

"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. JULY 1986.

JEWELS IN THE CROWN.

At times, to the environmentally conscious person, it seems that there is just no end to the battle with greed and ecological stupidity.

This gloom and doom opening sentence comes about, I'm afraid, because we have news of an agreement made between the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Queensland Council of Bird Societies (representing caged bird interests). The agreement allows the keeping of WRENS by selected aviculturalists for a trial period of two years, with the object of breeding for the caged bird trade.

This is nothing short of appalling.

I view with repugnance the whole idea of keeping any bird in a cage. However, it would seem that we are stuck, for always, with Parrots and Finches spending their lives thus, but to take the little jewels in the crown of our Natural Heritage and have them beating their wings against the confines of a cage seems to me to be totally devoid of aesthetics or any sensitivity for the birds. They are simply one more item which can be traded in by the caged bird trade.

It is unfortunate that the agreement was made without consultation with any naturalist groups. Had this been done then the welfare of the birds, rather than the wallets of the cage bird trade might have been considered. Inasmuch as a successful trial will lead to open trading in Wrens, what other insectivorous species will be next? Or how many wrens will have to die in cages for the experiment to be judged unsuccessful?

Assuming that at present, because of previous legislation, there are no such species in captivity in Queensland to provide breeding stock, where will such stock be obtained? Will the caged bird group be granted permits to trap in the wild? Do not be misled into thinking that the Parrots and Finches so popular in captivity were all bred in trade; some of them no doubt, but I venture to suggest that despite existing legislation to the contrary, many of them are taken from the free, wild state we so enjoy, to be sold off.

The aspect that particularly distresses this writer is that the floodgates may well be opened for the despicable types who indulge in the odious practice of smuggling birds to overseas fanciers for ridiculous prices. The fact that dozens of birds may die before they sell one live one matters not to them. Inasmuch as the Family Maluridae is restricted to Australia and New Guinea, what price a breeding plumaged male to some rich, unscrupulous Yankee collector? Or the scarcer Grasswrens of the West and North?

Do not be complacent about it, fellow members. If you care enough about wild birds to be a member of this Club, then hopefully you too feel saddened at the sight of any bird constricted by a cage. A Club such as ours which recognizes that a very large part of the beauty of birds is their freedom, the priceless gift of flight, ought to do its utmost to resist this move.

Ron Hopkinson.

SEASONAL SPECIES SURVEY.

Just a reminder to participating members that July is the middle month of the winter season. Hope you can put in the extra effort this month to visit your usual Sectors. We will soon have the promised Atlas of Sector Boundaries for your guidance. If you would like to take part in the recording scheme please contact the Records Officer.

ADDRESS OF THE MINISTER FOR NATIONAL PARKS.

The address, if you wish to write to the Minister is as follows:

The Honourable P.R. McKechnie M.L.A.
Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and the Arts,
P.O. Box 155
NORTH QUAY. Q. 4000.

TRAVEL NOTES.

During a short stay in the Clifton Beach area, north of Cairns, I was able to observe some of the pretty birds that I haven't seen in the Toowoomba area. Every evening at dusk over fifty Sulphur-crested Cockatoos arrived with lots of squawking to settle in the tops of the trees at the edge of the rainforest. They were just as noisy when they departed around 5am in the morning. A Yellow-bellied Sunbird darted in and out of the window every morning and there were many types of Honeyeaters amongst the native shrubs.

A pair of Rainbow Bee-eaters and many Forest Kingfishers flew on to the wires and the dead tree branches. The Spangled Drongo, with the "fish-tail" was often around, also the Yellow Oriole. There were dozens of little Peaceful Doves in the horse paddock. I believe the Torres Strait Pigeon is there, too. Several pretty Finches with flashes of bright red were in the dry grass. Wrens could be heard in the dark red, orange and yellow Lantana and this also attracted the beautiful Ulysses or Mountain Blue Butterfly.

The birds in the cane fields were many and varied-- the Black Kite, the Brahminy Kite and the Australian Kestrel always hovering overhead. It was quite spectacular watching an early morning aerial spraying of the cane, but one wonders what long term effect this will have on the birdlife.

Nancy Belcher.

TWO PEOPLES BAY NATURE RESERVE.

In September 1985 John and Debbie Sullivan and myself went on a birding holiday to South-west Western Australia. The highlight of the trip was two days spent at Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve.

