

TOOWOOMBA BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER

POSTAL ADDRESS

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

No. 138 JUNE 1987

WHAT ARE YA ?

Some years ago I had for neighbours a family which included two brothers in early teenhood. During their fairly frequent sibling disputes one of them used, as a sort of desperate defence, the loudly voiced question, "Aw, what are ya ?".

To him it was more a statement of doubt as to the exact nature of his brother, rather than a question requiring answer.

It seemed to me, recently, when reading Bill Oddie's Little Black Bird Book (BOLBBB), that this is a question we might put to ourselves as members of a Bird Club. BOLBBB is a book as much about bird people as birds. One aspect of our pursuit that Oddie looks at is the different types of people who indulge. There are three basic kinds and they look something like this:

The Dude: Always spotlessly attired in brightly coloured sports shirt or blouse, neatly pressed slacks or skirt. Probably has Zeiss (West German Zeiss, of course) binoculars around the neck and on expeditions stays at motels or chalets.

Bird Watcher: This is the common or garden variety bird person. Not as well dressed as the Dude but usually neat and tidy. On trips uses tents, or if better heeled, vans and caravans.

The Twitcher: Here is the dyed in the feather tick hunter. The Twitcher will do anything (repeat, anything), to tick off a new bird on the list. To the Twitcher the life list is the Bible, the Koran or Talmud of birding. Usually dressed in gear that looks like rejects from Vinnie's Boutique. Your genuine Twitcher needs no motel, caravan or tent but will happily doss down anywhere. Develops a nervous twitch (hence the name) when told of a new bird in the district. This twitch only goes when the bird is seen and ticked.

If you wonder where you fit into this picture, you are probably an amalgam of all three. Most of us are.

However we still need an answer to our leading question. In this land there are several names we apply to ourselves.

Ornithologist: I think we can discount this one for most of us, inasmuch as it carries connotations of training in science, Zoology, Biology etc. and would seem better suited to professionals.

Bird Spotter: Not used a great deal here, thanks be to whichever God whose lapful it is to control such things. "Bird Spotter" conjures up visions of people dashing about the landscape with paint and brush doing polka dot things to birds. No thank you.

C/td.

WHAT ARE YA ? C/td.

Bird Watcher: This name, although still in use, has run the course of its usefulness. Inasmuch as there is more to the hobby than merely watching birds, it is inaccurate. To make it even less acceptable is the image of a "bird watcher" portrayed by Hollywood. We are depicted as effete and slightly twee individuals and used as the butt of what passes for humour in some of the lesser epics. I can attest to the fact that the dedicated "bird watchers" with whom I have had the pleasure of sharing the interest are anything but effete. No thank you.

Birdo: This one is used a great deal today, in literature as well as speech, and more's the pity. If there is anything of purely Australian origin in our hobby it would be this abomination.

Readers old enough to remember the period following World War 2 will no doubt remember the first refugees from Europe. Given the average Aussie's indolent approach to new words such people promptly became "Reffo's". With the passing of time this became "migrants" or "bloody wogs", either one of which is preferable, depending on your political persuasion.

In the 1950's and early 1970's Australia had a scheme of National Service training and naturally the participants became known as "Nasho's". Again we see the Aussie habit of contraction of a longer term and the addition of the "O" to give a slightly derogatory nuance to the word. However "Reffo" and "Nasho" have passed into our lingual history.

A third example, extant, is applied to the mecca of octane, the corner service station or "Servo". No derision here, though. Given our dependence on the motor vehicle and the necessity for the "servo", we had best not offend them.

Thus our "Birdo", whose father may have been a "Reffo", and who might have served as a "Nasho", now fills his car at the "Servo" and sets off.

You see ? Surely we can do better. I may add that I have heard this word used by people who did not have the good fortune to be born in Australia, but lazy habits can be catching. No thank you.

I should like to offer for consideration the word "Birder". It has the beauty of simplicity, uses no more syllables than the one above and does not lend itself to misuse or derision. A "Birder" is one who is interested in the study of birds and who goes "birding" to further that study. Q.E.D.

"What are ya?" Well I know not about you mate, but I am a birder. Yes please.

Ron Hopkinson

CLUB BRIEFS

THANK YOU, GLORIA.

On behalf of the Executive I should like to thank Gloria for her spell as Editor. Gloria helped us out when Ron was not able to continue and in a short time became a valuable member of the Executive. We wish her all the best on the farm and hope the drought breaks soon.

