



TOOWOOMBA BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER

CLUB OFFICERS:

President: Lesley Beaton (ph. 326262)
Secretary: Ann Shore (ph. 303207)
Treasurer:
Records: Angela Kilmartin (ph. 382404)
Librarian: Nancy Belcher (ph. 384047)
Editor: Pat McConnell (ph. 352980)

p.o. box 67 · darling heights · qld 4350

"TO ENCOURAGE THE OBSERVATION AND STUDY OF THE BIRDS OF THE TOOWOOMBA AREA"

No. 153 - September 1988

Dear Members,

This is the last time I shall be writing to you as President. I intend to resign at the A.G.M. and not to accept any nominations for positions on the committee.

I have been President for three years and served on the Executive for seven. In that time I have made many friends, been involved in many projects and innovations of the Club and seen many, many birds. I would like to thank all the members for their support and friendship over the years.

Please join me at our A.G.M. in October. We already have a number of people willing to nominate for positions on the 1988/89 Executive, but are happy to accept more. Pat's slides will be well worth seeing and there is always plenty of time to chat over supper.

Lesley, President.

The Adaptability of Birds to their Environment.

Scene - Gold Coast sea front highway, 11.30 am, not far from the Grand Hotel on the Southport waterfront. On a light bulb - on the inland side of the busy highway - twenty feet above the roar of continuous traffic - sits a bored Pelican. He's so bored in fact he's yawning! (Do birds yawn, I wonder?) Behind him, shining in the sun, is one of the tallest high rise buildings of this area. A magical picture - but of course - no camera.

Looking to the sea side of the road are two more Pelicans also balanced on large street lights.

Change of scene - inside Scrumpis Restaurant having lunch at 12 noon. Outside, gathering proffered crumbs from a picnic table - twenty or so Pigeons (normal), twenty or so Seagulls (normal) and two Straw-necked [bis! As bold as brass, right alongside the picnic table and obviously enjoying the handouts.

This same band of birds were also seen to leave en-masse - wheel and circle together and settle down together on the coastal sand bank twenty-five yards from the shore - all fossicking together. Pigeons on a salt sand bar? Further out, on a sand bar rapidly being covered by the rising tide were a pair of Plovers. These also I have never seen on salt sand banks and in salt water.

My first sighting for the day's excursion was a Reef Heron, fossicking amongst the rocks at the exit of the Sea World water. At least he was in his normal habitat! When not fossicking, he sat in the normal Heron hunch on the rock outcrop. He was almost black all over, the breast being a dark grey. According to Robin Hill, these birds do not nest in colonies like other Herons but build a platform of sticks lined with smaller twigs amongst seashore rocks or on a rock ledge. The Northern variety are white, but they vary into the darker greys the further South they are found.

Vera Simon.

Currawongs

Recently (July and early August) we have had an influx of Currawongs at "Shorelands". The Pied Currawong is not exactly our favourite bird - not by any means! Apart from its habit of depositing regurgitated pellets around the garden - and in the birdbath - (could it be responsible for the excessive number of "foreign" seedlings I have found and potted up recently?) - we do not like having the small birds and fledgelings molested, devoured or driven away. Some of the larger birds can stand up for themselves and we were delighted to see the pugnacious Blue-faced Honeyeaters having "words" on a number of occasions, even succeeding in driving them away from the water.

The Currawongs have developed a liking for the empty Pecan nutshells which we are using to mulch our roses, apparently eating them wholesale; plus infuriating the Honeyeaters and Friarbirds by tearing repeatedly at the Callistemon twigs while they are trying to feed on the blossom, though quite for what purpose we cannot tell.

Perhaps the strangest behaviour we have watched though would be the encounter between an aggressive Currawong and an imitation plastic snake. Last season we had fixed several of these "snakes" among our vines, having been told that they would make effective bird-scarers, although we could not see any benefit at the time. However, now with leaves fallen and one remaining "snake" still in place and much more visible, our big black predator decided the reptile should be dealt with in no uncertain fashion and belaboured it with his strong bill for several minutes - much to our entertainment! Alas, we had no camera handy. Then there was the confrontation with the young Bearded Dragon, when I intervened, not being certain of the outcome.

They are characters, these winter visitors, and although we do not always love them or approve of their ways, on the plus side one must record their use as country scavengers and a liking for their wild highland calls.

Any^{way}, roll on the Spring.

Ann Shore.

Field Outing - Jones Road and Hoods. Sunday 28th August

A wet start again for Redwood Park. Will we ever get the Club outing over that new suspension bridge? After a discussion with members present it was decided that we would go to Jones Road, Withcott for our outing. The weather was windy but fine. Good birding at the creek, with Scarlet Honeyeaters in profusion and once again all three Wren species were seen together. Both Superb and Variegated were in full colour, but the Red-backed was just coming into plumage.

