



toowoomba bird
club
inc.

TOOWOOMBA BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER

CLUB OFFICERS

President	Angela Kilmartin	Ph 382404
Vice-President/Records	Pat McConnell	Ph 352980
Secretary	Ann Shore	Ph 303204
Treasurer/Librarian	Keith Treschman	Ph 352894
Editor	Barbara Weller	Ph 329824

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

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

No. 156 - December 1988

REPORT ON R.A.O.U. CONGRESS

Recently three members of the T.B.C. (Angela Kilmartin, Jane White and Barbara Weller) attended the 86th R.A.O.U. Congress held at the Shortland Wetlands Centre near Newcastle. The centre is located on 65 hectares of wetland on the edge of Hexham swamp, a wetland complex of 2500 hectares and a major component of the Hunter River system. The Centre is an Education, Research and Recreation facility launched as a N.S.W. Bicentennial Project in late 1985 and was officially opened late in 1988. The area was once a football field and grazing land with the surrounding paddocks being used for horses until the early eighties when an Egret colony decided to nest in some paperbark trees. This was the impetus to establish the centre.

Educational activities include school class visits and a resident teacher; educational displays of printed material and photographs; mounted bird specimens; live specimens; theatre; resource materials and shop. Recreational activities include walking trails from 15 minutes to half day; canoe trails through 7 km of natural and constructed channels; observation tower to view nesting and roosting birds; guided tours and talks. Research activities include Project Egret watch to study the ecology and breeding behaviour of all four species of Australian Egrets with Australian wide volunteer observers; surveys of the distribution and movements of Latham's Snipe; studies of Old World Warblers, micro-organisms of Egret digestive tracts and frogs; co-ordination of a team of specialists in wetland assessment, documentation and design and management; and survival of paperbark seedlings in the Egret rookery has been investigated under various seasonal conditions. As well the Wetlands Centre is collaborating with N.S.W. and Victorian wildlife authorities to re-establish breeding populations of Magpie Geese in the lower Hunter. These birds have been almost wiped out in this part of Australia by shooting and habitat destruction. Forty birds raised at Serendip Wildlife Research Station in Victoria were transferred in November 1987 to Shortland Centre where they were released after a period of acclimatisation. Some forty more are at present being acclimatised at the Centre and will be released soon.

The Congress itself was attended by approximately 150 people from all over Australia as well as a N.Z. couple and a young student from Leningrad in U.S.S.R. Saturday and Sunday was devoted to the delivery of papers from those involved in research or observation of different aspects of bird life. The topics were very diverse and we heard about bird breeding behaviour from Cattle Egrets to Sacred Ibis; Bird distributions for various areas; bird behaviour from gang warfare in White Winged Cough to promiscuity in Cattle Egrets; migratory patterns of various species and the story of the work of John and Elizabeth Gould on the birds of Australia and particularly the Hunter region in 1839-40. An exhibition of their work was on display at the library and was well worth a visit.

The talks were interesting and thought provoking and it was encouraging to see many younger birders presenting their findings to the Congress. The next five days were taken up with bird related activities. On Monday we (even Angela managed to hobble aboard assisted by the crew) boarded the replica of the William IV paddle steamer to leisurely cruise up the Hunter to see the masses of sea birds perched on the dykes in the river. It is amazing how well camouflaged they were as one assumed the grey blobs to be rocks until a closer look with the binoculars revealed them to be Godwits or Sandpipers etc. Other activities included netting and banding, censuses and counting, nest counts and tag watch or just birding in the Wetlands or Nature Reserve. All in, it was a feast of birding with fascinating talks, interesting activities, pleasant company and most important of all - lots of birds to see.

Editor.

REPORT ON HELIDON HILLS FIELD OUTING

27th NOVEMBER.

A brief storm but little rain just cleared the air before our outing on Sunday 27th November. After the previous day's humidity this was a welcome start.

Two members quickly checked out a local lagoon but had nothing exciting to report before picking up the rest of the party in Helidon. Good stops were made on the gradual climb up to the Helidon Hills. The first, on a bend rounding a damp gully, produced Leaden Flycatchers, Brush Cuckoos and a Gicadabird while Scarlet Honeyeaters were busy high in the flowering Eucalyptus and Noisy Friarbirds much in evidence; two being observed at separate nests.

