



"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. AUGUST 1986.

CONSERVATION IS A GIFT.

To many dwellers of city and town there come times when they have a day out in the bush, away from the sights, the clangor and the smells of city life. Whether this time out takes the simple form of a picnic in the park, a day's birding in the bush or a camping holiday, the desire is to spend time among trees, creeks, wildlife or the coast. Why ?

Why do we need this wilderness experience? Why not a picnic on the foot-path of the main street of town? Because, I believe, we are at a certain point in the evolutionary cycle which places most people nowadays close together in cities and towns, yet we are descended from a line of forebears who back to a far distant past were hunters in the forest, herdsman on the plains, tillers of the soil, or fishermen or sailors at sea.

Our modern life is an abrupt and violent contrast to the simple mode of existence to which we were bred. We adapt (or evolve) into these more crowded conditions but we have not yet bred out the need for the wilderness experience and it is this need which surfaces now and then and sends us off to the bush on some pretext, be it birding or fishing or whatever form of outdoor hobby we pursue.

It has been predicted that in time we will evolve a species of human which will live solely in cities, tier on tier, row upon row, with no instinct for the outdoors. It may well be so. We can fix no bounds to Nature's conforming power. Already she has produced certain creatures so eminently adaptive to circumstances that they are equally at home whether immersed in air, water or mud.

Inexorable though the process of evolution may be, is it not a trifle slow ? What about you and me ? We are somewhere in between Father Adam and the end product of human development. We still need a bit of wilderness for our retreat and we ought to conserve it only for that purpose; but of course, we ought to conserve for other reasons, too. What about our children ? Or theirs ? Do we sentence them to a life spent only in the confines of some gigantic rabbit warren ? Is it not better to leave them some opportunity for healthy outdoor recreation. After all recreation is really re-creating. They too will need the wilderness experience.

Already much harm has been done through the mindless quest for wealth and power and each day the need for new thinking becomes more urgent, yet there might still be time. Certainly the last few years have shown that more and more ordinary people are caring. The examples of the dams issue in Tasmania, the numbers of people who turn out to help beached and stranded whales is truly encouraging.

However our generation makes its mark on this planet, please don't let us be the generation who inherited an Eden and bequeathed a desert.

Conservation is a gift. It is a gift to ourselves and a gift to children yet unborn.

Ron Hopkinson.

WHY?

In mid-winter the City Council cuts the grass on the island at Lake Annand. Why ?

I am disappointed to see a favourite perching tree at the water-bird Park cut down to a useless stump. Why ?

Lyn Rowan.

Bradley Drennan has celebrated his eighth birthday and made his first Holy Communion this month (July). Congratulations Bradley.

Lyn Rowan.

A PARLIAMENT OF OWLS.

Lyn Rowan has mentioned a quiz question posed by Radio 4GR recently. The question was "What is a group of owls called?"

It apparently took some time before the answer was supplied, to wit, "A Parliament of Owls."

This sent me on a short search of earlier issues of this news-sheet. Bingo! In Issue #43 (July 1979) we carried an article on nouns of assemblage and in the following issue (#44, August 1979) a response from Ann Shore.

Many such collective nouns date back to Mediaeval times. A Parliament of Owls is one such; a few others mentioned in the articles were: a host of Sparrows, a tidings of magpies, an exultation of Larks, a murmuration of Starlings and a murder of Crows.

Ron Hopkinson

MORETON ISLAND SUBJECT.

Early May was a perfect time for bird watching on Moreton Island. The Tea-trees and Banksias were loaded with blossom. The bush was alive with the sound of birds.

In about four days the Honeyeaters had the Tea-trees nearest the house (where I stayed) stripped of blossom. This was where I saw my first Scarlet Honeyeater, a beautiful little bird. I was fortunate enough to have a few good sightings of a Noisy Pitta.

Two delightful weeks of birding on a truly beautiful island, sighting 54 species, 15 of which were new for me; they were:

|                        |                         |                          |
|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Little Black Cormorant | Bush Thick-knee         | Varied Triller           |
| Black-necked Stork     | Beach Thick-knee        | Golden-headed Cisticola  |
| Mallard                | Whimbrel                | White-cheeked Honeyeater |
| Brahminy Kite          | Rose-crowned Fruit-dove | Olive-backed Oriole      |
| Whistling Kite         | Richard's Pipit         | White-brstd. Woodswallow |

CLUB BRIEFS.

