



toowoomba bird club

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

NEWSLETTER NO.136 APRIL 1987

FIELD OUTING for APRIL

Date: Sunday, April 26
Place: Sectors 1 and 2, especially Wellcamp, Spring Creek, Showgrounds, Lions Park
Assembly Point: McDonnell & East car park
Time: 7.15 am for departure 7.30 am SHARP
Leader: Lesley Beaton

CLUB OFFICERS

President	Lesley Beaton	Phone 32 6262
Secretary	Ann Shore	Phone 30 3207
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.

MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES

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- Red-necked Avocet (35+), 19.2.87, Hood's Lagoon, MA, LA, PM
 Red-necked Avocet (30), 3.3.87, Helidon Spa, AS, JS
 Peregrine Falcon, 19.2.87, Helidon, MA, LA, P
 Noisy Pitta, 13.2.87, Redwood Park, MA
 Glossy Black Cockatoo (5), 14.2.87, Lower Flagstone Ck Rd, MA, LA, IK
 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, 14.2.87, Hood's Lagoon, MA, LA
 Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo, 4.2.87, University Centre, Jellicoe St, DM
 Spotted Quail-thrush, 24.2.87, Morley's Rd, Ballard, MA, PM
 Fork-tailed Swift (1, flying with Fairy Martins), 8.3.87, Helidon Spa, LB, JB
 Ground Cuckoo-shrike, 8.3.87, Air Force Rd, Helidon, LB, JB
 Ground Cuckoo-Shrike (5), 10.3.87 and 12.3.87, Ringmere, Withcott, WJ
 Wedge-tailed Eagle (2), 10.3.87, over Glenvale State School, LB and class
 Black Falcon, 15.3.87, Over Westbrook Sugarloaf, LB, JB
 Australian Hobby, 22.3.87, flying NE over 15 Dunmore St, LB
 Red-capped Robin (f), 1st of season, 26.3.87 jct of Silver Ridge & Topps Rds, LB, JB
 Crested Shrike-tit, 22.3.87, New Helidon Dip, LB, JB
 Collared Sparrowhawk, 11.3.87, Ringmere, Withcott, EJ, WJ
 Australian Hobby, 28.3.87, Ruthven St, EJ, WJ
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|-------------------|-----------------|
| LA Laurie Atzeni | DM Daryl Mears |
| MA Michael Atzeni | AS Ann Shore |
| JB John Ball | JS John Shore |
| LB Lesley Beaton | WJ Bill Jolly |
| IK Ian Kennedy | EJ Eileen Jolly |
| PM Pat McConnell | |

QUIZZICAL'S QUIZ No.8

Here is another Quiz from our mystery writer "Quizzical" to test (and increase?) our knowledge of the habits of many birds found in our study area.

What is the most often eaten food of these insectivorous birds?

Beetles Flies Larvae Ants Lizard

- Shining Bronze-cuckoo
 Sacred Kingfisher
 Scarlet Robin
 Eastern Yellow Robin
 Rufous Whistler
 Superb Fairywren
 Speckled Warbler
 Buff-rumped Thornbill
 Striated Thornbill
 Sitella
 Fuscous Honeyeater
 Eastern Spinebill
 Dusky Woodswallow

MORNING BIRD-WATCH - HELIDON and
FLAGSTONE CREEK - 29 March 1987

We looked for Avocets at Helidon Spa but they had moved on. Instead, as we checked the dam, noting the Black-winged Stilts, Little Grebes, Black Duck and Grey Teal, a startled-looking Pheasant Coucal peered down at us from the top of a young gum tree!

A quick stop at the Rest Area by the Lockyer, logging a few more species, then a turn southward; over the Lockyer and the dry hills to the Flagstone Creek valley. White-backed Swallows above on the power lines and an Aust. Hobby mobbed by Magpies over the hill.

"Stop! Quick, look there!" Lots of little birds in the lantana and small thickets as we turned a corner on the gravel road - calls and movement everywhere. Zebra and Double-banded Finches, a Mistletoebird, Lewin's Honeyeater and Wrens galore. What were they? Who could spot a cock? Yes, suddenly there he was, an unmistakable Red-backed male, his bright russet saddle catching the sun as he flew though already he had lost most of his striking black plumage for a dowdier brown. No more breeding for him this season.

Very few birds as we drove on westwards up the creek, until we arrived at the foot of the range and the Upper Flagstone Road turnoff. A trickle of water there and, as so often, we were well rewarded. Firstly I flushed a bevy of Quail. Were they Stubble or Brown? Too quick to see as they exploded into the air from just beneath my feet! Both Spotted and Striated Pardalotes, a solitary White-browed Scrubwren, and Superb Fairy-wrens (this male also in his eclipse plumage) completed our round-up of small birds for the morning. We had seen the usual larger birds too, making 45 species in all.