Using Albany as a base we made an early start on the Reserve on the 20th September. The main aim of the trip was to see the Noisy Scrub-bird and the Western Bristlebird. After having a chat to the Rangers and getting a few more sites for the birds we began looking.

We could hear Scrub-birds calling and we got within a few feet of them, but seeing them is a different matter. The area near the Ranger's office where we were looking is very thick and makes for difficult birding, so after a few hours we tried another spot which we hoped would be more productive.

As a quick interlude, we had a look for the Western Bristlebird and were lucky enough to get excellent views of a male displaying on a nearby bush.

TWO PEOPLES BAY C/td.

With the Bristlebird out of the way we again began our search for the Scrub-bird. We spent all that afternoon looking for it in a different habitat without success, again getting very close but never seeing it. But the day wasn't wasted, as while looking for the Scrub-bird we saw Yellow-nosed Albatross, Red-capped Parrot, White-breasted Robin, Western Whipbird, Splendid Wren, Red-winged Wren, Southern Emu-wren and Western Spinebill.

The next day again began early as we had thirteen sites to check out. The Scrub-bird being an inquisitive bird, it checks out intruders into its territory; coming very close, but staying well hidden, it soon departs. Unless the bird is seen fairly quickly (within thirty minutes or so) it is probably better to move on to the next site and start again. We did this and managed to get a quick glimpse of a single bird at the fourth locality. We went on to check the others without success.

The only endemic species in the South-west, left to us, was the Red-eared Firetail and we managed to see that at the last Scrub-bird site. In the Reserve that day we also sighted Square-tailed Kite, Spotless Crane, Brush Bronzewing, White-tailed Black Cockatoos, Western Rosella, Rock Parrot and Grey Currawong.

On any trip to the South-west corner a stop at Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve is a must for any birder.

Pat McConnell.

FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS.

Roy and I have called a temporary halt to our wanderings and now rent an old farm house at Kalbar, a village outside Boonah. It is fairly isolated and we have lovely views over the paddocks and to the mountains.

One of our greatest joys is to keep an eye on all our neighbours; their comings and goings. The thirty or forty Double-barred Finches - our nearest neighbours, who live in a dense bush of Lantana - are waiting on the wire for their daily handout of seeds, and to come to the birdbath. Are the Zebra and Plum-headed Finches with them today?

The Mistletoebird and White-throated Gerygone are vivid splashes of colour while the Chestnut-breasted Mannikin are in and out of the scrub beside the road.

From the kitchen window I watch the wedgetails who nest yearly on Obum-Obum Hill. But this week, as we were lunching on the back verandan, something in the paddock caught my eye. I picked up my binoculars and yes - it was the Wedgies busy eating something, surrounded by a dozen or more Crows all waiting their turn at the feast, when their Majesties had finished. Later we walked down the paddock and saw that it was a very freshly killed Hare. We were much amused at the Crows' behaviour as earlier we had seen them mobbing a large Kite, but the Eagles and also the Harrier which guests over our paddocks, they leave severely alone.

Another interesting sighting we have had is that of a willie Wagtail with a very faint eyebrow and flashing white wings. We have seen him two or three times in the gully down the road, but since we borrowed a telephoto lens to photograph him, we have not seen him! But we still watch for him and hope. The white wings are visible when he is perching but a little difficult to see against the white of his flanks.

Peggie Beaton.

EXECUTIVE NOTES

The Lockyer Peace and Environment Group has written to us asking if we would like to be involved in the Folk Festival this year. As we do very little P.R. below the Range, we felt it would be worthwhile to have a display on the Sunday and possibly an early morning bird walk. That will take place on the week-end of 14-16th November.

Many of you will have seen our letter to "The Chronicle" (Saturday July 5th) and also read Ron's editorial. We feel very strongly about any more birds being added to the list of caged birds and we feel that bird-watching clubs should have been consulted before any decision was made. As well as our letter to "The Chronicle", we have written to other natural history clubs making them aware of the situation, and to Mr. McKechnie, M.L.A., the Minister responsible.

Because of conservation issues that are cropping up from time to time, we have formed a Conservation sub-committee consisting of Angela Kilmartin, Ron Hopkinson, Ann Shore and Lyn Rowan. If anyone else is interested in being on that sub-committee, please get in touch with Angela.

