completed lists were to be returned to the Secretary as soon as possible after completion of the count.

The Meeting closed at 10.35 p.m.

Alan Graham.

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