Ann Shore

Members present: Nancy & Frank Belcher, Elaine and Ron Box, Joe Deuble, and John and Ann Shore.

UNIVERSITY CENTRE, Jellicoe St

A new sighting for us occurred on 4 February when I saw two Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos, Calyptrorhynchus funereus, whom I presumed to be male and female.

They were making quite a commotion at the edge of our Rainforest in a Maidenhair Wattle tree. They seemed to be tearing the bark from the wattle branches as though looking for food.

However, their stay was short as the Noisy Miners and Pied Currawongs eventually persuaded them to move on, as is usual with most new birds.

At first I thought they were the Red-tailed Black Cockatoos, until I saw the yellow patches on the side of their heads and creamy-yellow under their tails.

I tried to take pictures of them but they were too high up and out of range for my camera.

Daryl Mears

"Roseneath" is approx. 50 km SW of Toowoomba, 11 km outside Pittsworth and 3 km from the Condamine River.

Close by are two lagoon-type stretches of water which are the habitat for a wide variety of bird life - **Pelican, Black Swan, Whiskered Tern, Sacred Ibis,** and many duck families, etc.

Roseneath is often on the flight-path for some of these birds, the most exciting of which was a small flock of **Maggie Geese** who rested rather clumsily in our old pepperina trees for an hour or so one summer.

Our farm is a grain-producing farm with stretches of trees in different locations. In these treed areas we often sight Kangaroos, Wallabies and Koalas, with of course resident birds such as **Galahs, Crows, Kestrels, Black-shouldered Kites, Red-rumped Parrots, Willy Wagtails and Finches** and, during the mousy wintry weather, **Barn Owls** and other owls are seen watching the roads at night from aged fence posts. At times we have to slow the car to allow a family of **Quail** to cross, or **Spotted Pardalotes** to skim across, or for a family of **Plumed Whistling-ducks** to move on.

Around the farmhouse are many different trees which attract migratory and other birds - **Pale-headed Rosellas, Straw-necked Ibis, Kookaburras, Pied Butcher birds, Magpies and Magpie-larks.** The **Noisy "Micky" Miners** seem to have taken over the house yard and herald the comings and goings of our beautiful Katrina cat wherever she is. Once a **Rose Robin** was seen, and Bruce has on occasion seen a **Noisy Friarbird**, and around the grain silos are families of **Zebra Finch, Double-barred Finch, Superb Fairy-wren, Crested Pigeon** and **Cockatiel.**

Each year we are blessed with the great event of watching a family of **Tawny Frogmouths** rearing one, sometimes two families of young. A pair of Frogmouths have been rearing their young at Roseneath in the pepperina trees close to the house for ten years. There are 11 world species of Frogmouth and the Tawny is our sole endemic species, ranging throughout Australia. We marvel at their camouflage art, how the rough and frail-looking nest is used year after year, and at their faithfulness as parents - always of two youngsters; one year three eggs hatched but one fledgling was tossed from the nest to die.

March is the time to find this couple in their tree, beginning the first breeding cycle; August is the next, with the young usually beginning and ending their nuturing time over four or five months.

We've often promised ourselves to note every detail of their breeding habits - perhaps this will be the year! Bruce will often walk about at dusk, their hunting time, with these birds flying from tree to tree following him, and at times of wind storms, in true Footrot tradition, Bruce can be seen anxiously waiting below the tree in case a young bird falls to the ground. We read that if breeding is successful Tawny Frogmouths will usually return to the same



nest year after year with one pair recorded as returning to the same nest for fourteen consecutive years. It is good to know our two like this environment.

I have mentioned a number of birds - and the following are also resident: **Common Starling, Little Grebe,** and **Sulphur-crested Cockatoo** (who can ruin a corn crop!). These birds have been seen: **Sacred Kingfisher, Rainbowbird, Budgerigar, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Spotted Harrier, Swift Parrot** and **Masked Lapwings.** The lagoons have many more species to offer.

Di Muirhead

THE EFFECTS of WOODCHIPPING on BIRD POPULATIONS in the BEGA FORESTS in south-eastern NSW

The forests around Bega and Eden on the south coast of NSW comprise about 300,000 hectares of Crown timber reserves and 130,000 ha of national parks and nature reserves. About 220,000 ha of the timber reserves are to be logged over 40 to 45 years (which began in 1970); the rest is too steep, is required for stream protection, etc. About 20,000 ha of the logged area will be planted to Pinus radiata.

Logging Operations have changed since 1970. Early in the period the logged areas, 'coupes', were 10-20 ha. All the useful (for timber or woodchips) trees were felled, young trees likely to develop into good logs were left, unsuitable tree species were left and the area was left to regenerate without burning or seeding.

