

TOOWOOMBA BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER



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

No. 154 - October 1988

Field Outing: Goomburra. Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th September.

Beautiful weather promised a great weekend campout at Goomburra and those who attended were not disappointed.

A small group of birders showed up on Saturday afternoon and after a quick exploration of the picnic area, headed off on what is called the Ridge Walk. This walk passes through lush vine scrub and members were rewarded with plenty of birds including Paradise Riflebird, Green Catbird and Topknot Pigeon with an Albert's Lyrebird calling off the track. Included in its repertoire were Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Logrunner and Grey Shrike-thrush.

The evening saw the arrival of three Q.O.S. members and a combined spotlighting foray during which Sooty and Boobook Owls were heard and Tawny Frogmouths, Greater Gliders, Pademelons and a Short-nosed Bandicoot were seen. We were hoping to see the Tiger Cat which had been seen on the previous weekend but the noise of our neighbours' Ghetto Blaster playing at 40,000 decibels probably scared it into the next valley. However the evening was still a success.

For those braving the cool morning on Sunday there was an hour or two of splendid birding before breakfast, with good views of Glossy Black Cockatoos. Breakfast saw the arrival of two more Toowoomba Bird Club members and three more Q.O.S. members.

After breakfast we got ourselves organised and headed off on the Cascades Walk. This turned out to be the highlight of the weekend with four to five hours of fantastic scenery, interspersed with excellent birding. Birds included Wompoo Pigeon, Black-faced Monarch, Logrunner, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Noisy Pitta and Shining Bronze-cuckoo. Two Red-bellied Black Snakes were also seen.

Sixty-one species were seen during the weekend.

Members present: Lesley Beaton, Don Gaydon, Dave Hill, Pat McConnell, Lisa Maloney and Norma Thomas. Wendy, Narelle, Kym, Kelvin, Laural and Eric joined us from the Q.O.S.

Pat McConnell.

Leslie Dam - Birdwatching.

I recently attended a school camp near Warwick where it was my duty to take groups of Year 8 boys hiking. I decided to combine this with birdwatching and equipped the boys with a pair of binoculars between two. It was a delight to see their excitement and wonder as they learnt to spot different species of birds. Colourful Rainbow Bee-eaters were building a nest in the bank of the creek; a White-faced Heron waded in the shallows while Eastern Rosellas, Scaly-breasted Lorikeets and Sulphur-crested Cockatoos screeched overhead. The highlight was watching a pair of Azure Kingfishers fishing while we sat and ate afternoon tea on the opposite bank. There were many cries of 'Gosh, there he goes again!' The boys then spotted a Sacred Kingfisher in the tree overhead.

Around the camp were very tame Apostlebirds who liked to sit on the side mirrors of the cars and look at themselves amid much chatter. Near the dam wall were Blue-faced Honeyeaters who ventured to within a few feet of us as we made billy tea and damper. Their blue eye patch is brilliant at close range. I was rather amused to watch a Rainbow Lorikeet Spring to the defence of a Blue-faced Honeyeater who was being attacked by a Noisy Friarbird. Their behaviour was not unlike some exhibited by the boys in my charge.

I also enjoyed observing an Eastern Rosella at close range and marvelling at their colours, particularly the pale lime green low down on their breast which is shown on most illustrations. They appear to be a solitary bird unlike the Pale-headed Rosellas which are always in pairs.

Barbara Weller.

Snippets From Members' Bird Notes.

Late one afternoon, one of two immature Butcherbirds was resting on the verandah rail when he noticed a wallaby (with joey in pouch) hopping across the yard in search of greener pastures. Not far behind was another wallaby also with joey in pouch and soon they began eating. Young Butch watched with considerable interest for some time and then decided to investigate at closer range. He landed near one of the wallabies and appeared quite fascinated with this 'strange looking animal with an extra pair of legs hanging from a belly pouch'. Then he hopped around the animal and checked her over from all angles before 'having a go' at the snake-like tail, which caused the wallaby some concern. She moved a metre or so and Butch decided that 'more action' was the order of the day and began dive-bombing the wallaby to get her on the hop again! Meanwhile the second immature Butcherbird appeared on the scene, dive-bombing the other wallaby. The terrible twins were not satisfied until the wallabies had taken cover in long grass. What mischief makers!