Luckily for the Club, Ron has been able to take up the reins of Editor again. Ron needs no introduction as we know his contribution from past years. Welcome back, Ron.

Lesley Beaton, President

NEW MEMBERS

The Club is pleased to welcome the following new members:

Elaine Cobb,	Greg & Heather Zirbel,	Mrs. Alison Evans
Flat 3,	"Lacewood",	& Family,
22 Wilma Street,	M.S. 224,	11 Prince Henry Drive,
TOOWOOMBA. 4350	TOOWOOMBA. 4352	TOOWOOMBA. 4350

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ANNUAL SUMMARY

As a supplement to this issue we are publishing the Annual Summary of Species for 1985. We regret the delay, but last year the Records Officer undertook a major re-organization of the Club records and this has consumed a great deal of spare time. The 1986 Summary will follow soon.

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FIELD DAY INFORMATION

Details of up-coming Field Days will now be found in the box on page 4.

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FLIGHT--THE MECHANICS

How do they do it? Just when you settle yourself to have a good look at the birds on your favourite swamp something disturbs them. They simply take flight and leave. How do birds achieve this instant mobility?

The mechanics of bird flight, though not yet fully understood, can provide some insight into the characteristic which most separates them from us, and which is possibly the single most appealing attraction they have for we earth-bound mammals.

The principles of aerodynamics began with evaluation of the flying ability of birds. The basic aerofoil shape of a bird's wing, with a thickened, rounded leading edge and tapering back to a thin trailing edge, has been applied to fixed wing aircraft. In a bird the thickened leading edge is the area containing the wing bones. To this are attached the feathers which form the rest of the wing. The avian aerofoil, however, is much more complex in design and capability, compared to the rigid aircraft wing. The bird's wing has to provide propulsion as well as lift, whereas the aircraft gains propulsion from the propeller or the thrust of a jet engine, and its wings provide lift only. In both cases, of course, propulsion is needed to provide an airflow over the wing.

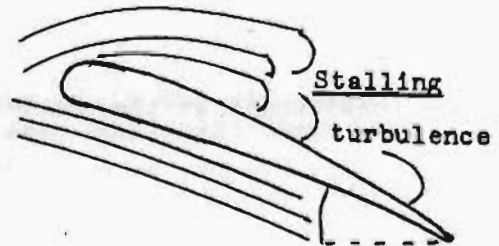
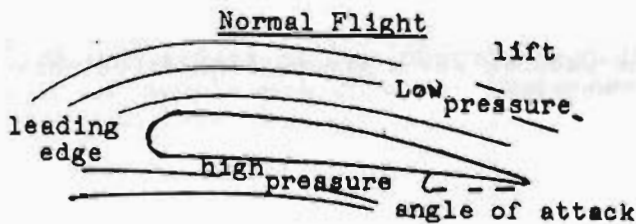
The bird's propellers are at the tip of the wing; the primary feathers. These feathers can move in such a way as to translate the up and down flapping movements into forward propulsion which creates the airflow. At the same time the main part of the wing, the secondary feathers provides the lift.

In its simplest terms, as air flows over the wing it divides as it passes over the leading edge. The convex upper surface causes the upper airstream to travel faster and farther, creating lower pressure. At same time the lower airstream, passing below the wing maintains a higher pressure thus causing the wing to move towards the area of lower pressure, i.e, upwards. This generates lift which holds the wing and the attached bird, aloft.

The angle at which the wing is presented to the airflow is called the angle of attack. As the leading edge is tilted upwards the angle of attack increases. This improves the lift, until a point is reached where the angle becomes too steep and the airflow becomes turbulent and lift is lost. The wing has then stalled.

I hope to take a look at other aspects of this fascinating subject in later issues.

Ron Hopkinson



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Q.O.S. BIRD COUNT--LAIDLLEY AREA-- 24/5/87

Waterbirds made up the majority of birds sighted by Ron Hopkinson and I as we participated in the Queensland Ornithological Society's experimental winter bird count, covering the area from the Queensland Agricultural College on the Warrego Highway, South-east through Worest Hill and Laidley and down the Laidley and Mt. Berryman valleys.

Ideal birding conditions to start with; calm and sunny but becoming overcast by mid-morning. The region is still desperately short of water, though greener to the eye since recent rain, with creek beds bone dry and many dams empty.

