



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

NEWSLETTER NO. 132 DECEMBER 1986

There is **NO** field outing in **December**.

Keep these dates free for future outings:

January 25 Jubilee Park, Toowoomba
February 22 Wader outing, by minibus, to the coast
March 28 & 29 Campout at Lake Broadwater, near Dalby

CLUB OFFICERS

President	Lesley Beaton	Phone 32 6262
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Treasurer	Lyn Rowan	Phone 35 9118
Records Officer	Angela Kilmartin	Phone 38 2404
Librarian	Nancy Belcher	Phone 38 4047
Editor	Gloria Glass	Phone 30 7054

Activities Field Day and Monthly Meeting - 4th Sunday of each month.
Usually depart from McDonnell & East car park at 7.30 am.

Camping trips and film and slide evenings.

Newsletter Published monthly, prior to the Field Day. Contributions should be mailed to the P.O. Box. Deadline is the last day of the month.

Annual Subscription Ordinary Membership \$10.00
Family Membership \$12.00
Student Membership \$ 5.00

Postal Address P.O. Box 67, DARLING HEIGHTS, Q, 4350.

EDITORIAL

SUNDOWN NATIONAL PARK has been increased in size. The announcement of the addition to ANY National Park is good news for all of us interested in birds, for it means that a further piece of Queensland is preserved for wild creatures - we hope for all time.

Birds who haven't been to Sundown 'haven't lived'! Toowoomba birds have the opportunity, if they are tickers, to add many new birds to their list: Brown Treecreeper, Diamond Firetail, Turquoise Parrot and Southern Whiteface were new birds for me at Sundown.

The camping there is first-rate - a nice grassy plot all your own, with a fireplace and wood provided. Showers (which you fill with water from the Severn River) and lavatories are nearby. And with a bit of luck you will have Welcome Swallows nesting in the lavatory with you!

The rocky creeks are worth exploring whether they are in spate or dry. Birdwatchers of course need to add several hours to the times for walks shown on the Park notice board.

So far, I have only been to the over-the-range part of the Park (90 km anticlockwise from Stanthorpe) but ONE DAY I hope I'll get to the northern part west of Ballandean.

Congratulations to our State Government for adding to our national heritage.

Gloria Glass, Editor

OUR CONSTITUTION

The alteration to the Constitution proposed in the October Newsletter was passed at our November meeting. This was to change the dates of our financial year to 1st November in one year to 31st October in the following year, bringing it into line with the current practice of holding the Annual General Meeting during October.

The Constitution has been retyped incorporating changes up to November 1986, and copies are available. Send a stamped self-addressed envelope to the Secretary if you would like a copy.

ARE YOU VISITING SYDNEY?

In a recent letter to our Secretary, the N.S.W. Field Ornithologists Club have invited any of our members visiting Sydney to get in touch with their Activities Officer, Alban Richards (Ph 660 8062) or Secretary, Norma Maxwell (Ph 944 287). The postal address of their Club is P.O. Box C426, Clarence Street, Sydney, 2000.

QUIZZICAL'S QUIZ QUESTION 5

Where would you expect to observe the following birds foraging most frequently - on the ground; in the understory (0.2 to 4 metres or 8 ins to 13 ft); or in the tree-tops (above 4 metres or 13 ft)? Tick the appropriate column.

Bird	Ground	Under-story	Tree-tops
Aust. Magpie			
Superb Fairy-wren			
Silvereye			
Grey Fantail			
Rufous Fantail			
Crimson Rosella			
Striated Pardalote			
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike			
Spotted Pardalote			
Rufous Whistler			
Golden Whistler			
Eastern Whipbird			
Rose Robin			
Eastern Yellow Robin			
White-browed Scrub-wren			
Dusky Woodswallow			
Eastern Spinebill			
White-winged Chough			

Send in your answers before the end of December and receive the fabulous prize of seeing your name in print in the January newsletter!

ANSWERS to NOVEMBER'S QUIZ

A.2 "Torresian" is a zoogeographic region encompassing roughly northern Australia and eastern Queensland.

A.3 (a) honeyeaters are the major group of nectar-feeders; (b) butcherbirds and magpies, the terrestrial predators; (c) thornbills, warblers, the foliage-feeding insectivores; (d) treecreepers & sitellas, the bark-foraging insectivores; and (e) woodswallows, the aerial insectivores. (If you named other groups and are still prepared to defend them, examine carefully whether they are endemic or cosmopolitan groups.)

A.4 Honeyeaters obtain protein from (a) flying insects, and their energy from (b) nectar and (c) manna and/or lerps and/or honeydew.

WINNER

Congratulations to our only winner for this quiz:

E. WILLIAMS

who also sent a subscription.

(Would E. Williams kindly phone the Secretary to tell her your address, so that we can add your name to the mailing list for our Newsletter.)