Later, procedures were changed to try to reduce the risk of wildfires. Coupes are now 30-50 ha, more

trees to provide seed are left and the areas are⁴ burnt to reduce fire fuel.

At the end of 40-45 years, it is expected the cycle could begin again. Yields of timber are expected to be higher even though trees will be smaller but density greater.

Bird species were recorded in the forests in 1977-1982. There were 116 species recorded - 22 transients, 94 regular inhabitants, of which about 60 were resident and 34 migratory or nomadic species.

The greatest differences in bird species were not between the various Eucalyptus species forest sub-types, but between the forests of ridges and gullies. Birds characteristic of the gullies include Wonga Pigeon, Eastern Whipbird and Brown Gerygone. Birds of the ridges include Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Rufous Whistler and Spotted Quail-thrush. Some small patches of rainforest dominated by lillypilly, Acmena smithii, are home to the Large-billed Scrubwren.

Birds in Regenerating Forest Two types of regeneration were studied - 0-4 years and 9-17 years. The 9-17 years areas were clear-felled and burnt with a few seed-producing trees left. The 0-4 years sites were on ridges, and the 9-17 years sites on both ridges and gullies. The ridge sites were characterized by Eucalyptus sieberi and E. longifolia, and the gullies E. cypellocarpa, E. elata and E. smithii. Each site was surveyed once each season for a year.

The effect of logging operations was most apparent in the 0-4 years sites. Many species were less frequent and few were found breeding. In the 9-17 years sites, the bird community more closely approached the composition of that in the mature forest.

Species more abundant in older regeneration were those (naturally) that prefer dense vegetation - Superb Lyrebird, Eastern Whipbird, Pilotbird, Bell Miner, Lewin's Honeyeater, New Holland Honeyeater and Silvereye.

Birds less abundant in the older regeneration were mostly those of the mature eucalypts - the Gang-gang Cockatoo, Sitella, Red-browed Treecreeper, White-eared Honeyeater, Brown-headed Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill, Mistletoebird and Spotted Pardalote.

Rufous Whistler, Jacky Winter and Scarlet Robin, birds of woodland and forest with an open understorey, were characteristically scarce in the dense vegetation of the older regeneration but relatively common in the open vegetation of the 0-4 years regeneration.

Nesting Hollows The provision of nesting hollows is a sub-issue. Little is known about the formation of hollows in eucalypts except that they are certainly a feature of older trees rather than younger. One study found that one species of Eucalyptus did not form hollows big enough for cockatoos until 190 years old.

Foresters are likely to select for destruction older, twisted, "hollow-ful" trees to the detriment of

hollow-nesting species such as the Gang-gang Cockatoo, Red-browed Treecreeper and Crimson Rosella.

More emphasis needs to be placed on this factor in the selection of retained seed trees, if these birds are not to be disadvantaged in the long term.

Lessons Learnt

(i) The more retained trees in the coupes the better. Average retention rates were 5/ha on ridges (from 61/ha) and 12/ha in gullies (from 43/ha). Thirtyfive percent of the 40 most frequently recorded bird species were feeding mainly in the retained trees.

(ii) Retained trees should be those with mistletoes and hollows or the potential to form hollows.

(iii) Gully areas should have a lower logging priority as they act as refuge areas after fires. Understorey birds are severely disadvantaged by even minor fires. Territories occupied by birds such as White-browed Scrubwrens, Brown Thornbills and Striated Thornbills were found in one study to be vacant twelve months after a light fire. Some of these (banded) birds disappeared from the area but some were found in the nearby gully forest.

These lessons have been put into effect to some extent in the Bega-Eden area.

(Ref: Smith, P.: Woodchip Logging and Birds near Bega, NSW, in Birds of Eucalypt Forests and Woodlands - Ecology, Conservation, Management, edited by Keast, Recher, Ford and Saunders. RAOU and Surrey Beatty & Sons, Chipping Norton, 1985)

HABITAT DONATIONS Received

Treasurer Lyn reports that we have received \$170 so far towards our Club's specific gift to the Habitat.

YELLOW-TAILED BLACK COCKATOO

This bird is in the news this month. See Members' Bird Notes and Daryl Mears' article.

Our Records Officer, Angela, asks those members who have survey forms for the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo to return them to her before the end of May.

APRIL is S.S.S. MONTH

April is the middle month of the Autumn season, and as for other SSS months, members are asked to make a special effort to visit and record the birds in as many of our eight sectors around Toowoomba as possible, for this is a SEASONAL SPECIES SURVEY month!

Phone Angela (or Gloria) for a checklist if you haven't got one.

FUTURE OUTING DATES

May 24 Cooby Creek and Dam
June 28 Ma Ma Creek