Higher up we were brought to an abrupt halt by the sight of three large black birds put to flight from roadside Casuarinas by the leading car. Flashes of red as they flew brought cries of "Cockatoos", narrowed down to "Glossies" as they perched again nearby giving all watchers good observations of head, beak and tail shapes, patterns and colours. Arriving at our destination, a quiet farm, our host and his children took us on an enjoyable ramble through their paddocks and then into the Eucalypt woods; dry leaves and twigs scrunching underfoot and the air full of aromatic scents while here and there were clumps of low wattle bushes coming into brilliant flower as we had noticed along the roadside on our way up. Hosts of small birds flitted about in the high canopy; Buff-rumped Thornbills, Scarlet Honeyeaters and Spotted Pardalotes among them; Noisy Friarbird in abundance and numbers of Little Lorikeets elsewhere.

Our pathway ended above a deep forested chasm and hills beyond with Ravensbourne National Park lookout on the skyline. Very still, few birds there, only cicadas drumming. A quiet break then a return walk, quickened by approaching thunder and hasty goodbyes and exits in case the gravel road became impassable.

It was good to have two new members with us and to have seen 65 species in all during a rather abbreviated outing.

Ann Shore

REPORT ON THE T.B.C. BREAK UP BAR-B-QUE

Sunday, 4th December

The beautiful gardens of the University Centre in Toowoomba made an ideal setting for our Christmas break-up bar-b-que again this year. Only six members of the club were able to come unfortunately, four of whom also enjoyed a refreshing swim in the pool before a leisurely lunch under the shady trees.

Being the middle of a warm day, few birds were in evidence then while the cicadas kept a steady chorus in the background. Those present were;- Peggie and Roy Beaton, Lesley Beaton, John Ball and Ann & John Shore.

Ann Shore

REPORT ON NEW TOOWOOMBA BIRD RED NECKED PHALAROPE NO. 259 HOOD'S LAGOON 8/10/88

Lesley Beaton, John Ball, Pat McConnell

Small wader most frequently seen swimming, sometimes with bobbing movements. Occasionally seen walking or perched at water's edge. Very tame. The call which was recorded sounded very much like a Black fronted Dotterel.

Bill dark, fine and as long as the head. Forehead white, with this white extending as a stripe onto the upper crown; lower crown dark on either side of the head joining at the back of the head and continuing down the nape onto the back where it becomes paler.

Distinct white eyebrow. Black facial patch starting at the lores and continuing under the eye to the ear coverts and slightly down the neck. Throat and breast white with darker mottling on the flanks and some on sides of neck. Undertail white. Back dark with pale worn scapulars with some pale feathers above the scapulars. Underwing dark with paler bases to the primaries and a white wing bar in flight. Underwing primaries and secondaries light grey with paler bases of underwing coverts grey. Uppertail with a dark tip narrower to form a dark central stripe with paler sides. Legs short and grey/green in colour. The bird stayed at least twenty-two days.

Pat McConnell

BROKEN HILL AND ENVIRONS JUNE/JULY 1988 by DAVID HILL

As part of the Geology course at the D.D.I.A.E., the students are required to attend a field trip to Cobar, Broken Hill, Silverton and a sheep station called Weekeroo in South Australia. This not only allows the students to study fantastic geology, but also allows the bird watchers some good birding.

The first good sightings were White Blumed Honeyeaters abundant in the gum trees in the caravan park at Cobar. The flatness of the land and the lack of trees make bird watching a pleasure. Travelling was also prosperous as Fork Tailed Kites and Wedge Tailed Eagles could be seen clearly. Large flocks of Ibis were also seen above the plains near Wilcannia. These plains extend for a few kilometres along the road and for several hundred metres back. No doubt numerous waterbirds would abound.

Weekeroo offered many opportunities to observe the birdlife, as there were many areas that were naturally treeless, while the creeks were lined with large gums and other small shrubbery. Sitting still, enabled the watchers to observe the antics of White Browed Babblers and to see feeding pairs of Striated Pardalotes go past. The open fields and ridges enabled views of Eagles and Ravens floating on the wind. (which was colder than Toowoomba's westerlies) Parrots were also present with three types seen in close proximity to each other; the Blue Bonnett, the Mulga Parrot and the Mallee Ringneck were all observed in pairs, with the Mulga Parrot the most commonly seen. Spring would bring many more birds to this area and the wild flowers would certainly make the trip worthwhile.