A large group of 23 members and visitors assembled at Webb Park for an afternoon barbeque.

Very little birding was done but the antics of the Laughing Kookaburras, well aware what barbeques were used for, kept us all amused.

At dusk the squadrons of fruit bats, or flying foxes, flew over the park and it was easy to catch them in our spotlights.

The walk through Redwood did not reveal many birds; however, two Brush-tailed Possums afforded a lot of attention. We all had fun going through the bush in the dark. "A Merry Christmas" and "Happy New Year" wishes were exchanged before we took to our separate ways.

Lesley Beaton

Members present: John Ball, Merv Baxter, Diana and Enid Beal, Lesley Beaton, Frank & Nancy Belcher, Bradley Drennan, Gloria Glass, Nancy Gooding, Kath McGrath, Kevin & Margaret McPhee, Lyn Rowan, Ann & John Shore, Jane White.

Omitted from October News-Sheet:

Species observed on Helidon Outing 28.9.86

(Species seen in Sector 3 are shown ', Sector 5 are shown ", while Sector 7 are unmarked.)

Australasian Grebe, Aust. Pelican, Darter", Little Black & Little Pied Cormorants, Pacific & White-faced Herons, Great Egret, Glossy & Straw-necked Ibis, Black Swan, Pacific Black, Pink-eared & Maned Ducks, Grey Teal, Hardhead, Black-shouldered Kite", Pacific Baza, Square-tailed Kite, Wedge-tailed Eagle', Aust. Kestrel, Dusky Moorhen, Purple Swamphen, Eurasian Coot, Comb-crested Jacana, Masked Lapwing, Red-kneed Dotterel, Black-fronted Plover, Black-winged Stilt, Latham's Snipe, Common Sandpiper, Feral & Crested Pigeons, Peaceful & Par-shouldered Dove, Common Bronzewing, Galah, Lophur-crested Cockatoo, Scaly-breasted & Little Lorikeet, Pale-headed Rosella, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Common Koel, Laughing Kookaburra, Sacred Kingfisher, Rainbow Bee-eater, Dollarbird, Welcome Swallow, Fairy Martin", Richard's Pipit", Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike, Jacky Winter, Golden & Rufous Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Leaden Flycatcher', Rufous' & Grey Fantail, Willie Wagtail, Eastern Whipbird', Grey-crowned Babbler, Clamorous Reed Warbler, Golden-headed Cisticola, Superb", Variegated & Red-backed' Fairy-wrens, White-browed Scrubwren, Speckled Warbler, Weebill, Brown' & White-throated Gerygone, Brown', Buff-rumped & Yellow-rumped Thornbills, White-throated Treecreeper, Striped, Lewin's', Brown-headed, White-naped', Brown", & Scarlet Honeyeaters, Noisy & Little Friarbirds, Noisy Miner, Mistletoebird", Spotted' & Striated Pardalotes, Silvereye, House Sparrow, Double-barred Finch, Common Starling, Common Mynah, Olive-backed Oriole", Figbird, White-winged Chough, Aust. Magpie-lark, Pied Butcherbird, Aust. Magpie, Pied Currawong, Torresian Crow.

101 species

DOLLARBIRDS Such beautiful birds and what fantastic aerobatics they treat us to at this time of year, sometimes as late at 5.30 to 6 pm! One bird in particular enjoys using a cleared area for such late afternoon courtship displays of spectacular swoops, loops and rolls. Little wonder the name 'Broad-billed Roller' for this Australian member of the cosmopolitan Roller family. The late afternoon light shows the true beauty of their greenish blue, deep blue and lilac blue plumage.

CHANNEL-BILLED CUCKOOS are frequenting our area again - same flight-path as in previous years, past our home, noisily travelling NE to SW. We have sighted four flying together. This time last year a Channel-billed Cuckoo chick was in the bush near our home, its call a loud one-syllable, slightly up-scale call, which I had heard and not recognized for a week prior to sighting the chick. It seems the foster parents had left the chick in the area occasionally and gone searching for food. I tried for a closer inspection of the chick, but alas, once the bird sighted me approaching, binoculars in hand, it flew deeper into the bush screeching the familiar Channel-billed call. Very timid! Surprisingly, one flew past our home at 8 pm one evening, screeching loudly, maybe catching insects in the light of our spotlight.

RED-CHESTED QUAIL As yet we have not sighted this bird again, November 1984 being the first and only time we have ever seen one. It was 9.10 pm on a warm evening, and our old dog sniffed out a Red-chested Quail on the lawn, right outside our home. In the torch-light it at first looked like a mouse scurrying away. John caught the quail chick and what a pretty bird it was. It fitted quite comfortably into my cupped hands, where it decided to fluff up and have a nap. I was delighted of course and took advantage of the situation and inspected the bird closely. It passed through my mind how vulnerable these little birds are; no wonder they're rare.