Lastly, we have also formed a Species Checklist Committee, made up of Angela Kilmartin, Ron Hopkinson and Michael Atzeni. These three will vet any new birds that are put forward to be added to our list. We felt this to be necessary as the birds that are added from now on will be the less common species of the area.

Lesley Beaton.

FIELD DAY REPORT. SPICER'S GAP. 22/6/86.

We met at Moogerah Dam at 8.45am, a beautiful sunny morning, no wind but a decided nip in the air.

As ever, at Moogerah Lake there were hundreds of water birds, Black Swans, Cormorants, Darters, the grace of Pelicans in flight, Dotterels and Sandpipers.

In the lower picnic area where we went for morning tea, we saw quite a variety of bush birds. A Yellow Robin sitting in a tree where the sun caught it, looked like a Christmas bauble, shining brilliant yellow. Another brilliant sighting was an Azure Kingfisher, and I was thrilled to see an Eastern Spinebill, as I have not seen one for some time.

But our great thrill was the visit of a male Rose Robin, who sat on a fence and watched us having morning tea.

We then went on to Spicer's Gap, stopping en route to reconnoitre a place where on Saturday we had seen a small group of Diamond Firetails. Alas, they were not around but we saw Grey-crowned Babblers and Dusky Woodswallows. So on to the historical site of the Pioneers' Graves and Moss' Well and to the Governor's Chair where a cold wind precluded our having lunch there, but did not spoil our enjoyment of the Spectacular view from the Chair itself.

We returned to a sunny, sheltered spot overlooking Moss' Well whilst Honeyeaters, Pardalotes, Thornbills and Yellow-throated Scrubwrens together with White-browed Treecreepers kept us delighted as we lunched.

At Moss' Well, Merv and Lyn left us as they had decided- being in a 4WD- to take the route down from Spicer's Gap through to the Cunningham Highway, west of Cunningham's Gap. (I trust they made it safely and enjoyed it).

FIELD DAY REPORT C/td.

The rest of the party- consisting of Lesley, Roy, myself and visitor Pearl Glyde from Kalbar- stayed on to continue birding around Moss' Well, where many birds come down to drink.

Here we had the really thrilling experience of seeing a Wompoo Fruit-dove, in all its beautiful colours, sitting in a tree waiting for us to leave so it could come to drink. We watched it for quite some time and then left it to its drink.

Just after leaving Moss' Well, Lesley and Pearl who were ahead of Roy and I, saw a Wonga Pigeon. On our descent we also saw Eastern Rosellas, Scaly-breasted Lorikeets and King Parrots. In all we sighted 70 species, some new to our Kalbar list.

A lovely day. But as to our bird of the day- was it the lovely Rose Robin in his beautiful grey and rose, or the Wompoo Fruit-dove in lilac, yellow and green? I leave it to you to decide.

Peggie Beaton.

Species List. Includes Moogerah, Spicer's Gap and en route.		
Aust. Grebe	Wompoo Fruit-dove	Red-bkd. Fairy-wren
Aust. Pelican	Common Bronzewing	Yellow-thrtd. Scrubwren
Darter	Wonga Pigeon	Wht-thrtd. Treecreeper
Little Blk. Cormorant	Galah	Little Friarbird
Little Pied Cormorant	Rainbow Lorikeet	Blue-fcd. Honeyeater
Pacific Heron	Scaly-brst. Lorikeet	Noisy Miner
Cattle Egret	Aust. King Parrot	Lewin's Honeyeater
Great Egret	Eastern Rosella	Yellow-fcd. Honeyeater
Str.-nkd. Ibis	Pale-hded. Rosella	White-npd. Honeyeater
Royal Spoonbill	Horsfield's Brnz-cuckoo	Brown Honeyeater
Black Swan	Azure Kingfisher	Eastern Spinebill
Pacific Blk. Duck	Laughing Kookaburra	Spotted Pardalote
Grey Teal	Welcome Swallow	Striated Pardalote
Blk-shld. Kite	Richard's Pipit	Silvereye
Wedge-tld Eagle	Blk-fcd. Cuckoo-shrike	House Sparrow
Aust. Kestrel	Rose Robin	Common Starling
Dusky Moorhen	East. Yellow Robin	Aust. Magpie-lark
Eurasian Coot	Jacky Winter	Dusky Woodswallow
Masked Lapwing	Golden Whistler	Grey Butcherbird
Red-kneed Dotterel	Restless Flycatcher	Pied Butcherbird
Blk-frntd Plover	Grey Fantail	Aust. Magpie
Blk.-winged Stilt	Willie Wagtail	Pied Currawong
Sharp-tld Sandpiper	Grey-crnd. Babbler	Torresian Crow
Silver Gull	Gldn-head. Cisticola	

FIELD DAY FOR JULY.