The atlas of sector boundaries is now available. We believe this will make easier the separation of sectors for members participating in the scheme to record the birds of Toowoomba. You can obtain a copy from the Records Officer (Angela Kilmartin) or at the monthly Field Days. Why not join in the project? It adds to your birding fun and the more observers we have the more species we will record.

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Herewith an early reminder of the Annual General Meeting. The date set aside is Tuesday October 7th. Venue and other details will be announced later.

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The response to our appeal on behalf of the East Gippsland Coalition to help with the wood chip battle was great. Together with generous donations and the raffle at the Field Day we collected \$50. A cheque for that has now been forwarded. Good one, Club.

NO BIRDIES FOR THESE GOLFERS

Lyn Rowan clipped a story from "The Chronicle" of July 5th about golfers at a club at Cervantes (245km North of Perth, W.A.)

It seems the local Crow population have taken to swooping on and removing golf balls from the fairways; up to a dozen golf balls a week disappear. Club secretary, Mr. Eric Bateman said, "All we know is that some old bird out in the bush is sitting on a fortune."

If that "old bird" ever hatches one of those balls it will have some awkward explanations to make to its mate.

If the golfers get close to the thieves it may well be a "murder of Crows."

Ron Hopkinson.

Lyn Rowan

# Five Summers of the Condor



## FIVE SUMMERS OF THE CONDOR

The California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*), a decreasing and embattled species of the west Coast of the United States, formerly found from Washington (State) to California, must now rate as a severely endangered species.

Over the last five (U.S.) summers a team from California Poly's Condor Watch Project, working in conjunction with the Condor Research Centre in Ventura, have developed a new technique of photographic identification of individual Condors in the wild which has enabled biological scientists to census the remaining wild population of four (4) birds.

That is one more summer than there are wild birds.

However there are 22 birds (and one unhatched egg) in captivity from which it is hoped to breed numbers for release to the wild. Not as simple as it might at first seem. When numbers reach such a low state, problems of in-breeding arise; hence the need for accurate identification of individual birds.

The photographic census involved people, Professors and students, spending up to ten hours at a time scanning the skies, waiting for birds to appear, and then grabbing for cameras. However, when a bird with a wingspan of nine

## Here's how photo censusing works

Some people have called it black magic. Actually it's just a lot of hard work.

That's what's behind the photographic census that enabled Cal Poly to identify condors on an individual basis.

The technique has been so successful, in part, thanks to the birds themselves. Condors molt some of their wing feathers every summer. The pattern varies from bird to bird, so no two condors look alike. If there are adequate photos to show the loss and replacement of feathers over time, it's possible to obtain an exact

census of the population.

The hard work starts when the biologists and students sit around a huge table with 400 to 500 photographs and begin the sorting. Each photo is marked with date, locality and photographer. First the photos are sorted by date, then comparisons of condors are made on that date. Next the identification is correlated over time. It's a complex process.

Once completed, the end product is somewhat magical. It shows a dramatic sequence of photos on each bird's development over the summer. □

feet or more passes over you no more than fifty feet up, you'd reckon it worth it.

The causes for the birds decline seem to be all related to humans.

Dr. Eric Johnson said, "Some of us feel we have a responsibility to bring them back." Non Hopkinson (with thanks to Marilyn Jacobs for a copy of "Cal Poly Today" Vol. XXVII No. 4.)

LIBRARY NOTES.

We thank Mrs. Dorothy Row for the donation of "The Readers Digest Complete Book of Australian Birds" to our library. Members are advised that this beautiful book and many other bird and wildlife books are available from the Librarian.

New Publications received are:

The Bird Observer: Nos. 650/651/652/653/654, March, April, May, June, July.

Darling Downs Naturalist: Nos. 382/383/384/385, May, June, July, August.

D.D. Naturalist Journal: Vol. 9, June 1986.

Urimbirra: Nos. 4/5/6/7. April, May, June, July 1986.

Q.O.S. Newsletter: Vol. 17, Nos. 3/4/5/6 April, May, June, July 1986.

The Sunbird (Q.O.S.): Vol. 16, Nos. 1 & 2, March, June 1986.

The Australian Birdwatcher (B.O.C.): Vol. 11, Nos. 5 & 6, March, June 1986

Wildlife Australia: Spring 1985, Summer 1985, Autumn 1986, Winter 1986.

R.A.O.U. Conservation Statements: The Forty-spotted Pardalote.

The Orange-bellied Parrot.

The Freckled Duck.

Birds (R.S.P.B.): Spring 1986.

Newsletter, Agricultural Society of Q'land. (Toowoomba): Vol. 9, No. 5, May.

Nancy Belcher. Librarian.

