



toowoomba bird club inc.

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

No. 174 - July 1990.

FROM THE EDITOR:

The cold weather is well and truly with us often making conditions for bird watching rather unpleasant. However, we were fortunate to score better warmer weather for the winter Bird-a-thon held on Sunday, 24th June. I'm sure those members who participated would agree that it was a very enjoyable day with 120 species being sighted altogether with an incredible total of 65 species being seen at the Helidon Dip. The bird(s) of the day for me would have to be a pair of Crested Shrike-tits seen along the Helidon Dip Road as they played among the trees. A full report on the day appears later in this newsletter.

The next two outings will be below the range which is usually a little warmer and sheltered from the cold westerly winds. So come along and try to see the winter migrants who have arrived back.

In September we have been invited to Dawn Allen's place at Mitchell along with Q.O.S. There is an open invitation for all members during the period Friday 21st to Sunday 30th September to camp on her property. Come for a few days or for the entire period if you are able. An alternative outing to Goomburra, east of Allora has been organized for Sunday, 23rd September for those members unable to attend the Mitchell camp-out. Members could also camp for the week-end or longer in the area.

We were saddened to learn of the death of long time member John Shore (husband of Ann), who died in mid-June after a brief illness. John had been interested in bird-watching from an early age and joined the club soon after its formation by his then neighbour Bill Jolly. As well as being an active member, John was very supportive of Ann in her role as secretary. On behalf of the club, I would like to extend to Ann and the family our sympathy. He will be sadly missed.

Q.O.S.I. WINTER COUNT 17.6.90.

The Queensland Ornithological Society conducts a Winter Bird Count which was inaugurated in 1987 to supplement its long-standing Spring Counts held in October. Marilyn Jacobs and myself have participated in these counts regularly and once again we packed our lunch and set out for a day's birding. We always survey an area around Grantham and Gatton. It is mainly wetlands with open forest and some pastoral land as well as including part of Lockyer and Redbank Creeks. I look forward to these days because not only is it good birding but I receive a great deal of pleasure from going to the same place year in and year out to find the same species still there.

However, there has to be a highlight for the day and Marilyn and I agree that this year it was the sighting of a Marsh Harrier at Karrasch's Lagoon on the Old(original) Toowoomba Road east of Grantham. We had been counting the waterbirds for about 20 minutes. There was not much activity apart from two nesting Black Swans, Coot, Jacana and a Black Duck with a family of four young. Then the Harrier came coursing over the water. It continued to the western, shallow end of the dam and in a sudden flurry took one of the young Black Ducks. As it struggled to get airborne with the duckling it was "attacked" by the parent. This entailed the duck stretching upright in the water and aggressively splashing with its flapping wings.

Meanwhile seven Crows had taken umbrage at this intrusion and were loudly mobbing the Harrier. Drawn by this disturbance a Whistling Kite appeared out of nowhere and joined the fracas by trying to seize the prey. Immediately the Crows turned on the Kite and chased it off. The Harrier settled into some long grass to eat its meal.

Within seven minutes of the Harrier's arrival dam-life became calm once more. The Swan on its nest tucked its head under its wing, the Coot and Jacana returned to their feeding and a Black Duck led its smaller family of three to safer waters.

Lesley Beaton

JOHN ARTHUR SHORE, J.P.

It is with great sadness that we record the death of John Shore on 14 June 1990. A link with the history of the pioneering days below the range, none of us can remember a time when John wasn't at the hub of the development of the settlement of Withcott; similarly, few of us can remember when John wasn't a regular participant in Bird Club activities.

Such was the place that John occupied in our club community that his loss is felt by us in many different ways. A staunch and long-standing friend of the club, John not only provided strong moral support to his wife Ann in her execution of the oft-times arduous duties of Club Secretary over more than ten years, but was always to the fore in giving his energetic practical support to club projects, from planting trees at the Waterbird Habitat to setting up stalls at Craft and Hobby shows.

His depth of knowledge and farmer's-eye view of the natural history of Withcott in particular extended over more than sixty years of residence. John relished working out of doors. Disinterested in the concept of retirement, he continued to tend and develop Shorelands to the point at which it routinely attracted comment and admiration from passers-by. A man of great enthusiasm, his capacity for work was prodigious.

It was John's delight to watch Blue-faced Honeyeaters bathing in the bird bath outside the kitchen window, to tell joyfully of the antics of the fairy-wrens in his rose bushes, or to relate tales of long-ago Withcott where Stone-curlew were commonly encountered between what is now Shorelands and what was once the school.

It was clear to all who were privileged to know him that John evinced a deeply-felt love of nature in general, and for birds in particular. And for people too. He was a man of genial disposition, with a capacity for warm friendship and simple affection; a good friend.

We are sure that each and every member of our club will join in offering sincerest sympathies to Ann in her sudden deprivation, as well as sharing keenly in her sense of loss.

W.H.Jolly

WINTER BIRD-A-THON 24 July 1990.

Unlike the bad weather of the last month's planned bird-a-thon, fine weather greeted members and stayed with us throughout an enjoyable day. One hundred and twenty species were recorded which is an excellent number for this time of year especially considering many areas were not visited as most members decided to bird as a group.