Date: Sunday, July 27th 1986.
Place: Murphy's Creek-Hampton.
Assembly Point: Pigott's Car Park.
Time: 7.15am for departure 7.30am SHARP.
Leader: Lesley Beaton.

SPECIAL FIELD DAY FOR AUGUST. COMBINED WITH Q.O.S.

Date: Sunday, August 10th. 1986. Time: 8am.
Place: Minden area. Meet at Haigslea School which is 1km. East of the Sundowner Hotel, on the Southern side of Warrego Highway. The trip will probably last till mid-afternoon but visitors should feel free to leave earlier if necessary.
Leader: Graham Leach (Q.O.S.)

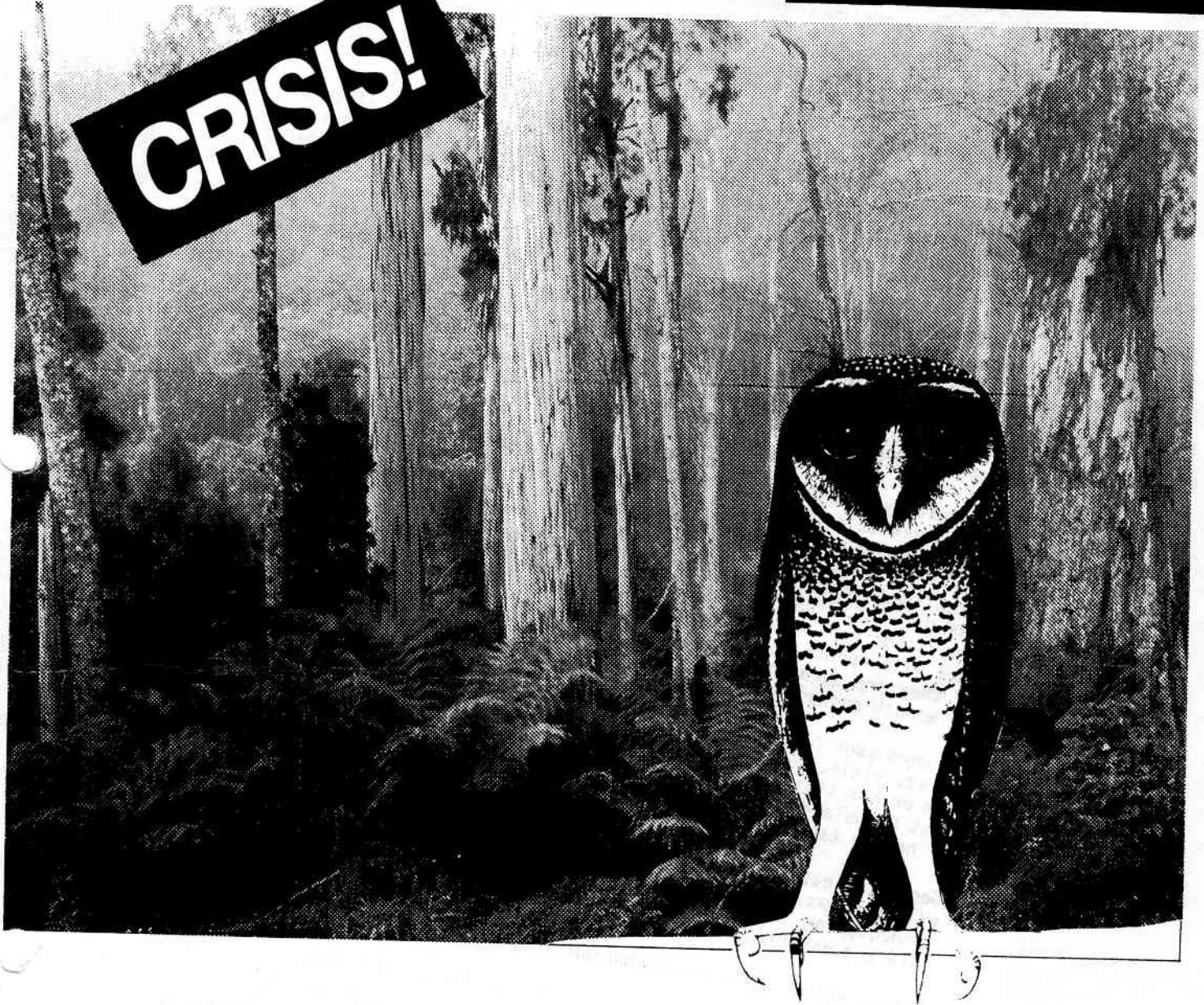
MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES.

