

TOOWOOMBA BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER

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toowoomba bird  
club  
inc.

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

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No. 162 - July 1989.

The One That Got Away?

I was staying recently at Sunshine Beach doing a course over twelve days. Our group was having a barbeque in the grounds of this block of apartments.

As I was walking with another person to join the group, a bird flew across in front of me about two metres away just below eye height, and landed on a small bush about three metres from me. Its long tail and clumsy flight reminded me firstly of a Pheasant Coucal. When I had a closer look at it. It was smaller than a pheasant. What really struck me was a definite white streak above the eye and another below the eye.

I went on with the barbeque and hours later looked up my book. I concluded it was a Long-tailed Koel. My description says it is a very rare vagrant that migrates from New Zealand to the islands north of Australia. I took my camera to search for it that day, but did not sight it.

My lack of knowledge about the bird resulted in my not passing this information on, nor did I search for it again over the next few days. When I was back in Toowoomba, Pat M<sup>C</sup>Connell told me how rare it would be. He contacted Brisbane. The suggestion was that an immature Pallid Cuckoo was a possibility. The Koel had never been confirmed as having been on the mainland. The migratory time period was not quite June.

So, I think it was the Koel. The historical record does not support this. The result is a learning experience for me. It could have been an exceptional sighting. In future, I will act at the time, writing the features I observe, get a camera immediately and contact an expert quickly.

At least I have a good conversation piece!

Keith Treschman

Field Outing to Stockyard/Rockmount - 25th June 1989.

The picturesque scenery of the Stockyard/Rockmount area was an added bonus for the seven members, two visitors and a baby (sounds like a movie) who enjoyed a pleasant morning's birding and socialising to boot.

The early morning nip seemed to keep the birds frustratingly out of view. However after a few stops along the creek we managed to find a feeding pair of Scrubwrens, Grey Fantails, Variegated and Superb Fairy Wrens and a pair of brown Jacky Winters nearby. In the Rockmount area, a pair of Brown Goshawks betrayed their presence by calling as one chased the other.

A compulsory hunger-mitigation stop at Helidon was followed by a quick trip to Hood's Lagoon and the Helidon Dip with the hope of seeing the Squatter Pigeons. No Squatters were seen but Red-capped Robins and a flock of 16 Pelicans overhead made the detour worthwhile and capped off a good build-up to Sunday's roast dinner.

Michael Atzeni

JOHN WILLIAM LEWIN (1770-1819)

Recently I was involved with helping a cousin publish a biography he had written of our convict ancestor. One of the references my cousin found was of our forebear acting as one of the 'twelve good and lawful men' who assisted the Coroner at the inquest into the death at sea of one John Lloyd.

My cousin's handwriting was not clear, so I consulted a few reference books to try to find whether the Coroner's name was 'Lewis' or 'Lewin'. Imagine my surprise when finding that the Coroner was John William Lewin, OUR Lewin, of Lewin's Honey-eater and Lewin's Rail fame.

John Lewin's father had published a seven-volume work entitled 'The Birds of Great Britain', and in 1800 John came to New South Wales with his wife. An 'insect' man, Dru Drury, paid part of his passage on condition that Lewin sent back an equal value of insects.

Lewin supported himself by selling his paintings, while collecting insects for Drury and drawing and engraving plates for his projected books on Australian butterflies and birds. His butterfly book was published in 1805 and the bird book soon after. However, all the copies of the bird book destined for Australian subscribers were lost - in a warehouse fire or at sea. The Lewins were very hard up financially, and Mrs Lewin opened an inn and shop to augment John's painting, which then included portraits and miniatures.

When Governor Macquarie arrived in the colony in 1810, he recognised Lewin's ability and, seeking to give him some kind of financial security, appointed him Coroner. Lewin, to keep faith with his subscribers in New South Wales, republished his bird book in Sydney in 1813, hand-colouring each plate himself.

Only seven copies of the 1808 'The Birds of New Holland' are known still to exist, and of the 1813 'A Natural History of the Birds of New South Wales' only eleven are known to exist. One of the 1813 copies was to be auctioned by Sotheby's in New York on 7th June and was expected to fetch \$US200,000.