Huge numbers of Plumed Whistling-Duck were concentrated near the Q.A.C. dams with a fair number of Straw-necked Ibis nearby. Still not open to the public but viewed from Laidley Golf Course, the newly enlarged Lake Dyer had small pools and swampy ground only, where a few waterbirds were feeding, including a dozen or so Herons. The lake should, after adequate rainfall in the catchment area, become a splendid bird-watching venue in the future.

Of the 58 species seen, special birds of the day were a Brown Goshawk, sitting quietly in a tree among the College buildings and a pair of Rainbow Bee-eaters over-wintering in the Laidley Valley perhaps-- and a Regent Bowerbird seen briefly as the sunlight caught his striking plumage.

Ann Shore

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY -- SUNDAY 31/5/87

As previously announced, members of the Club were present at Lake Annand for this annual environmental occasion; collecting donations and selling a little home-made produce in aid of the Bicentennial Waterbird Habitat and also promoting the Club.

It was a perfect Winter's day, calm sunny and warm and the happy atmosphere, displays and events were enjoyed by visitors and participants alike.

Ann Shore

Annual Subscription

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



FIELD DAY FOR JUNE

Date: Sunday, June 28th.
Place: Ma Ma and Heifer Creeks
Assembly: McDonnell & East car park
Time: 7.15am for departure 7.30am.
Leader: Lesley Beaton

JULY - AUGUST FIELD TRIPS

The July Field Day will be an S.S.S. effort in the Toowoomba region. Final details in the July issue.

The August camp has been confirmed for "Pialaway", on the Balonne River. It is not too early to check over your camping duffel, but remember that August Nights in the West can be chilly. We will publish fuller details in the next two issues.

FIELD DAY REPORT-- COOBY CREEK AND DAM-- 24.5.87.

The route taken to Cooby Dam was by the Old Goombungee Road and through Meringandan. We hoped to see a few waterbirds in the creek crossings along the way. We were unprepared for the treats in store.

The first stop, barely outside Harlaxton, was to look at a Maned Duck some twelve metres up in a dead tree - and another was sighted in another tree. However on the Bacon Co-op's pastures, with the usual Straw-necked and Sacred Ibises, were no fewer than nine White-faced Herons. Who has ever seen more than two or three at once before ?

Next, feeding in a bare paddock between Cawdor and Shirley was a wonderful collection of parrots - about thirty Galahs, forty Cockatiel and thirty Red-rumped Parrots with a couple of pairs of Pale-headed Rosellas going and coming. Over the road were grazing Maned Ducks while at the other end of the paddock was a group of Apostlebirds (twelve, of course!) and three Grey-crowned Babblers.

What could Cooby produce to equal these "on the way there" birds ?

Three Wedge-tailed Eagles were yet to come near Meringandan, and closer to Cooby, the expected White-winged Choughs.

At Cooby itself, we were initially disappointed at the few birds on the dam at our brief viewing. However the Azure Kingfisher was at his appointed spot by the pool below the dam wall, his cobalt back and brilliant orange front jewel-like in the dark foliage.

There were many small birds in the ancient callistemons along the creek banks, but it took us some time to identify them as Varied Sittellas, Silvereyes and Striated Pardalotes, with a Rufous Whistler in best male plumage, and some Superb Fairy-wrens on the ground.

Back to the dam again, with a White-throated Treecreeper near the wall. This time we walked along the edge of the road to see what else was up the arm of the lake, to add to the few Coots in the wider part of the dam. "Swans, Black Swans!", seen first by new member Lisa Monaghan, and there they were, along with a magnificent Darter together with Pacific Black Ducks and Grey Teals. But try as we might, we couldn't turn the Little Grebes into Hoary-headed, while the report of white necks sighted belonged "merely" to Little Pied Cormorants and not Great Crested Grebes. And not a Musk Duck to be seen. But yes, there were a couple of Koalas and a Wallaby.

Members Present: Joyce Bartenstein, Diana Beal, Frank and Nancy Belcher, Gloria Glass, Kevin and Margaret McPhee, Lisa Monaghan and Lyn Rowan.

Species: 33 on the way, 41 at Cooby, 59 in all. List held by Records Officer.

Gloria Glass

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

Camping trips and film or 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.

TOOWOOMBA BIRD CLUB

ANNUAL SUMMARY OF SPECIES- 1985

Supplement to Newsletter No. 138



First I must apologize for the lateness of this Summary, but many factors have contributed to it. It was decided that a much more comprehensive form of records be adopted. We now have a system that covers all sectors, which means that we will be able to more accurately place where birds have been seen. All this has been done in the hope that we will be able to produce a book of the birds of the Toowoomba area at a future date.