After morning tea at Ann's home, we decided to check out Hoods. However, only the usual birds were seen.

We had a visit from Donaldda Rodgers, ffom Pittsworth, for the outing. So nice to have your company, Donaldda, and the Weebill call.

In all, a total of fifty-three species were seen during the day.

Members present: Ann, Norma, Richard, Lonie, Joe and Angela.

Angela Kilmartin.

Display Board

We are pleased to announce that with the help of the boys of the Westbrook Training Centre our display board for the Water Bird Habitat has been completed and is ready for installation. This will take place at the Habitat on Tuesday, 27th September at 12 noon and I hope that some members will be able to join me at the Habitat for a B.Y.O. picnic.

Angela Kilmartin.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday 18th October 7.30 pm. Cnr Coonan and Dwyer Streets, Harlaxton.

The meeting is to be held at the Harlaxton Neighbourhood Centre as it is no longer feasible to hold them in private homes. There will be supper on the night and members are asked to bring a small plate of food. A raffle will also be held.

Guest Speaker: Pat McConnell. Pat will speak on the birds of Lord Howe Island and of Western Queensland.

September Outing

Goomburra State Forest. Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th September.

For those interested this will be a camping trip. However, there will be walks planned for those interested in a Sunday outing only. Activities will include spotlighting on the Saturday night.

Goomburra is a beautiful area of varied habitats and many interesting walks. The road in ends in gravel, so it is advisable to keep a close eye on the weather.

The meeting area will be the main camping area. This will be after lunch on the Saturday for those camping and 9 am on Sunday for the day trippers.

Bird - a - thon

The Club will be having its Bird-a-thon on Sunday 23rd October. The money raised this year will be going to the Club. Last year's Bird-a-thon was a great success and a whole lot of fun, so please keep this day free to support the Club. A sponsorship form is enclosed with this newsletter.

Q.O.S. Bird Count

The Q.O.S. is holding its Spring Count on the 8th and 9th of October. For more information, contact Ann Shore.

Bird Week - Bird Watching Competition

This year the Q.O.S. will be running a competitive Bird Watch. It will not be a simple test of spotting the greatest number of birds, but will require a knowledge of just which species are rare and which are common in the habitat selected.

The idea is to select what you think is the most productive example of the different habitats and do a three hour count in each one. Only self-propelled transport is allowed during the three-hour period. Sightings must be confirmed by an observer, and the results will be adjusted according to the rarity of each species.

The competition will run from the 1st to the 23rd of October. For further information, contact Pat McConnell.

S.S.S. Month

Members are reminded that October is a Seasonal Species Survey month.

Calendars for Sale

Once again, the Club has R.A.O.U. calendars for sale. These will be available at the A.G.M., or can be obtained from any of the Executive.

Member's Bird Notes

White-headed Pigeon	12/6/88	Raff & Bridge Sts.	J.D.
White-headed Pigeon	2/8/88	Flinders St.	J.D.
Blue-faced Honeyeater	14/8/88	Garden	J.D.
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (3)	3/9/88	Mabel St.	A.K.
Red-browed Firetails	3/9/88	Mabel St.	A.K.
Australian Hobby	3/9/88	Mabel St.	A.K.

J.D. - Joe Deuble, A.K. - Angela Kilmartin.

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EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Most of the executive positions are now filled, but nominations are still invited for any position.

Nomination forms are available from the Secretary and will also be available on the night of the Annual General Meeting.

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TOOWOOMBA BIRD CLUB - BIRD - A - THON

The Toowoomba Bird Club is conducting a Bird-A-Thon to raise funds for the Club.

If you would like to help please sponsor a Club member for the bird count to be held on the 23rd October.

The Club counts species and not individual bird numbers and would expect to see about 120 species on such a day.

If you are willing to help please indicate the amount per species for which you will sponsor the member. Donations are also acceptable.

Sponsor's Name	Amount/species	Donation	Member's Name	Total Species	Amount

Please return form to any member of the Executive by Wednesday 19th October.

NOTICE FOR GOOMBURRA CAMPOUT

Having contacted the Forestry Department and made the booking for the campsites I was told that the road in is in bad condition and that further rain may make it unsuitable for conventional vehicles. I will be going out there this weekend (September 17 and 18) to check the road and walking tracks and would like people who intend coming on the campout to ring me the following Wednesday or Thursday evening for a final report. Should the campout be cancelled an alternative day only outing will be organised.

P. McConnell ph. 352980