Lorraine Wilson

MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES

Forest Kingfisher, Nov.86, Gilmour Court, FB,NB
 Sacred Ibis (30), Nov.86, Gilmour Court, FB,NB
 Rufous Night-heron, 2.11.86, Lockyer Ck. near Lockyer Siding, LB
 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoc, 8.11.86, Hood's Lagoon, LB
 Eastern Rosella, Oct.86, Uni. Centre, Jellicoe St, DM
 Baillon's Crake, 29.11.86, Gowrie Ck, Gowrie Junction, DB

JB John Ball	FB Frank Belcher
LB Lesley Beaton	NB Nancy Belcher
DB Diana Beal	DM Dave Mears

BICENTENNIAL WATERBIRD HABITAT

It was a calm, sunny morning, perfect for birdwatching. The dozen or so bleary-eyed campers agreed that a stroll along the creek bank was a great way to start the day.

Amongst the group were people from the U.S.A., Armidale, Brisbane, Laidley and Gatton. Most had binoculars and all had a lot of interest.

Before we started out I gave a little talk on the Club, showed them pictures of birds most likely to be seen and demonstrated how to find a bird with binoculars.

As we walked along, other couples who were sitting on the bank enjoying the sunshine joined us, and it was quite a group that marvelled over the brilliant plumage and dramatic aerobatics of the Rainbow Bee-eater. We also got excellent views of a male Variegated Fairy-wren, Red-browed Firetails drinking, male Figbirds, Double-barrred Finches and a White-faced Heron. Dusky Moorhens were in abundance and the group were amused to see such heavy birds clambering around on the outermost branches of the bottle-brushes.

I felt it was a most worthwhile exercise as we had two offers for the Club to visit properties in the Lockyer Valley. Also it is always stimulating to see people's enthusiasm when shown a bird for the first time or told a little about avian behaviour. The more people that become aware of the beauty of our birds and the bush, the better our world will be.

Lesley Beaton

FROM our library copy of "BIRDS"

Rails only!

I WAS DELIGHTED to learn that the British and French governments have opted for a rail only link. Rails are weak fliers and would benefit from a small tunnel to aid their migrations between Britain and the Continent.

The project will be less costly than some of the more ambitious schemes as it will require no concrete, tiling or other expensive materials; just a few reeds, boggy areas and the occasional light.

Most of us would prefer an invasion of these harmless and pleasant creatures rather than the noisy vehicles which other schemes would inflict upon us.

**Martin Coath
Sevenoaks, Kent**

SUBSCRIPTIONS are now due for 1987.

See front page for dollar amounts, and the enclosed slip. Early despatch of your cheque would be appreciated.

It's great to see the Waterbird Habitat taking shape before ones eyes. Saturday afternoon was damp and murky, too misty to see across from one side of the Habitat to the other, and there was scarcely a bird to be seen.

This second public planting was organised by South Toowoomba Rotary, and other organisations and schools will have their special planting days after Christmas. Council Parks and Gardens staff had already dug holes, set down the trees and shrubs in readiness with plenty of bags of bark mulch, and a few keen Council workers were on hand with a water truck for filling buckets and to assist with planting instructions if needed. Some 40 or 50 volunteers of all ages set to work in an orgy of mud, mess and enthusiasm and completed the job in quick time. Now we wait for them to grow, eager to visualise results in five or ten years' time. What will it look like? What birds will be there, nesting, roosting and feeding...?

For the time being the public is being excluded wh more development work is carried out, including paths, hides and picnic area, etc. However, Bird Club members may enter after applying to the Director of the Parks and Gardens Department for the key. Soon the viewing platforms will be constructed, but funds for more work are urgently needed and all donations for the Habitat will be greatly appreciated.

Ann Shore

Editor's note: Our Club actively supports this project, and donations made through our Club are very welcome. Donations may be given to the Treasurer at outings, or posted to her at our P.O. box. *****

ENTICING BIRDS INTO YOUR GARDEN

It is all very well to go on birdwatching outings with the Club and on private jaunts, but how much better one learns the birds one lives with. Gov Junction has me now on familiar terms with Striped and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, whereas when I lived in South Toowoomba the morning bird chorus was presented by House Sparrows mainly, with the occasional Australian Magpie and Pied Butcherbird using the very high television aerials as singing perches.

Everyone knows that abundance of nectar-producing trees and shrubs is what brings in the birds, especially honeyeaters, but which are the best ones to plant?

My efforts of picking shrubs from a nursery catalogue were not very successful, but I had one win in Grevillea sp. Poorinda Firebird which brought in the Eastern Spinebills, to my great joy.

No doubt many members have a favourite tree which attracts interesting birds. How about sharing your knowledge with other members. Write in, phone, send a smoke signal or carrier pigeon to tell me of your best bird tree.

Gloria Glass