

TOOWOOMBA BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER

CLUB OFFICERS

President	Michael Atzeni	Ph 355587
Vice-President	Beryl Walker	Ph 345352
Secretary	Ann Shore	Ph 303207
Treasurer	Lesley Beaton	Ph 308481
Editor	Barbara Weller	Ph 329821
Record's Officer	Pat McConnell	Ph 352980
Librarian	Julie O'Connor	Ph 324594



toowoomba bird  
club  
inc.

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

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

No. 169 - February 1990

From the Editor: Four members of Toowoomba Bird Club and a very large number of members Q.O.S. enjoyed the Australia Day long week-end at the Barambah Field Study Centre via Nanango. A full report on the week-end will appear later in this newsletter. However as one who attended I would like to say the week-end was thoroughly enjoyable with lots of bush and rain forest nearby which was alive with birds. Thanks to Angela for organizing.

An Easter camp-out has been organized at a property in the Mitchell area. The owners of the property have volunteered to guide us around and promise to show us lots of birds. Once again Q.O.S. has been invited to join us. More details later.

The editor would appreciate any articles you may think would be of interest for publishing, or any articles on a trip or bird related activity that you may care to write.

A big thank you to all those members of the club who assisted in any way with the T.B.C. display at the Hobby'n'Craft Spectacular. The display was very eye-catching and well planned by the executive.

Report on the Barambah Camp-out

The club members who did not attend the camp-out really missed a good week-end. The road into the camp was long but the birding on the way in and out was worthwhile with among other things Squatter Pigeons in profusion.

The camp site itself was wonderful - well laid out, with barracks to sleep 46 and a large kitchen and common room. It was set in a lovely valley with two rain forests just a short walk from the camp. Also some open forests with a creek plus some longer walks made Barambah Field Study Centre a good spot for a camp.

114 species were seen on the week-end including New Holland Honeyeaters, Green Catbird, Logrunners, Painted Button-quail, Paradise Riflebird, Little Wattlebirds, Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters, Rose-crowned Fruit-dove and Superb Fruit-dove. Two Barking Owls were also flushed from a Casuarina tree and observed for about 20 minutes by some participants.

A good week-end was had by all!

Angela Kilmartin

In Search of the Eyrean Grasswren

The Eyrean Grasswren must be on the list of the most wanted birds to see that birdos keep in their bottom drawer. Last year I was in the Simpson Desert on old Andado Station - Eyrean Grasswren country!!

Not that it looked like desert; my idea of desert was long sandhills and little or no vegetation - but this was green with trees, groundcover and flowers. "Best years I can remember", Molly Campbell from old Andado told us when Allan stopped to ask if it was O.K. for us to camp down the "road".

The "camp" was off the road between two sandhills, a two-night stop. This was to give us a full day to find the wren. Some of the party went out that afternoon to try their luck but as I was camp cook for dinner I was busy with my camp ovens. After dinner the campfire talk was about the 'wren' and the canegrass on the sandhills was the place to see it. I was also told that the bird was not seen after 9.00 a.m. by birdos who had come before.

Next morning I was up early and chose the big sandhill furtherest away from the camp. During the night a wind had come up and I remembered that Grasswrens don't like wind!

On the hill it was quite peaceful and I almost forgot why I was there. I found a small protected, sunny area where I thought the wren might sun itself and sat down to wait. After about 20 minutes one small mouse-like bird, ran from one clump of canegrass to another, then another. Then another one ran across. "It looks like them," I thought as I remembered all the books said they did that. After about 20 minutes I decided to find another spot.

Down the sandhill was a higher area and I slowly made my way there as there seemed to be a good stand of cane grass. As I approached the grass I could here the insect-like call of the Eyrean Grasswren. This time I just dropped to the sand and waited a long time before I could locate the wrens in the canegrass.

In the end I was able to observe two wrens feeding. Up through the stem they would feed then drop down to the base to climb once more up into the base just below the wind line. I don't know how long I sat and watched these strange little birds - I just know how privileged I feel to have seen them!!!

Angela Kilmartin



Photo-Richard Thomis

Can you find the Little Grassbird?

The bird was seen on November's outing to the Lockyer Wetlands.

The Behaviour of Birds - Part 7 of a Series.

Soaring

Soaring is an energy saving device because movements of the air are used to buoy up the bird. There are three main ways in which the atmosphere constructs a source of energy for soaring. The first depends on the flow of the wind being deflected upwards towards an obstacle - a cliff or hill provides an opportunity for "slope soaring" in the breeze blowing up its face. Gulls use this method to soar and hover along cliff faces while searching for food. It is also used by eagles as they patrol their hunting grounds.

