



"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. APRIL 1986.

PEOPLE POWER

Readers who have followed the Editorials over the last few months will recall that in February I expressed the view that people who do not necessarily fit the popular media image of "Greenies" could still achieve much in matters of conservation. In March issue I wished for someone like Mrs. Aquino to appear in our fair State.

Well, Mrs. Aquino has her hands full in the Phillipines, so when the Lindeman Island deal raised its greedy head, ordinary people displayed their "People Power" and 50,000 of us petitioned against it and East-West Airlines dropped their plans. Hooray for People Power.

The Premier, no doubt, would accuse me of "flogging a dead horse", but in such matters it is the principle (or in this case, the lack of it) behind such schemes that is at stake. Lindeman Island, while perhaps not a dead horse, is at least lying down resting but the concept of caring about such things as National Heritage still remains.

For as surely as the Good Lord made little green apples, other such schemes will arise in the future. There seems to be no satisfying the greed of big business or some politicians. For example, keep an eye on what is happening in Tasmania and New South Wales with the wood chip industry. Whole forests are being felled and flogged to Japan for as little as \$3.00 per tonne. My late lamented Grandmother to the contrary notwithstanding, I venture to suggest that Queensland is not too far down the wood chip hit list.

However it would seem that recent Editorials have made some members uncomfortable. I should like to point out that the views expressed are entirely my own and do not necessarily reflect Club Executive policy. I had assumed that that was understood but in the interests of clarity I make that formal statement. I have received, directly, several expressions of agreement, so I presume there is at least some measure of support.

If you disagree with the viewpoint why not put your ideas on paper in the form of a letter to the Editor? I am always asking for contributions so perhaps we could establish a forum on matters of conservation.

It may also be appropriate to clarify the apparent political nature of my comments. Given the fact that it is politicians who make the deals to sell off National Parks I fail to see how one can differ with them without appearing political. When it comes to politicians, I am, if not cynical, at least apolitical. I very much agree with the old lady who said, "I don't like voting for them, it only encourages them". I assure you that if it was the other side planning to flog off part of the Great Barrier Reef I would attack them in the same way.

It seems to me that the only alternative is to sit meekly in the corner and say nothing while politicians who think only of the next election and not the next generation give away your Heritage, and mine. Well, I for one will not cop that. While, of course, one does not want to lose perspective through an excess of emotion, I do feel that a dose of good old-fashioned anger at some of the things that are done to this little planet of ours is needed at times.

After East-West withdrew, the Premier made the puerile comment, "We'll leave it (Lindeman) to the goats and not all the goats are on the Island." I am happy to say that I am one of the 50,000 "goats".
As a member of a bird club, were you?

Ron Hopkinson

BINOCULAR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.

A Special Performance Optimum Optical Formula.

Latest news from Japan concerns an interesting and exciting break-through in binocular technology which has brought about an ultra-modern design in binoculars.

As we all know, the current design has maintained the porro prism form for decades and one would have thought that, except for roof prisms, the designers had exhausted the possibilities of the type.

That is not so. Some Japanese manufacturers, anxious to increase their share of the market set up a small research team to develop a Special Performance Optimum Optical Formula.

Eventually the team, which consisted of optical and electronic engineers, came up with a startling design which is a truly modern mix of optics and electronics. Yes, our familiar binoculars have entered the electronic age.

Although retaining much the same configuration as has the porro prism type, an incredibly small computer has been built into the chambers containing the objective lens. Of course, by the standards of computer technology it is a basic little device, yet it represents a miracle of miniaturization, employing small operating buttons built into the lens barrels, so that the viewer can operate the computer glasses at eye level.

Power source and the primary computer unit are housed in a pack about the size of a cigarette packet. This can be carried in a shirt (or skirt) pocket and the fine connecting wire is carried along the neck strap into the rear end of the glasses.

Reluctant to divulge too many trade secrets at this stage the manufacturers (The Mikasi Optical Company) state that the computer can be programmed for up to fifty different viewings. This means that birders, for instance, can plot features for fifty separate species; size, colours etc. While this is a bit limited, in our case we could feed in data, say, on some of the species seen in our area but not yet on the list. Or if one were planning a trip to a distant area one could research the species likely there and programme their salient identification points.

Information stored in the computer can be compared to incoming visual data by means of small sensors set behind the objective lens. Also a built in grid scale can determine physical size at viewing distances up to approximately 100 metres.

Light Emitting Diodes (LED's) are used to confirm identification. For instance, on viewing a bird one would need to decide if it was Passerine or non-Passerine, press the appropriate button and the sensors scan for size, colours and if a match is made with the memory bank a set of green LED's appears in the field of view giving a code number for that species. A red LED indicates no match and it's back to the field guide.

Focussing, too, has been automated with this instrument. It is only necessary to centre the bird in the field of view, depress yet another button and a small servo motor moves internal lenses back and forth while an infra-red beam measures the exact distance to the subject. No more twirling the little wheel as the bird flits around. Lock on with this device and it stays in focus even though the subject moves.