FIELD DAYS FOR AUGUST - SEPTEMBER- OCTOBER.

The camp at Coolmunda Dam, previously promulgated has been cancelled.

The August Field Day will be as below:

Date: Sunday, August 24th

Place: Redwood/Jubilee Parks.

Assembly Point: Pigott's car park.

Time: 7.15am for departure 7.30am SHARP.

Leader: Nancy Belcher.

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SEPTEMBER.

Date: Sunday, September 28th.

Place: Helidon Hills.

Assembly Point: Pigott's car park.

Time: 7.15am for departure 7.30am SHARP.

Leader: Michael Atzeni.

OCTOBER. Combine with T'ba Field Nats.

Date: Sunday, October 26th.

Place: Glen Lomond Park-  
Upper Flagstone.

Assembly Point: Pigott's car park.

Time: 7.15am for departure 7.30am.

Leader: Angela Kilmartin.

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EXECUTIVE NOTES.

This month a number of routine items were looked at but some points of interest are:

a). R.A.O.U. calendars will again be ordered this year. They proved very popular last year and as only 20 have been ordered, and with 15 already ear-marked, it would be wise to contact Ann as soon as possible if you wish to buy. The price will be \$10.00.

b). When Marilyn was in the U.S.A. recently she made contact with a bird club that has as its emblem, a kite very similar to our own Black-shouldered Kite. At her suggestion we have written to the group, the Ohlone Audubon Society, asking them if they would be interested in being a sister club and exchanging newsletters.

c). Viola Temple-Watts, President of the Toowoomba Field Naturalists Club, has asked if our Club is interested in joining other like-minded clubs in some fund-raising for the Waterbird Habitat. We certainly feel it's important for our Club to be involved, however it will depend on the type of activity and outlay involved and more information will be forthcoming after further discussions.

Lesley Beaton. President.

FIELD DAY REPORT. JULY 27th 1986.

It was a very moist, cold morning, but despite this there was a good number of people who turned up for the outing. Because of the inclement weather the Hampton Road venue was postponed and an alternative route to Hood's Lagoon and the Helidon area was taken .

When we got to Withcott, where we had arranged to meet Ann, it was a surprise to see Bill Jolly. He'd been holidaying in the area and was pleased to meet old friends and new members. Unfortunately he could not join us but his son, Owen, did.

A number of the group had not been to Hood's Lagoon before so it was a beautiful opportunity to show them one of the Club's best birding spots. Two Pelicans, Black Swans with cygnets, Jacana and Pink-eared Duck were some of the birdlife on the dam that morning. Michael showed us where the Whistling Kites were nesting and we took the advantage of using his telescope.

Moving on to the Dip area we saw Common Bronzewing feeding along the railway tracks. Initially, the young acacias, where we wandered, yielded very little in the way of birds. Eventually a couple of feeding parties flew through and we saw Weebills, White-throated Gerygones, Buff-rumped Thornbills and a few of us managed to sight the Western Gerygone (or Warbler) for which the area is now noted.

After morning tea at Helidon Rest Area where a successful raffle raised about \$55 for the East Gippsland Co-alition, the rain really set in so we decided to call it a day.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Michael Atzeni, Diana and Enid Beal, Lesley and Peggie Beaton, Kath Blackburn, Joe Deuble, Gloria Glass, Ron Hopkinson, Angela Kilmartin, Betty and Les Porter, Lyn Rowan, Ann Shore.

VISITORS: Owen Jolly, Ian Kennedy, Philip Theunissen.

SPECIES LIST:

|                       |                     |                       |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Aust. Grebe           | Blk-frntd Plover    | Eastern Whipbird      |
| Aust. Pelican         | Blk-winged Stilt    | Speckled Warbler      |
| Little Blk. Cormorant | Feral Pigeon        | Weebill               |
| Little Pied Cormorant | Bar-shld Dove       | Western Gerygone      |
| Cattle Egret          | Common Bronzewing   | White-thtd Gerygone   |
| Black Swan            | Crested Pigeon      | Buff-rmpa Thornbill   |
| Pacific Blk. Duck     | Pale-hded Rosella   | Little Friarbird      |
| Grey Teal             | Laughing Kookaburra | Blue-fcd Honeyeater   |
| Pink-eared Duck       | White-bckd Swallow  | Noisy Miner           |
| Hardhead              | Welcome Swallow     | Lewin's Honeyeater    |
| Maned Duck            | Tree Martin         | Yellow-fcd Honeyeater |
| Whistling Kite        | Fairy Martin        | Spotted Pardalote     |
| Collared Sparrowhawk  | Richard's Pipit     | Striated Pardalote    |
| Brown Quail           | Red-capped Robin    | Silvereve             |
| Dusky Moorhen         | Golden Whistler     | Pied Butcherbird      |
| Eurasian Coot         | Rufous Whistler     | Aust. Magpie          |
| Comb-crstd Jacana     | Grey Fantail        | Pied Currawong        |
| Masked Lapwing        | Willie Wagtail      | Porresian Crow        |