The other new system introduced was the "new bird card", which is a register, in index card form, of each bird, to record details of first sighting; who, when, where etc. This gives us a quick reference to all the species on our list.

I wish to record my thanks to Gloria for all her help with both these projects; without her I would be still typing.

There was only one new bird for this year-- the Budgerigar. On the list below you will see that 44 species from our list were not recorded in 1985. I think this reflects, in many cases at least, the absence of observers more than the birds. Weather and migration may have played a part but we can't do much about that aspect. However we could do a lot about the observation. We need more members to fill in monthly checklists to fill the gaps in our records. You don't have to be a twitcher to tick a checklist; a Sunday drive, or a daily walk around the block can give us valuable information for our records.

How about it ? Can you help ?

To those members who submitted checklists for the year I would record my thanks and invite other members to consider joining in this most useful project.

Angela Kilmartin.
Records Officer.

44 Species from Toowoomba List which were not recorded in 1985.

(Figures in brackets refer to month and year of previous sighting)

Great Crested Grebe (7.81)	Red-necked Stint (11.83)
Hoary-headed Grebe (4.84)	Sooty Tern (1.76)
Little Bittern (11.77)	Red-tld. Black Cockatoo (12.83)
Black Bittern (10.84)	Turquoise Parrot (4.80)
Black-necked Stork (10.83)	Oriental Cuckoo (1.79)
Magpie Goose (9.82)	Powerful Owl (12.84)
Wandering Whst-duck (1.83)	Barking Owl (12.83)
Freckled Duck (10.83)	Red-backed Kingfisher (8.81)
Mallard (12.75)	White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike (2.84)
Cotton Pygmy-goose (1.82)	Yellow-eyed Cuckoo-shrike (12.84)
Musk Duck (3.84)	White's Thrush (12.84)
Square-tailed Kite (10.82)	Scarlet Robin (4.80)
Red Goshawk (4.77)	Crested Shrike-tit (5.84)
Marsh Harrier (8.83)	Spotted Quail-thrush (9.82)
Stubble Quail (2.83)	Little Grassbird (8.82)
Painted Button-Quail (11.83)	Plum-headed Finch (12.84)
Red-chest. Button-Ql (11.84)	White-brstd. Woodswallow (10.76)
Baillon's Crake (2.83)	Masked Woodswallow (9.80)
Blk-tld. Native-hen (11.82)	White-brwd. Woodswallow (9.80)
Painted Snipe (1.83)	Black-faced Woodswallow (10.82)
Marsh Sandpiper (12.82)	Apostlebird (8.83)
Curlew Sandpiper (10.82)	Australian Raven (11.84)

NON-PASSERINE SPECIES C/td.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Whiskered Tern										10		
Rose-crowned Fruit-dove	1											
Topknot Pigeon	1					6			9	10		
White-headed Pigeon			3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Feral Pigeon	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Spotted Turtledove	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Brown Cuckoo-dove	1			4			7		9	10	11	12
Peaceful Dove	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Bar-shouldered Dove	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Emerald Dove	1			4							11	12
Common Bronzewing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		10	11	
Crested Pigeon	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Squatter Pigeon	1											
Wonga Pigeon	1	2		4					9	10	11	12
Glossy Black Cockatoo		2										
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo										10		
Galah	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo			3	4	5		7			10	11	12
Rainbow Lorikeet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Musk Lorikeet	1	2	3		5	6						
Little Lorikeet	1		3	4	5	6	7			10	11	12
Australian King Parrot	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
Cockatiel	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Budgerigar				4			7			10		
Crimson Rosella											11	
Eastern Rosella											11	
Pale-headed Rosella	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Red-rumped Parrot	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
Pallid Cuckoo			3		5				9	10	11	
Brush Cuckoo	1			4								
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	1			4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo			3							10		
Shining Bronze-cuckoo		2									11	
Common Koel	1	2	3						9	10	11	12
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	2								10	11	12
Pheasant Coucal	1	2	3	4	5		7	8	9		11	12
Southern Boobook	1	2			5		7	8	9	10	11	
Barn Owl				4				8				
Tawny Frogmouth	1	2		4	5			8			11	
Australian Owlet-nightjar	1											
White-throated Nightjar										10		
White-throated Needletail	1	2	3	4							11	12
Fork-tailed Swift	1			4								
Azure Kingfisher	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			10	11	12
Laughing Kookaburra	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Sacred Kingfisher	1	2	3						9	10	11	12
Rainbow Bee-eater	1	2	3	4	5		7	8	9	10	11	12
Dollarbird	1	2	3					8	9	10	11	12