Of course you are going to ask "Yeah, great but how much for this?" Well a trade off has to be made for such a wondrous device. Although having the power of 8x, 30 the glasses are about the size and weight of 10x, 50. They will go on sale in the United States at first for about \$300(A). A small price to pay for such a wonder.

BINOCULAR RESEARCH C/td.

Ornithology is not the only use for them, naturally. Many specialized interests would employ them. Aircraft spotters, yachting clubs and racegoers to name but a few.

Lastly, while it may seem slightly clumsy, as yet, in size and weight, no doubt further research will reduce these factors. For instance, the team which developed the glasses is now working on an infra-red image intensifier which will make night viewing almost as bright as day. Their problem is overcoming acronyms caused by leading letters of paragraphs.

Ron Hopkinson.

THE HEAD.

On a recent week-end, in early March, Rod Hobson and I made the drive through Warwick and Killarney to Queen Mary's Falls National Park. It is a scenic drive which many members have probably made and, no doubt, enjoyed. To any who have returned by doubling back through Warwick, I should like to suggest that next time you continue Eastwards towards Boonah.

Just a few kilometres from the Falls is a look-out from which is revealed what must be one of the most breath-taking scenes in South East Queensland. The viewpoint is set in the side of the ridge along which the road passes. One approaches from a heavily forested section and the view seems to be suddenly revealed.

In the valley below you is "The Head", the area which gives rise to the Condamine River. From here the river begins the journey which ends at Lake Alexandrina and the Southern Ocean. To the North East stands Wilson's Peak, while to the north is Mt. Roberts/Superbus (site of the tragic Lincoln Bomber crash in 1955). Beyond that, stretching generally Northwards is the Great Dividing Range.

If you happen to see it on a superb early Autumn morning, as we did, I am sure you will be so enthralled that you will just stand and look, as we did. It needed only a Wedge-tailed Eagle to round it off. We were not disappointed. An Eagle appeared, slightly below our line of view and flew along the valley, to our right.

Not far along, the great Raptor went into an almost vertical climb, turned, and with wings half closed, dived. This manoeuvre was repeated several times---Climb, stall turn, closedwing dive. There was no other Eagle present that we could detect but we concluded that it was probably a male displaying over breeding territory. In a word, spectacular.

Just to complete things, a Grey Goshawk (Grey Phase) made the journey past us, along the face of the ridge. A morning to remember.

Ron Hopkinson.

SEASONAL SPECIES SURVEY.

The Records Officer has requested that we remind you that April is the "A" in JAJO. It is the middle month of the Autumn season. Given the lovely fine days we have been experiencing, we hope that you have been out and about checking on species present. If you have doubt about the sector boundaries don't hesitate to contact Lesley, Angela or Ron.

EXECUTIVE NOTES

It was decided to send a \$10 donation to the Chinchilla Field Naturalists' Club in thanks and appreciation for the organization of the beaut Easter campout.

President

BIRD BANDING WEEKEND

The bird-banding weekend at Audrey Sorensen's property drew a lot of interest. Mike Hines and his son Barney arrived at about 10.00 am on Saturday and mist-nets were put up almost straight away. Three were situated across flight paths to the bird baths in Audrey's garden while several more ran along beside the track through the vine scrub.

Things were quite slow for most of the day which gave us plenty of opportunity to look at the birds close at hand. About four o'clock it was a different story with the need for two banders and six collectors working flat out. Sunday was again at a more leisurely pace and interested people had the chance to band one or two birds themselves.

Overall we had some good, first-hand experience at erecting mist-nets, retrieving birds from nets, recording data, and banding birds. Mike's invaluable knowledge gave us many tips for a smooth running project when we get it going. Audrey and I have applied for "B" class banders' licences.

The number of birds banded was 124 with 19 species represented. Lewin's Honeyeaters were the most common bird banded being 15% of the total. The most interesting to me were the Shining Bronze-cuckoos, Black-faced Monarch, Eastern Yellow Robin and Eastern Whipbird.

Lesley Beaton

WILDLIFE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF QUEENSLAND

On Tuesday, March 25, Steve & Viola Temple-Watts called a public meeting with the idea of starting a W.P.S.Q. branch in Toowoomba. Seven people turned up.

Both Steve & Viola are involved with the Dalby and Oakey W.P.S.Q. branches and felt there may be a need for one in Toowoomba. I believe that there is a need and that many other people would be interested and that perhaps they were unaware of the meeting. I know I nearly missed it.

It was decided to make the idea more public especially by word-of-mouth and that another meeting would be called around about the last two weeks of May to see if any more interest had been generated.

If you feel you would like to support such a venture, please keep a look out for an article in "The Chronicle" about the meeting.

Lesley Beaton

The combined Easter campout with the Chinchilla Field Naturalists' Club was a terrific weekend. Seven members and friends from the Club joined thirty-odd Nats. at Dukes Plains just south of Theodore.

