



TOOWOOMBA BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER  
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"TO ENCOURAGE THE OBSERVATION AND STUDY OF THE BIRDS OF THE TOOWOOMBA AREA"

No.151-July 1988

Field Outing to the Lockyer Valley and Laidley Areas. Sunday 26th. June.

What a great day! Ninety-three on our checklist! Yet not many of us would have predicted such a satisfying field outing given the gloomy unpromising start. But this day brought new birds for some, new acquaintances for others and new ground covered. It was also a pleasure to welcome old birding friends, make new ones and be joined by an enthusiastic Q.6.S. member, Dean Moss from Rosewood.

As we met at Apex Lake, Gatton, a Little Eagle flew in to sit and eat its prey on a post in the lake until roused by Dean to give us a quick look at it in flight. We moved on to the dams in the grounds of the Queensland Agricultural College at Lawes to find Plumed Whistling-duck in their hundreds and so used to human activity that we could observe them quite closely without disturbing them. Two Tawny Grass-birds were glimpsed as they flitted among the weeds bordering the water and Striped Honeyeaters and Little Friarbirds were busy in nearby eucalypts.

We drove on southward through Forest Hill to the little hamlet of Blenheim where morning tea was enjoyed but little birdlife seen. However, luck soon changed in the Mt. Berryman valley. Lesley Beaton's sharp eyes spotted Dusky Woodswallows on the powerlines plus dozens of Zebra Finches with many other small birds around too. The wooded valley hillside produced tantalising glimpses of a raptor seeming to play hide and seek in the trees but we never achieved a proper identification. As the valley closed in there was bird activity everywhere and turning a corner our convoy of cars scattered a group of female Satin Bowerbirds from roadside thickets, the bronze sheen on their backs plainly to be seen. Joe Deuble found two Tawny Frogmouths, upright and unmoving, for all the world like extensions to the branches they perched on, while an Eastern Spinebill fed close to the road to gratified exclamations from the onlookers.

At the end of the bitumen we checked out a quiet creek crossing being rewarded by a flash of ultramarine as an Azure Kingfisher sped past while a Fan-tailed Cuckoo gave us good views. Several Satin Bowerbirds preened themselves after bathing and a Wedge-tailed Eagle soared overhead.

Next stop - Laidley. Plenty of waterbirds around on a large dam, and Cockatiels overhead. Highlights were a pair of Black Swans escorting a flotilla of six tiny cygnets. A break for lunch followed as the day had warmed up and most were in urgent need of refreshment. One more dam nearby produced a pair of Pink-eared Duck.

On the homeward run we took the scenic route to Ropeley, high over the hills with magnificent views, then down to earth again to find yet more to enthrall us at the Ropeley Rd. swamp. Many more Whistling Duck and various others, plus another special sighting: Australian Shovelers, also Black Swans. The bush bordering the road held more interest again; White-throated Honeyeaters, Rufous Whistlers, Weebills, a Restless Flycatcher while several Rainbow Bee-eaters cavorted above us.

To complete the day we turned off the Warrego Highway to visit a certain spot where a Red-backed Kingfisher was recently seen and, sure enough, there he was, waiting for us to make no. 93 on our list.

Ann Shore

Those present:

Lesley Beaton, Frank and Nancy Belcher, Joe Deuble, Lonnie Hogan, Angela Kilmartin, Lyn Rowan, Ann and John Shore, Richard Thomas and Jane White.  
Dean Moss- Visitor from Q.O.S.

Birdsville and Beyond. June 1988.

I had been looking forward to this trip for some months and had expected after good April rains an interior in good condition. It wasn't quite as green as I had been expecting but there was still plenty of water lying around and accompanying the water I hoped there would be lots of birdlife.

The three days drive to Birdsville is as always quite rewarding despite a few hundred kilometres of bad road as one gets close to Birdsville. En route to here birds of interest were Pink Cockatoo, Chirruping Wedgebill and Hall's Babbler. Special birds of interest being Plumed Pigeon and Australian Dotterel west of Windorah.

From Birdsville the serious birding began with some of the larger dunes south of Birdsville being camped at and checked out. Beside some of these dunes permanent or near permanent water holes have formed and these areas are rich in wildlife. The first birds of note being a pair of Flock Pigeons sitting in the shade of a Lignum bush, with Black-eared Cuckoos calling in the background. Cinnamon Quail-thrush were also common in the area. As camp was set up a flock of about eighty Little Corellas settled in for a meal on some nearby Paddy Melons. The clacking of their bills could be heard from some distance.