Lesley Beaton

BIRDS TO WATCH FOR IN SEPTEMBER

|                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Spotless Crake    | Noisy Pitta        |
| Eudgerigar        | Blk-fcd Monarch    |
| Sacred Kingfisher | Spectacled Monarch |
| Rainbow Bee-eater | Leaden Flycatcher  |
| Dollarbird        | Rufous Songlark    |

Fuscous Honeyeater  
Brown-hded Honeyeater  
Painted Honeyeater (This bird has been reported as coming to our area from September to February. It has a fondness for Mistletoe berries, so please check closely all birds seen in these clumps.

Angela Kilmartin, Records.

MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES.

Grey Goshawk. 24.7.86. Redwood Park CM. AK. LR.  
 White-bellied Sea-Eagle. (imm.) 8.6.86. Hood's Lagoon. MA. PM.  
 Little Eagle. 8.6.86. Hood's Lagoon. MA. PM.  
 Aust. Brush-turkey. 30.3.86. Gilmour Court. FB. NB.  
 Red-chested Button-quail. 11.3.86.(injured) DDIAE. PM.  
 Caspian Tern. 8.6.86. Hood's Lagoon. MA. PM.  
 Blue Bonnet. 6.7.86. Miles. LR.  
 White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike. 8.6.86. Hood's Lagoon. MA. PM.  
 Richard's Pipit. 31.7.86. Waterbird Park. AK. LR.  
 Red-capped Robin. 4.5.86. Helidon. LA. MA. PM.  
 Western Gerygone. 10.5.86. Helidon. MA. PM.  
 Red Wattlebird. 24.7.86. Waterbird Park. AK. LR.  
 Satin Bowerbird. 13.4.86. Spring Street (East). JD.  
 White-winged Chough. 12.3.86. Kleinton. JD.  
 " " " 4.5.86. Helidon. MA.  
 LA: Laurie Atzeni. MA: Michael Atzeni. FB: Frank Belcher. NB:Nancy Belcher.  
 JD: Joe Deuble. AK: Angela Kilmartin. PM:PatMcConnell. CM:Cath McGrath.  
 LR: Lyn Rowan.

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PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE TOOWOOMBA BIRD CLUB.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Club, to take place on Tuesday October 7th 1986, it is proposed to discuss certain changes which are felt to be desirable to our Constitution.

These changes should remove some small ambiguities and formalise the conditions pertaining to the Club's Checklist of the Toowoomba Area.

Therefore, in accordance with the Constitution, at least one month's notice is given and the changes are set out below;

Para. 2 Aims:

Add (e) To maintain a Checklist and suitable records of the birds of the Toowoomba region.  
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Para 5 Officers:

Clause (b) Alter the second sentence to read; "The Executive shall meet monthly and shall have a quorum consisting of a majority of the Executive currently elected."  
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Para 6 Election of Officers:

Clause (a) Alter the second sentence to read, "In the event of a vacancy occurring between elections, such vacancy shall be filled by Executive appointment."  
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Continued Overleaf.

CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES C/td.

Para. 7 Duties of Executive and Officers:

ADD. (f) The Records Officer shall be responsible for the maintenance of the Club's records of bird sightings, the continuance of the Club Checklist, and shall serve as Chairman of the Checklist Committee.

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NEW Para 8: Checklist and Records.

- (a) The admittance of bird species to the Club Checklist shall be controlled by a committee of three (3) members. Such committee shall consist of the Records Officer as Chairman, at least one other member of the Executive, and any other member appointed by the Executive.
- (b) Before submitting a species for addition to the Checklist the sighting must be made and identification agreed by at least two members present at the same time.
- (c) Unless deemed unnecessary by the Checklist Committee, members must have at least twelve (12) months membership of the Club before submitting a species to the Committee.
- (d) The Checklist Committee shall examine written notes submitted in support of the claim and, if necessary, discuss the claim with the proposers, before arriving at a decision. At least two Committee members must agree on the decision.
- (e) If a new species is admitted to the list the Editor shall publish such addition in the News-sheet.

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