PASSERINE SPECIES RECORDED DURING 1985

Species	Months	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	12
Noisy Pitta		1									10		
Singing Bushlark								7			10	11	
White-backed Swallow		1	2		4		6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Welcome Swallow		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Tree Martin		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Fairy Martin		1	2	3	4			7	8		10	11	12
Richard's Pipit		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Cicadabird		1	2	3							10	11	12
Ground Cuckoo-shrike						5							
White-winged Triller		1										11	
Varied Triller		1	2		4					9		11	12
Rose Robin					4	5	6	7					
Red-capped Robin					4	5	6	7	8				
Eastern Yellow Robin		1	2	3	4		6			9	10	11	12
Jacky Winter		1	2	3	4	5	6	7				11	
Golden Whistler		1			4	5	6	7	8		10	11	
Rufous Whistler		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Grey Shrike-thrush		1	2	3	4		6	7		9	10	11	12
Black-faced Monarch		1	2									11	12
Spectacled Monarch		1	2		4					9	10		12
Leaden Flycatcher		1										11	
Satin Flycatcher										9	10		
Restless Flycatcher		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		10		12
Rufous Fantail		1			4		6			9	10	11	12
Grey Fantail		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		12
Willie Wagtail		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Eastern Whipbird		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Grey-crowned Babbler		1			4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Clamorous Reed-warbler		1	2							9	10	11	12
Tawny Grassbird								7					
Golden-headed Cisticola		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Rufous Songlark										9	10		12
Brown Songlark											10	11	
Superb Fairy-wren		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Variegated Fairy-wren		1	2	3	4			7			10	11	12
Red-backed Fairy-wren		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		9	10	11	12
Large-billed Scrubwren		1			4					9			12
White-browed Scrubwren		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		9	10	11	12
Speckled Warbler		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		9	10	11	
Weebill		1	2	3	4	5	6						
Brown Gerygone		1	2	3	4	5		7	8	9	10	11	12
White-throated Gerygone		1	2	3	4	5		7	8	9	10	11	12
Brown Thornbill		1	2		4	5		7		9	10	11	
Buff-rumped Thornbill			2	3	4		6						
Yellow-rumped Thornbill		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Yellow Thornbill		1	2	3	4		6	7			10		12
Striated Thornbill		1	2		4			7					
Varied Sittella		1	2	3	4			7		9			12
White-throated Treecreeper		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Red Wattlebird					4		6						
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater									8				
Striped Honeyeater		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Noisy Friarbird		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Little Friarbird		1	2	3	4	5		7	8	9	10	11	12
Blue-faced Honeyeater		1	2	3	4	5		7	8	9	10	11	12
Noisy Miner		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Lewin's Honeyeater		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Yellow-faced Honeyeater			2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		11	

PASSERINE SPECIES C/td.	- 5 -											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S.	O	N	D
Fuscous Honeyeater			3									
Brown-headed Honeyeater		2	3									
White-throated Honeyeater				4					9	10		
White-naped Honeyeater	1		3						9	10		12
Brown Honeyeater	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Eastern Spinebill					5	6	7	8	9			
Scarlet Honeyeater			3		5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
Mistletoebird	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Spotted Pardalote	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Striated Pardalote	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Silvereye	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
House Sparrow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Red-browed Firetail	1	2		4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Zebra Finch	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10	11	
Double-barred Finch	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	1	2	3	4			7		9	10	11	12
Common Starling	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Common Mynah	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Olive-backed Oriole	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Figbird	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Spangled Drongo	1		3	4						10	11	12
Satin Bowerbird	1		3	4	5	6	7	8	9			12
Regent Bowerbird	1	2		4					9	10	11	12
White-winged Chough									9	10		
Australian Magpie-lark	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Dusky Woodswallow					5	6	7					
Grey Butcherbird	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Pied Butcherbird	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Australian Magpie	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Pied Currawong	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Torresian Crow	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

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Checklist total as at 31.12.1985---- 242 species.
 Non-passerines recorded in 1985 ---- 108
 Passerines recorded in 1985 ---- 90
 Number not recorded in 1985 ---- 44 (30 Non-P.-- 14P.)
 New species recorded in 1985 ---- 1 (Budgerigar . 28.4.1985)