Gloria Glass

This Month's Outing:

Sunday, 23rd July. Glen Lomand Park and Escarpment. Meet at the Waterbird Habitat at the Alderley Street entrance at 7.00 a.m. Leader Pat M<sup>C</sup>Connell.

Next Month's Outing:

Sunday 27th August. Meet at the Toowoomba General Cemetery near the main gate in South Street for birding west of Toowoomba. Meet at 7.00 a.m. for 7.30 a.m. departure. Leader Ann Shore.

Notice-Board at Water Bird Habitat:

The Toowoomba Bird Club Inc. has erected a notice-board at the Water Bird Habitat as a contribution to this bicentenary project. The stand for the notice-board was made by the Westbrook Training Centre while the actual display board was made by David Cleary. We thank David for a professional job well done. Also a thank you to Keith Treschman from the club for the organisation necessary to complete this project.

Posters of birds found at the habitat will be added shortly.

Editor

### Bird Banding in Australia.

Similar to most major countries of the world, Australia has a bird banding scheme. The present authority that carries out this research is the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service based in Canberra. The scheme first began in 1953 and was commenced and conducted by the Division of Wildlife Research - C.S.I.R.O.

In 1986 the management of the banding scheme was handed over to the National Parks and Wildlife Service, which is a commonwealth Government Department.

Most of the bird banding is done by honorary bird banders, who carry out the banding of birds as a hobby. These people are expected to be able to identify 80% of the bird species in their area before becoming a bird bander.

Additionally, a licence is needed to allow that person to trap, band and release birds which, by law, are protected.

An aspiring bird bander must accompany an A class bird bander for a period of time to become efficient in the handling and banding of birds. Once this has been done the B class bird bander then becomes an A class bander with the approval of the secretary of the scheme, who issues bands free of charge on request.

The bands come in approximately fifteen sizes, which cover all bird species, and are designed to have enduring qualities so that it remains on the bird's leg for all of the bird's life.

A variety of metals are used, such as aluminium, monel steel and stainless steel: the suitable type of metal is recommended for birds which have a variety of habits. For instance, birds which spend a great deal of time on the ground wear out bands faster than birds that remain in trees, or cormorants which dive in salt water or deposit corrosive droppings on their bands need stainless steel.

The longer a band remains on a bird the more information is obtained. The main aims of the scheme are to attempt to obtain information on the longevity, distribution, migration habits and mortality of all birds.

The reasons for research are that birds are of economic importance as well as colourful and pleasant. It is, therefore, necessary to know as much as possible about birds so that they remain with us without being reduced in numbers or rendered extinct.

Little is known about birds generally, and placing a numbered band on a bird marks it as an individual. If a band is placed on a bird, and that bird is of a known age, then the recovery is more important as it would help determine the longevity of that species.

Australia has a large number of bird species, approximately 750 included among which are some that are migratory, others remain in Australia but move to warmer climates within the continent during winter. The size of the Australian continent allows birds to move to any climate they choose without leaving the country.

During the time bird banding has been in operation a large quantity of information has been gathered on a number of species of birds, however not all is known about all species, but a portion of information is known about most species.

When live banded birds are found, it is VERY IMPORTANT to release them unharmed, with their bands on, and send details from the bands to the scheme.

If banded birds are found dead - the scheme needs people to remove and flatten the band and return it with details from the band, place and date the bird was found and cause of death.

The scheme can be contacted by writing to or phoning:

The Australian Bird Banding Scheme,  
G.P.O. Box 8,  
CANBERRA, A.C.T., 2061

Phone (062) 46 6180

# Birds

Following the definition, write the word, one letter to each space.

Then rearrange the circled letters to form the surprise word:

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Number of chambers in a bird's heart ○ \_ \_ ○.

Characteristic of birds' bones ○ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_.

Feathers that round out birds' body angles and give a smooth outline

\_ \_ \_ ○ \_ \_ \_ .

The bird's lungs are aided by these ○ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ ○.

Found at base of trachea in bird \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ ○ \_ \_ \_ .

Central axis of quill feather \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ ○ ○ \_ \_ .

Part of quill feather of bird \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ ○.

Food of many birds \_ \_ ○ ○ ○ \_ \_ .

Second stomach region in bird \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ ○.

Different species of birds have their particular types \_ \_ ○ \_ \_ \_ \_ .

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