The idea behind the winter bird-a-thon is to provide coverage of the area at a time of year when the weather slows many birders down. This goal was achieved and I am sure this initial winter bird-a-thon will be followed by many more. Birds of interest were Australian Shoveler, Brown Falcon, Banded Lapwing, Topknot Pigeon, Shining Bronze-cuckoo, Ground Cuckoo-shrike, Crested Shrike-tit and Western Gerygone.

Pat M^CConnell

10 April 1990

"Abberton", Helidon.

Bill Jolly, Eileen Jolly.

DESCRIPTION: A very large bird of prey, at least equal to Whistling Kite in size, clearly smaller than a Wedge-tailed Eagle. Large beak with a pronounced hook. Scruffy white head with bold black band running backwards from the eye. Underparts entirely white except for a dark breast band, distinct but not well defined. Upperparts uniformly brown.

BEHAVIOUR: Discovered sitting at the topmost point of a dead, limbless tree. He ducked occasionally when Peewees dived close by, and at one point, when they came too close for tolerance he spread his wings and lunged towards them. Otherwise he remained motionless for about twenty minutes, before taking to the wing and flying across the house and away to the north.

HABITAT: The tree in which the Osprey was resting stands on the bank of Lockyer Creek, opposite the house garden. Lockyer Creek holds sufficient fish to attract regular Cormorants and the occasional Pelican. It runs close to Hood's Lagoon to the west, and to the Bremer and Brisbane Rivers and Moreton Bay to the east.

CONDITIONS OF OBSERVATION: A clear bright morning, 7.30 a.m. The bird was sitting approximately 50 metres from the house verandah, on the other side of the creek, just a little above head height from our position. Recognized with the naked eye; subsequently observed closely through 8X binoculars.

RELATED EXPERIENCE: We are familiar with Ospreys outside this region. On the previous day, 9th April, Eileen had watched an Osprey flying closely past the house and along the creek, in an easterly direction. There have been several other reliable, but unconfirmed sightings of Ospreys both at Hood's Lagoon and along Lockyer Creek over the last two years.

Bill Jolly

This report on the club's two hundred and sixty-second species by Bill and Eileen Jolly is the sort of report that makes the Record Officer's job easy. It is comprehensive and I hope it will set a precedent for future reports. In future the whole report may not appear in the newsletter but I have included it here as an example of what a "New Bird" report should be like.

Record's Officer

MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES:

Wobbling Quail	7.5.90	Flagstone Creek Road	L. Beaton, B. Weller, P. M. Connell
Marsh Harrier	7.5.90	Hood's Lagoon, Helidon	L. Beaton, P. M. Connell
King Quail (4 Male, 1 female)	28.4.90	Flagstone Creek Weir	P. M. Connell
Satin Bowerbird	24.4.90	Pascoe Lane near Horn Pk.	B. Weller
Magpie Goose (200+)	13.4.90	Lake Clarendon	B. Weller
Sulphur Crested-cockatoo (2)	26.6.90	Raff and Bridge Streets	J. Deuble
White-headed Pigeon	28.6.90	" "	"
Satin Bowerbird (6 female)	19.5.90	Mt. Lofty area	B. Weller
Western Gerygone	20.6.90	Helidon Dip	M. Atzeni, A. Atzeni
Australian Pelican	20.6.90	Belgium Street	M. Atzeni

RETURN THANKS:

May I say a very heartfelt thank-you for the beautiful flowers and the many kind messages, cards and cards of sympathy which I have received following John's short illness and sudden passing. I and all the family have been immensely strengthened and supported by all the wonderful tributes and kindnesses at this very sad time.

Ann Shore

FUTURE OUTINGS.

TOOWOOMBA BIRD CLUB.

- Sunday, 22nd July - Helidon and Murphy's Creek area. Meet at Helidon Spa Park at 7.30 a.m. Leader Ann Shore. (303207)
- Sunday, 26th August - Silver Pinch and Blanchview. Meet at Waterbird Habitat at Mackenzie Street entrance for 7.30 a.m. departure. Leader Lesley Beaton. (308481)
- Sunday, 23rd September- Goomburra. Meet at the main Forestry Camping area at 9.00 a.m. Come for the day or camp-out for the week-end or longer, and join the Bird Club on the day.

QUEENSLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

- July, 18th - Wednesday morning birdwalk. Swanbank Power Station - 8.30 a.m. start. If coming from Toowoomba turn off the main Warrego Highway at Walloon, travel past Amberley R.A.A.F. Base until Swanbank turnoff. (7 km out of Ipswich on Southern Bypass signposted Warwick/Amberley Air Base if coming from the eastern side of Ipswich.) Park in the main carpark opposite the guardhouse. Swanbank has two medium sized lakes, a small swamp and a Eucalypt woodland. Leader Harry Zawacki. (07 281 2633)
- July, 21st - 22nd - Camping Outing - Benarkin - Emu Creek Campsite. For more information phone Gerry and Janette Keating. (07 285 4921)

Q.O.S.I. Tour of Tasmania. The next Q.O.S. tour will be to Tasmania from Saturday 2nd February, to Sunday 17th February 1990. After meeting on the evening of Saturday 2nd February in Devonport the tour will spend four days at Cradle Mountain Lodge, Tasmania's premier wilderness accommodation, followed by a 10 day coach tour around the island staying in guest house and hotel accommodation(no camping). The tour will aim to show you all 11 Tasmanian endemic birds as well as the distinctive mammals, World Heritage scenery and historic attractions. For more information contact the editor - Barbara Weller - 076 32982.

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