The reason for this trip was mainly photographic and I had thoughts- if I was very lucky- of getting shots of the Grey and Eyrean Grasswrens. The following day I set out looking for the Grey Grasswren. Head in the air and looking forty feet ahead of me I crept around a Lignum bush and was surprised by a Western Taipan near my feet. When I got my colour back and swapped binoculars for camera all I managed to photograph was its tail. However, I saw a second snake later on and did manage to get some photos. Meanwhile the Grey Grasswren was seen frequently, and in fact I saw five in one bush, but the photos I got were of the "spot the bird" type. Another bird seen that was of interest from a distribution point of view was a Chestnut Teal.

The Eyrean Grasswren proved elusive that day but with another day to be spent here I was still hopeful. As it turned out I got excellent looks at the Eyreans on three occasions, and at one stage watched two adults feeding an immature bird for more than twenty minutes.

It was with a little sadness that we left this scenic place but time was moving on and I was determined to try some Cassia bush country further down the track in the hope of finding Banded Whiteface. The walk here to a Whiteface site was one of several kilometres and would have been quite enjoyable except for the flies and mosquitoes. They attacked us in droves and inbetween swats I did manage to see five birds. These like other Whitefaces seem to be constantly on the move making

photography difficult.

Our next port of call after three days of mostly leisurely driving with many stops for photography was Noccundra. Not a town as such just a pub, a transportable schoolroom and a few caravans. The camping here is quite enjoyable with the Wilson River providing a nice setting especially with several Pelicans swimming by on sunset. Two days were spent here with the only bird of interest being a Painted Honeyeater.

In all an enjoyable trip and one which I can highly recommend to anybody provided they don't go in summer and are well prepared for the remoteness of the area.

Pat McConnell

#### Q.O.S. Bird Counts.

At very short notice the club learnt that these events were now to be held bi-annually; a winter one each May as well as a spring one in October. After initially saying no and again receiving an appeal to collect data from the usual area that we cover, we mustered what troops we could enabling two parties to count in the Gatton and Laidley areas. Ron Hopkinson and Ann Shore checked the grounds of the Q.A.C. at Lawes, went on south-east through Forest Hill to Blenheim and the Mt. Berryman Valley and then right up the Laidley Valley. With all the dams and creeks full to over-flowing and the country looking green and refreshed despite the autumn season and the weather still sunny and mild on 25 May, they had an excellent day's birding. A feature was the huge number of Plumed Whistling Ducks seen and another the number of raptors about; most notable being two White-bellied Sea-eagles sitting quietly in tall trees overlooking a big dam.

Ann Shore

#### July Outing.

To Upper Flagstone Ck. The meeting place will be at the McKenzie St. end of the Water Bird Habitat on Sunday July 24 th. at 7.45 am. to leave at 8.00 am. Visitors are most welcome. For more information contact Angela on 382404.

#### August Outing.

Redwood park- Leader Angela Kilmartin.

#### Executive Members Needed.

This year a lot of the club's executive will be retiring. The positions which will definitely be vacated are President, Treasurer, Editor and Librarian. Nominations for the other positions are also welcome.

#### S.S.S. month.

Members are reminded that July is an S.S.S. month so please get those sheets filled in.

On the topic of checklists: members are asked to get their lists back to Angela as soon as possible as the Club's year is coming to an end and Angela wants to get all the information up to date before the executive changeover. It would also be appreciated if unused lists could be returned as soon as possible. Thank you.

Information Needed.

Information is needed on the nesting sites of the Striated Pardalote for tape recording purposes. This is needed by an American woman who is researching bird calls. For more information contact Angela.

Members' Bird Notes.

Rose Robin	4/5/88	21 Sylvan Ct.	MJ.
White-bellied Sea-eagle	25/5/88	Lagoon at corner of Mulgowie and Blenheim Rds.	AHS.
Great Crested Grebe (2)	5/5/88	Hoods.	AHS. LB.
Squatter Pigeon	5/5/88	Helidon Dip	AHS. LB.
Marsh Harrier	26/5/88	Hoods	AK.
Topknot Pigeon	/5/88	40 Mabel St.	AK.
Musk Lorikeet	25/5/88	" "	" "
White-headed Pigeon	" "	" "	" "
Red-backed Kingfisher.	First seen on 5 th. June . This bird has stayed around through June and may still be seen on the Helidon/Flagstone Ck. rd. approximately 0.7 km. past the Carpendale turnoff heading south. <b>Look above yellow letterbox.</b>		

LB- Lesley Beaton; MJ- Marilyn Jacobs; AK- Angela Kilmartin; AHS- Ann Shore.

TOOWOOMBA BIRD CLUB

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION:-Members \$10.00. Families \$12.00. Students \$5.00.

Activities:-Field day and monthly meeting- ~~four~~h Sunday of each month.

Camping trips and film and slide evenings.

Newsletter:- Published monthly, prior to the field day. Contributions are invited and should reach the Editor by the end of the month.