Ocean swells provide a similar updraught for seabirds. Petrels and Albatrosses can soar along, travelling with the swell even in calm weather.

Updraughts are also created by weather fronts and these can be used for soaring. Weather systems consist of moving masses of air, hundreds of kilometres across, and the boundary between two masses is called a 'front'. Birds soar up the **sloping face** of the approaching front to heights of over 6 000 metres as a means of escaping storms associated with the mixing of air masses.

A second source of energy for soaring is provided by air rising as it is warmed. When the ground warms in the sun, the air close to it heats up, becomes lighter and rises through the atmosphere as a thermal with a rising draught of air in the centre which birds use for soaring. Tall buildings, hot-air balloons and oil-field flares are examples of man-made thermals.

Small birds are probably assisted by thermals while migrating but the specialists at using thermals are eagles, hawks, storks, pelicans, and vultures. They are all heavily built birds with broad wings and the primaries separate like spread fingers which will give them good lift at low speeds and the ability to turn in tight circles. They soar to the top of one thermal perhaps 2 000 metres high and then glide to the next several kilometres distant and soar again.

Soaring is very efficient. An Albatross can travel long distances without flapping if there is a good wind. A 9 kg Albatross uses only 1% of its body weight of stored energy to fuel a 100 kilometre flight.

by Barbara Weller

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

Future Outings

Sunday, 25th February - Kleinton area. Meet at Highfield State School at 7.30 a.m.  
Leader Michael Atzeni Ph. 355587

Sunday, 25th March - Jubilee Park. Meet at Bridge Street entrance adjacent to  
the Toowoomba City Council Quarry. Leader Ann Shore Ph. 303207

Friday 13th to Monday 10th April - Easter Camp-out in the Mitchell area. More in next  
newsletter.

Sunday, 27th May - Autumn Bird-a-thon of the Toowoomba coverage area.

Members Bird Notes:

Black-necked Stork	30.12.89	Hood's Lagoon	P.M.
Common Sandpiper	17.12.89	Lockyer Creek, Helidon	P.M.
Double-barred Finch	Jan 1990	Muir St, Toowoomba	B.W.
		(first time seen in backyard	
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	19.12.89	Showgrounds	Beryl W
Pacific Heron	23.12.89	" "	Beryl W, C.W.
Tawny Frogmouth	23.12.89	Flinders St; Toowoomba	J.D.

P.M. - Pat M<sup>C</sup>Connell; B.W. - Barbara Weller; Beryl W - Beryl Walker; C.W. - Colin Walker; J.D. - Joe Deuble

Proposal for Cannon-netting Migratory Waders in Moreton Bay.

**Purpose:** To band waders and secure recoveries of birds that have been banded elsewhere in the Pacific flyway. To encourage Q.O.S.I. members to further wader research throughout Qld. Banding operations may be extended beyond Moreton Bay to include areas throughout the state.

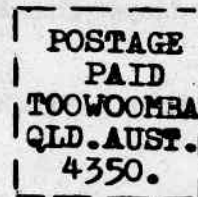
The work performed in Moreton Bay will form the focus of an international effort aimed at using Bar-tailed Godwits as an indicator species of global climatic changes. Because of its diverse range of intertidal habitats, Moreton Bay can also be used to answer questions related to the ecological distribution of this species by age and sex, information which can then be tested by others around the world.

**Participants:** Work will be co-ordinated by Dr. Peter Driscoll under licence number A778 of the Australian Bird Banding Scheme and Jeremy Thompson from the University of Qld. Banding and related work such as colour marking will be co-ordinated with the activities of the Australian Wader Studies Group to improve the understanding of movements within Australia and the number of birds using Moreton Bay as a staging area on migration.

Adapted from Q.O.S. inc Newsletter - Volume 20, Number 11, December 1989.

**Regent Honeyeaters:** A study of the uncommon Regent Honeyeater is being done by Chris Jefferies. At present many native trees are in flower, especially Iron Bark, Mugga, and White Box which attract honeyeaters and Lorikeets. Please check all such trees for Regent Honeyeaters and pass on the information to Graham Leach - Librarian, c/- Q.O.S. inc; P.O. Box 97, St. Lucia, Qld. 4067

THE TOOWOOMBA BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER  
Registered by Australia Post  
Publication Number QBG3973



If undeliverable return to  
Toowoomba Bird Club Inc.  
P.O. Box 67  
Darling Heights. Qld. 4350

RECORDS OFFICER,  
4-8 RICHARDS COURT,  
TOOWOOMBA.  
4350