It was good to renew friendships made on past outings. The Nats. always make us feel very welcome, and the organization by president Frank Truscott and John Mason ensured a relaxing time.

The gorge itself was very dry and there was not a great deal of bird life, however the botanists were beside themselves over a number of their finds.

Dukes Plains was a different matter with a variety of birds coming in to the numerous dams.

The following list is a personal one for the weekend. The complete list will be printed in Urimbirra (the Nats newsletter).

Species list: Little Grebe, Pelican, Pacific Heron, White-faced Heron, Straw-necked Ibis, Plumed Whistling-duck, Black Duck, Black-shouldered Kite, Aust. Goshawk, Wedge-tailed Eagle⁺, Brown Falcon, Aust. Bustard, Masked Lapwing, Black-fronted Plover, Peaceful⁺ & Bar-shouldered Dove, Crested Pigeon⁺, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo⁺, Rainbow⁺ & Scaly-breasted Lorikeet⁺, King Parrot, Cockateil, Pale-headed Rosella, Pallid Cuckoo, Laughing Kookaburra, Richard's Pipit, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Rufous Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush*, Restless Flycatcher, Willie Wagtail, Grey-crowned Babbler, Red-backed Wren, Weebill, Buff-rumped Thornbill, White-throated Treecreeper*, Striped Honeyeater, Noisy & Little Friarbirds, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Noisy Miner, Lewin's*, Singing, White-eared, White-throated & Brown Honeyeaters, Mistletoebird, Spotted* & Striated⁺ Pardalotes, Double-barred Finch, Chestnut-breasted Mannikin, Figbird, Spotted Bowerbird, Apostlebird, Magpie-lark, White-breasted Woodswallow, Grey & Pied Butcherbirds, Aust. Magpie, Pied Currawong⁺, Torresian Crow.

61 species

⁺ - birds seen at both Isla Gorge and Dukes Plains.

* - birds seen at Isla Gorge only.

On the way home on Monday, we stopped at a beautiful waterhole on Palm Tree Creek approximately 15 km north of Taroom. This oasis of water and palm trees (*Livistona* species) was abundant with bird life. I'm sure we would have identified more if we'd had a telescope or the ducks had moved closer.

We also saw Emus near Wandoan.

Species list: Little Pied Cormorant, White-faced Heron, Great & Intermediate Egrets, Jabiru, Straw-necked Ibis, Black Swan, Black Duck, Maned Duck, Whistling Kite, Aust. Hobby, Brolga, Laughing Kookaburra, Little Friarbird, Noisy Miner, Magpie-lark, Torresian Crow.

17 species

Lesley Beaton

MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES.

Australian Pelican. 16.3.86 Atkinson's Dam. (20+). AK. LR.
Glossy Ibis. 16.3.86 Glenore Grove AK. LR.
Magpie Goose. 4.4.86 Hood's Lagoon. (16). LB. JB. RH. REH.
" " 3.3.86 Crestwood Estate, Glenore Grove. AS.
Whistling Kite. 5.4.86 Airborne over Mabel Street. AK.
Collared Sparrowhawk. 24.11.85 Airborne over Dunmore Street. LB.
Grey Goshawk (White Phase). 8.3.86 Bunya Mtns. LR.
Silver Gull. 9.4.86 Toowoomba Showgrounds lake. AK.
Little Lorikeet. 28.3.86 Mabel Street. AK.
Crested Shrike-tit. 8.3.86 Bunya Mtns. LR.
Mistletoebird. 27.12.85. Male, Home Garden, 15 Dunmore Street. LB.

JB: John Ball. LB: Lesley Beaton. RH: Rod Hobson. REH: Ron Hopkinson
AK: Angela Kilmartin. LR: Lyn Rowan. AS: Ann Shore.

FIELD DAY FOR APRIL.

Date: Sunday, April 27th. 1986.
Place: Welcamp Area.
Assembly Point: Pigott's Car Park.
Time: 7.15am for departure at 7.30am Sharp.
Leader: Lesley Beaton.

LIBRARY NOTES.

Publications Received.
Birds. (RSPB Magazine) Autumn 1985.
The Bird Observer. #648, 649. January, February 1986.
Q.O.S. Newsletter. Vol. 7 #1 January, February 1986.
Urimbirra. Vol. 20 #1 January 1986.
The Sunbird (Q.O.S.) Vol. 15 #3 September 1985
The Sunbird Vol. 15 #4 December 1985
The Bird Observer. #650 March 1986.
Urimbirra. Vol. 20 #2&3 February, March 1986.
Darling Downs Naturalist. #380 & 381 March, April 1986.
Q.O.S. Newsletter Vol. 17 #2 March 1986.

Books.

Australia's Beautiful Coastline (Womens' Weekly) Recently donated by
Lyn Rowan.

Nancy Belcher. Librarian