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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."

No. 167 - December 1989.

From the Editor: The recent Bird-a-thon was very successful in terms of species sighted and funds raised for the club. To date \$198 has been collected. Please forward any outstanding monies to the Treasurer. A full report is included in this newsletter from Pat M^cConnell the Record's Officer. The Executive have decided to hold another Bird-a-thon in May of next year to enable members to spot the winter migrants from the north.

The Barambah Field Study Centre has been booked for the Australia Day week-end in January. The centre is north-east of Nanango in the Jimna Range and has a diversity of habitats nearby. Contact Michael Atzeni if you are interested in attending for the week-end or for a day. More details in the outings section.

On behalf of the T.B.C. inc. I would like to wish members a very happy Christmas and a joyous and prosperous New Year. I hope the 1990's bring many good things your way and lastly but not leastly - Happy birding!!

Field Outing Report - Lockyer Wetlands, 26th November 1989.

A very impressive turnout of 21 members and visitors enjoyed a leisurely inspection of the wetlands around Grantham, Gatton & Laidley and were amply rewarded for their efforts. First port of call was Karrasch's Lagoon at Grantham where several new members saw their first Comb-crested Jacana. Their list of "firsts" continued to grow with species such as Magpie Goose and Wandering Whistling Duck at Jankhe's Lagoon and Great-crested Grebe at Lake Clarendon. Even a couple of our more experienced birders picked up a "lifer" in the form of the Little Grassbird seen at Beadle's Swamp via Laidley.

With the aid of telescopes good views of all the waterbirds were obtained including an intimate "aural" inspection of probably the most popular bird of the trip, namely, the Pink-eared Duck. Any doubts about the appropriateness of its name were quickly dispelled of for our newer members.

Lunchtime provided an excellent opportunity for discussion on future outings. Some noteworthy proposals were put forward including a Seabird trip off the coast of Brisbane and the possibility of more camp-outs. After lunch we visited Cole's Road swamp where all four species of Egret were seen. All in all, a thoroughly enjoyable outing and my thanks to everyone for making it so. Total number of species seen was 89.

Michael Atzeni

Note from a 'Crow-eater'.

In February of this year Colin, Heather and I moved from Adelaide to Toowoomba. Within a short time we came into contact with the club at the Hobby-n-craft Spectacular. We have been to several club outings and as newcomers we find them to be a great benefit. Not only have we seen many bird species, many new to us, such as, the Wandering Whistling Duck and the beautiful King Parrot; but also these outings have helped to get to know the country around Toowoomba. Also the club's outings are very friendly and have given us a chance to become acquainted with other club members, whose local knowledge is very much appreciated.

Living so close to a variety of habitats has meant that we have a larger variety of birds visiting our garden than we did in Adelaide, 30 species so far, including Striated Pardalotes nesting and Rainbow Bee-eaters. Previously I had only seen Bee-eaters in the dryer mid-north and Mallee areas of S.A. Unfortunately we have not seen any Honeyeaters but as our garden and birding expertise grows, we hope this will change.

We are looking forward to more birding with the club!

Beryl Walker

Report on Bird-a-thon held on Sunday, 22nd October 1989.

The rain of the previous week cleared leaving the club with a fine Sunday to conduct its annual bird count. Twenty-four enthusiastic birders showed up on what turned out to be a great days birding.

Gathering at the Waterbird Habitat for lunch, members compared notes and came up with a list of 136 species. This in itself was a good list but some common species were still to be seen. So after a quick lunch members set off again to improve this total. At the end of the day 153 species had been seen (not including Mallard). This is a great days total for one days birding and those participating should be very pleased. Some birds of interest being Chestnut Teal, Painted Button-quail, Forest Kingfisher, Red-backed Kingfisher and Satin Flycatcher.

All that is left is for birders to spot their sponsors and get their money in as quickly as possible. Many thanks to those who helped.

Pat M^CConnell

An Update on Toowoomba's Most Wanted!

The September newsletter showed 62 bird species were still to be seen by club members in 1989. I am pleased to say that this has now been reduced to 53. With only one month to go there is still plenty of fun to be had chasing these remaining species. To save repeating September's list, I will just list the species seen since then and the members can refer back to the previous list to work out the remaining species. The nine species seen were:- Black Bittern, Barn Owl, Forest Kingfisher, Red-backed Kingfisher, Mosiy Pitta, Scarlet Robin, Spotted Quail-thrush and Rufous Songlark. Good birding!

Pat M^CConnell

Members Bird Notes

Red-backed Wren (8 were seen in backyard)	September	2 Gilmour Court	F.B.	N.B.
Black-necked Stork	9/7/89	Hood's Lagoon	M.A.	L.A.
Royal Spoonbills	"	" "	"	"
Yellow-billed Spoonbills	"	" "	"	"
Intermediate Egret	19-23 /10/89	Spring St.	M.J.	
Pelicans (7)	25/9/89	Hodsonvale Rd.	L.A.	
Rainbow Bee-eater(12)	6-15 /10/89	Gilmour Ct.	F.B.	N.B.
Satin Flycatcher	22 /10/89	Duggan Park(nesting)	L.B.	K.T.
White-headed Pigeon	22 /10/89	Raff/Bridge St.	J.D.	
Noisy Pitta	1-14 /10/89	Redwood Park	M.A.	L.A. P.M.
Rufous Songlark	22 /10/89	Lockyer Siding	M.A.	J.O. B.W.
Ground Cuckoo-shrike	22 /10/89	Helidon Spa	M.A.	L.B. P.M.
White-bellied Sea-eagle	29 /10/89	Hood's Lagoon	M.A.	