November 7th, 1987. Approximately 11.30pm. The opening of a sliding screen door produced a high-pitched screech - a night bird was flying overhead and answered the screech of the sliding door! Sounded the same too!

Does anyone know what is otherwise called the 'Hoop Crane'? Can be heard now and then at night, flying overhead making a hooping noise. Rather an obscure description, but perhaps someone can help?

November Outing: Helidon Hills area.

Tape Recording Review: 'BIRD CALLS OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA'

Len Gillard 1987. Processed by EMI (Aust.) Ltd. Approximately \$12.00
Available from Peter Gillard, PO Box 214, Kirwan. Qld 4817.

This tape by Len Gillard features the calls of 150 species of birds from Eastern Australia, 75 per side, with a rainforest chorus at the conclusion. The name of each bird is announced before its call is played, each call lasting for an average of 36 seconds.

Mr Gillard has travelled extensively to obtain his recordings as birds from Tasmania to Cape York are included. The tape includes many species not previously available commercially and some, for example Painted Snipe, Sooty Oystercatcher and Topknot Pigeon are very difficult to record. Generally speaking, the calls are strongly reproduced and the background noise limited to only that of the surrounding habitat, with very little other noise.

Some sections are very well represented, particularly the pigeons with 10 species and the honeyeaters with 19 species recorded. The three owls featured, Rufous, Southern Boobook and Barn are recorded with exceptional clarity.

Birds of similar plumage and distribution can be separated by learning the calls from this tape, for example Lewin's and Yellow-spotted Honeyeaters. Birds with similar calls can also be separated by consulting this tape, for example the Australian Raven and Torresian Crow.

Given the overall quality of this tape, it represents excellent value for money for anyone anxious to become more familiar with the calls of the birds of Eastern Australia.

Ian Venables.

NEW TOOWOOMBA BIRD.

258. Whimbrel. *Numenius phaeopus*. September 10th 1988. Hood's Lagoon.
Pat McConnell and Ann Shore.

A large wader with a long downwardly curving bill. Bill colour brown, with a fleshy coloured base to the lower mandible. Head - dark line extending from bill to eye; a pale line above this with a darker one above and a pale line through the crown. Basically a brown bird with darker spotting on the back and sides. Some barring seen on tail with the bird standing side on. Legs grey-green. Seen twice in flight - basically brown above but with upper tail and lower back paler.

Observed for about twenty minutes through a telescope.

Christmas Breakup.

This will be held at the University Centre, 6 Range Street, Toowoomba, on Sunday 4th December from 12.00 noon.

The grounds are very pleasant and there is a pool so members can swim if they wish.

Many thanks to Daryl Mears for his help in organising this event.

Members' Bird Notes.

Emerald Dove (Green-winged Pigeon)		Range Street	D.M.
Glossy Black Cockatoo (3)	5/9/88	Picnic Point	A.S.
Whimbrel	10/9/88	Hood's Lagoon	P.M. & A.S.
Horsfield's Bronze Cuckoo	12/9/88	Dunmore Street	L.B.

L.B. - Lesley Beaton; D.M. - Daryl Mears; P.M. - Pat McConnell; A.S. - Ann Shore.

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 and support your Club.

Groups and localities will be organised prior to the outing. The Club will meet afterwards at the Waterbird Habitat for a picnic lunch, during which lists will be checked and the afternoon's activities planned. We will meet at 12 noon.

R.A.O.U. 86th Annual Congress.

December 10-11th 1988. The Congress will be held at the Shortland Wetlands Centre near Newcastle, N.S.W. and will be followed by a campout from December 12-16th. The theme of the Congress is Waterbirds. For further information contact Angela Kilmartin, phone 382404.

New Member.

The Club extends a warm welcome to Mrs Julie O'Connor, 32 East St, Toowoomba.

FROM THE EDITOR.

As I plan to retire as Editor and run for another position on the Executive, this is my last newsletter.

I would like to thank the Club members for their support throughout the year and express my appreciation for the many contributions made towards the newsletter during my term as Editor.

I would also like to thank the Executive for their tireless support.

Pat McConnell.

TOOWOOMBA BIRD CLUB

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

ACTIVITIES: Field day and monthly meeting fourth 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.