Intermediate Egret. 29.5.86. Spring Ck. LB.
Royal Spoonbill. 11.5.86. Waterbird Park. LB.
Black Kite. 19.5.86. Hood's Lagoon. LB. AK. AS.
Collared Sparrowhawk. 7.6.86. Waterbird Park. LB. AK.
Little Eagle. 7.6.86. Wetalla. LB. AK.
Rufous Whistler. 22.5.86. North State School. JD.
Red Wattlebird(2). 13.6.86. Picnic Point. AK.
LB: Lesley Ball. JD: Joe Deuble. AK: Angela Kilmartin. AS: Ann Shore.

An urgent message to members of the Bird Club.

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CRISIS!



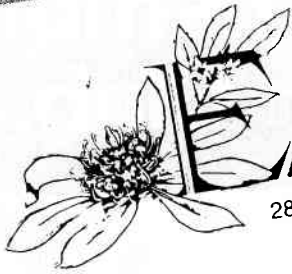
TOOWOOMBA BIRD CLUB.

The woodchip industry has eyes on Queensland as well. Our club can help in the problem by making a collective donation. If members can spare even \$1 or \$2 it could be pooled as a Club contribution. (Naturally if you wished to give more that would be fine). Please contact Lesley if you can help.

The Sooty Owl (*Tyto tenebricosa*). A rare and very secretive bird, it is found in the lowland rainforest and ferngullies of East Gippsland.

Like its cousin, the Powerful Owl, it is just one of the many birds and mammals who depend on mature, unlogged forest for its survival.

They may become extinct, unless what remains of their environment is protected from woodchipping and clearfelling in our forests.



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EAST GIPPSLAND COALITION

285 Little Lonsdale St., Melbourne, Vic. 3000. Telephone (03) 663 1561

THURSDAY, JUNE 5, 1986.

Dear Bird Observer,

Today is World Environment Day. The Victorian Government is, at this very moment, considering whether to open the door to woodchipping in our magnificent East Gippsland forests. If a decision is made in favour of woodchipping, forests of great biological significance will be clearfelled and the woodchips exported to Japan.

Undoubtedly you are aware of the devastating effect of clearfelling on flora, fauna, soils and water quality. Mature forests, which provide habitat for dependent mammals and birds, are felled and replaced with young, even-aged stands of trees. These tree-farms won't provide habitat for birds like the Sooty Owl, the Powerful Owl, the King Parrot, flycatchers, and many honeyeaters for up to 100 or 120 years. By that time, the forest will have been felled again for the next 'crop' of woodchips.

Fortunately though, we are not alone in our opposition to woodchipping. Recent market research carried out for the Australian Conservation Foundation shows that over 80% of Melbourne people oppose this destructive practice. Also, although some members of the Government are keen to establish a woodchip scheme, many others recognise its environmental impact. They know, as the East Gippsland Coalition's "Jobs in East Gippsland" report points out, that conservation needn't cost jobs. They will oppose the woodchip scheme within the Government - but only if they are sure that you, and thousands of others like you, are opposed to woodchipping.

We need your help now, in two ways, to prevent the woodchip scheme. First, visit, phone or write to your local Member of Parliament. Tell him or her that the door should stay closed to woodchipping and that East Gippsland's forests should be protected by National Parks. Ask him or her to take immediate action against woodchipping.

Second, please send a donation to help save the forests. Your donation will help us reach thousands of Victorians who, like you, don't want woodchipping. Once alerted, they will join the fight to ensure that our wild and beautiful forests are protected.

Please help. Time is running out for the forests.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Bob Brown
For the East Gippsland Coalition.

CAN YOU HELP?

Perhaps if we can help save forests in East Gippsland we can also protect the forests in our State. Issues such as this require a broader view than mere State boundaries.

WILL YOU HELP?

If so, please contact Lesley or any member of the Executive. Or bring something along to the next Field Day.