F.B. - Frank Belcher; N.B. - Nancy Belcher; M.A. - Michael Atzeni; L.A. - Laurie Atzeni; M.J. - Marilyn Jacobs; L.B. - Lesley Beaton; K.T. - Keith Treschman; J.D. - Joe Deuble; P.M. - Pat M^CConnell; J.O. - Julie O'Connor; B.W. - Barbara Wilson;

Future Outings

January 27-28 - Barambah Field Study Centre. Cost \$1.00 per person per night. Bring sleeping bag, pillow, food, cutlery, crockery, & cooking utensils. Hot showers and toilet, kitchen with fridge and wood stove and gas Bar-b-que provided. Directions: Go through Nanango, turn right into Elgin Vale Road, cross over intersection with sign to Jimna branching off, turn left on bitumen then right onto a gravel road, cross over cattle grid with a sign Contact Michael Atzeni for more information on 355587. Map in next News/1.

Can you spare an hour for the Australian Bird Count?

The Australian Bird Count (ABC) is now well under way, and birdwatchers all over Australia have begun to provide the RAOU with data sheets about the birds in their local areas.

The ABC is a major RAOU project which will spend the next five years measuring changes in the relative abundance of land birds at selected sites throughout Australia.

The project's stated aims are an exact parallel of the aims of our own annual bird counts as set out in the club's newsletter as long ago as September 1976, and participation by club members in this project could place valuable information on the national record.

Since an item about the ABC appeared in the club Newsletter in June of this year, several club members have registered as Counters, but we need a lot more help so we can ensure that this important national study truly reflects bird status in this very special area of ours.

We are not looking for experts, nor asking people to give up days at a time to counting birds. If you are reading this item, then you are the sort of person we need as a Counter.

A Counter is asked to choose his or her own study site, from 1 ha up to 10 ha, in which to count birds for an hour - at least four times a year. The chosen site could be your garden, a local reserve, a favourite birding spot, a rainforest or a paddock, anywhere you would like to go birding. We are not looking just for rare or exciting species, simply a count of whatever birds you find in your chosen area.

It's as simple as that. It amounts to an opportunity to do something useful while enjoying yourself.

If you would like to help out, or even if you'd just like to know more about it first, please give me a call on (076) 976056, or drop me a line to P.O. Box 1024, Toowoomba, 4350.

We would value your help.

Bill Jolly
Regional Co-ordinator,
RAOU Australian Bird Count.

The Behaviour of Birds - Flight Control Part 5 of a series.

Control of flight, whether to maintain a straight and level course , or to turn, dive or climb requires the greatest skill of all.

An aeroplane has a tail unit which acts as a stabilizer to counteract any deviations from straight and level flight. Archaeopteryx, the earliest known bird in the fossil record had a long lizard-like tail, fringed with feathers, which also acted as a stabilizer but would have hampered manoeuvrability. The forerunner of modern birds probably did very little more than glide from tree to tree. In becoming more skilful fliers, birds have reduced the tail to a stump with a fan of feathers and stability is achieved by correcting movements of the tail and wings.

To maintain its course, a gliding bird trims its wings; to dive and increase speed, the wings are swept back and partly folded; to rise nose-up they are pushed forward and straightened. Stability can be increased by raising the wings in a shallow V, as is often noticeable in soaring birds of prey. In this posture if the bird rolls slightly to the right, lift increases on the right wing but decreases on the left wing, so any tendency to roll is immediately checked and the bird tilts back to an even keel. Frigatebirds have turned down wings which makes them less stable than other birds but more manoeuvrable. From a slow, soaring flight, a Frigatebird spots its prey and can instantly tilt over to one side and plunge head-long after it.

Steering is also achieved by movements of the wings. By tilting the angle of attack, or flexing or extending one wing, the lift on that wing is increases or decreases and the bird slews* around. The tail reinforces the effect of the wings by twisting one way or the other. The most manoeuvrable birds have wings and a tail that can vary considerably in area eg fork tail of swallows, terns, and frigatebirds. The tail provides a very sensitive rudder for movements at low speed because it can be spread widely for greater effect.

by Barbara Weller

Adapted from "Bird Behaviour" by Robert Burton, Granada Publishing 1985.

Future Outings (Con'd)

- Sunday, 25th February - Kleinton area.
- Sunday, 25th March = Jubilee Park.
- Sunday, 22nd April - Leslie Dam area.
- Sunday, 27th May - Bird-a-thon
- Sunday, 24th June - Murphy's Creek/Helidon

An Easter camp-out in the Mitchell area is also being planned. More information on this and the above outings in the next newsletter.

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