Silverton is a ghost town, some 35 km from Broken Hill, and a pleasant walk along a dry creek bed revealed a quite close look at a Kestrel, a Spiny Cheeked Honeyeater, Corellas and the ever present Galahs, making a noisy chorus overhead. Large Red Gums provided many nesting places for these birds. The bird life of Silverton was not the only attraction as we happened to be in the middle of a movie set at the unique Silverton Hotel. Also near Silverton is the Mundi Mundi Plain which, unfortunately we didn't venture onto. In the Silverton and Broken Hill area, numerous Wedgebills call and flit amongst the short desert trees. The long drive back to Toowoomba was also rewarding. A Major Mitchell Cockatoo was seen as well as Diamond Doves and Yellow Billed Spoonbills near the N.S.W./QLD border. Overall the birdwatching was excellent and I can well imagine what the bird life would be like in Spring.

NEW MEMBER: We welcome Marion Buchanan from 50 Woodend Road, Ipswich to our club, Marion joined us on the last outing to the Helidon Hills. We hope you have a happy stay with us Marion with much good birding.

JANUARY OUTING: Meet at the Hodgsonvale Lions Park at 7.30 a.m. on 22nd January to visit some private properties in the area. Leader Barbara Weller. Ph 329821

SUBSCRIPTIONS: These are due now. \$13.00 ordinary member/family
 \$10.00 student

It is important to keep these coming in to cover the expenditure of the club. Thank you.

MEMBERS BIRD NOTES: It is good to see a long list of sightings from members.

As many people saw the Red Necked Phalarope it will not be included in this list except to say it was first seen on 8/10/88 and last seen on 29/10/88 at Hood's Lagoon.

Other sightings are:

Black Fronted Dotterel	15/9/88	Hood's Lagoon	B.W.
Sacred Ibis (30)	24/10/88	Old Goombungee Rd.	B.W.
Plumed Whistling Duck(60)	23-29/10/88	Iredale	B.W.

Blue Billed Duck	9/10/88	Gatton	P.M.		
Little Bronze Cuckoo	23/10/88	Blanchview	P.M.	L.A.	L.H
Caspian Tern	9/10/88	Hood's Lagoon	L.A.		
Great Crested Grebe	9/10/88	Hood's Lagoon	L.A.		
Squatter Pigeon	23/10/88	Helidon Dip	P.M.	L.A.	L.H
White Browed Woodswallow	23/10/88	Blanchview	P.M.	L.A.	L.H
" "	"	Iredale	A.S.	B.W.	
Masked Woodswallow	"	Blanchview	P.M.	L.A.	L.H
Leaden Flycatcher	"	Abbott's Rd; Derrymore	A.S.		
Buff Banded Rail	17/10/88	Hodgsonvale	L.A.		
Emerald Dove	4/9/88	Redwood Park	L.A.		
"	seen often	University Centre	D.M.		
Pelican	25/9/88	Hood's Lagoon	L.A.		
Golden Whistler	21/9/88	Queen's Park	B.W.		
"	22/9/88	Campbell ST(East)	B.W.		
Superb Lyrebird	12/11/88	Girraween	P.M.		
Chestnut Teal	5/11/88	Hood's Lagoon	L.B.	P.M.	A.S
Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoo(12+)	12/11/88	Helidon Dip	L.B.	A.S.	
Painted Snipe	5/11/88	Hood's Lagoon	L.B.	A.S.	P.M
Buff Banded Rail	5/11/88	Hood's Lagoon	A.S.		
Glossy Black Cockatoo	27/11/88	17 Mile Rd, Helidon	Bird Club		
Superb Blue Wren	visits often	4 Muir St; T'mba	B.W.		
Rainbow Bee Eater	1/12/88	4 Muir St; T'mba	B.W.		
Pied Cormorant	1/10/88	Sylvan Crt.	M.J.	S.P.	
Western Rosella (aviary escapee?)	23/10/88	Gorden Cres,	M.J.	S.P.	V.
Has been around about 3 years.		Table Top Estate.			
Port Lincoln Parrotts(3)	23/10/88	" "	Y.W.		
Regular Visitors					

NEW TOOWOOMBA BIRD

Chestnut Teal

Bird No. 260

Hood's Lagoon

5/11/88

Sighted by P.M.; L.B.; A.S. Male swimming with a Grey Teal.
Bill blue/grey, head black, breast and sides chestnut with back dark brown,
white spot near base of tail.

B.W. Barbara Weller
P.M. Pat McConnell
L.A. Laurie Atzeni
L.H. Lonnie Hogan
A.S. Ann Shore

D.M. Darryl Mears
L.B. Lesley Beaton
M.J. Marilyn Jacobs
S.P. Sandy Pottinger
Y.W. Yvonne Winer

We hope you all had a very happy Christmas and wish you all the best for 1989 with lots of good birding. The Editor would appreciate any reports on birding done over your holidays to publish in the newsletter.

A red cross means you are non-financial and this will be your last Newsletter.