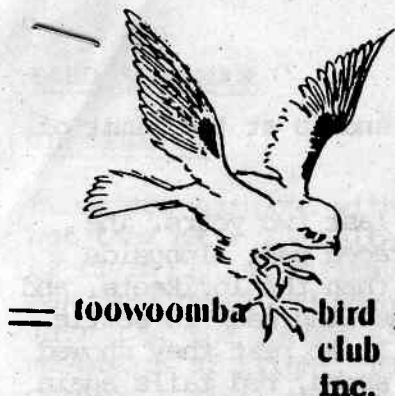


TOOWOOMBA BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER

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



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

No. 175 - August 1990.

FROM THE EDITOR

The exciting news this month is that two new birds have been added to our coverage area list bringing the total to 264 species. A King Quail (No. 263) was found dead on the road on 20 July by Rod Hobson. Although this bird has been sighted on a couple of occasions by club members it could not be added to our list because the sightings did not meet the criteria. i.e. that the bird has to be seen by two club members simultaneously, unless found dead as this one was. The next sighting was of Swift Parrots by Eileen and Bill Jolly on 21st July. See a full report later in this newsletter.

The Annual General Meeting of the Toowoomba Bird Club will be held on Tuesday, 23rd October at the Toowoomba Education Centre, Baker Street. It will take the form of drinks and nibbles served at 7.00 p.m. followed by the meeting and election of office bearers. All positions will be open for nomination and a nomination form is enclosed with this newsletter. Nominations will also be taken from the floor on the evening.

REPORT ON FIELD OUTING TO HELIDON AND MURPHY'S CREEK - 22nd JULY

At last a perfect Sunday for birdwatching after poor outing weather in recent months. Eighteen members and visitors were tempted out and amply rewarded by splendid birding.

We started at Helidon Spa where frost still lingered in the shadows, there were few water-birds except for Clamorous Reed Warblers which were active in the reeds edging the smaller lagoon.

Moving over the highway to the bridge over Gatton Creek, we were immediately aware of bush birds all around us and hardly knew which way to look firstly. With no wind and warm early sun, conditions were excellent for watchers, experienced or otherwise to observe small birds as they flitted around at close quarters. Numbers of Scarlet Honeyeaters, Silvereye, all three varieties of Fairy Wren, both Golden and Rufous Whistlers, White naped and White-throated Honeyeaters and Yellow Thornbills to name a few delighted members who could have stayed for hours.

The next stop was in the hills above Murphy's Creek where we hoped to find Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters. However these were elusive although brief glimpses of Crested Shrike-tits and Rainbow Bee-eaters were enjoyed. We were accompanied on a short walk by Jacky Winters and saw several Striped and Fuscous Honeyeaters. A total of 59 species for the morning.

We were pleased to welcome Sylvia Millington and Sue Watson with her small son, who joined us for their first club outing; also visitors James, Olive and Kae Booth whom we hope to see more of in the future.

Ann Shore

SWIFT PARROT (Lathamus discolor) BIRD NO. 264.

The Swift Parrot is a winter visitor to the mainland from Tasmania, and is at the limit of its non-breeding range here.

We have had several sightings of Swift Parrots at Abberton over the last two years. The first of these was on 23 August 1988 when a party of three parrots raced past alongside a small group of Scaly-breasted Lorikeets. They were a richer green than the lorikeets, and longer tailed. They circled across neighbouring properties before wheeling back to settle in a tree immediately across the creek from the house verandah. While at rest they showed their red tails clearly, but were immediately off again at enormous speed, red tails again obvious, to settle at the top of a distant downstream gum tree. I was on my own when this visitation took place, and accordingly couldn't offer the record as an addition to the Toowoomba bird list.

Although we keep a weather-eye open for Swift Parrots we didn't see any during the 1989 winter, but in June and July of this year we have had seven visits to date from parties of from two to five birds.

Our first sighting this year was on 1 June, when five Swift Parrots flashed past the verandah like a tight group of Australian Hobbies careering across the countryside, sometimes twisting suddenly in a new direction without pausing or slowing in any way.

In the ensuing six weeks, we have enjoyed several similar sightings of groups of sometimes two and sometimes four birds, usually flashing past the house parallel to the creek and below verandah height, showing richer greens and reds than lorikeets, and always at breathtaking speed. On 18 July, Eileen watched two Swift Parrots investigating the top of a Eucalyptus tessellaris close to the house, and for the first time heard their call, which she described as a tinkling, clinking chattering.

Then, on 21 July, while we were indoors, Eileen again heard Swift Parrots and we hurried outside to hear one call moving away from us to the west with another approaching from the east - just in time to watch a Swift Parrot flash past within about ten feet of us, showing its brilliant green back and breast, bright red wing linings, and long dull red tail, and calling its distinctive chattering call.

Thus, after at least eight sightings over a period of almost two years, this was the first time that we found ourselves standing side by side looking at a well-marked Swift Parrot, and prepared to present it as a confirmed sighting in terms of the criteria to be satisfied for its addition to the Toowoomba bird list.

Bill Jolly

PROGRESS REPORT ON PROPOSED ENVIRONMENT CENTRE

At the third public meeting on 21 June held to establish an Environment Centre in Toowoomba, an interim management committee was elected with the view to establishing a Toowoomba and Region Environment Council. (T.R.E.C.) This council would manage the proposed Environment Centre and lay the foundations for same.

The Interim Management Committee has drafted a Constitution, investigated avenues for funding, sought possible venues, started a news clipping service, and undertaken Media liason. They now feel ready to call the first Annual General Meeting where memberships will be sought and office-bearers elected. Membership fees will be \$12.00 - Individual; \$8.00 - Non-wage Earners; \$20.00 - Family. Membership forms are available from the Editor, Barbara.

All are invited to attend the A.G.M. to be held on THURSDAY, 30th AUGUST AT 7.30 p.m. AT DR.PRICE ROOMS, LITTLE STREET, TOOWOOMBA. Please help to protect our environment by becoming a member or accepting nomination for office.

Barbara Weller

BEHAVIOUR

Part 11 of a Series.

THE SENSES.

Birds are equipped with the same set of sense organs as other land-dwelling vertebrates, but they have been altered and adapted during their evolution to suit the requirements of flying animals. Travelling through the air at fast speeds is only possible if an animal can make rapid and accurate assessments of its environment. It must also have a fair appreciation of the forces acting on its body and have precise muscular control for the complex movements of flight. To see a bird sweeping in to make a precision landing on a perch or chasing a rival through the trees gives an idea of the finesse needed for flight. It is no wonder that Earth-bound humans have always envied birds and sought to emulate their freedom of movement.

To understand the behaviour of birds, it is essential to appreciate the bird's view of the world & to imagine the world as recorded by bird senses and processed by a bird's brain. The basic physiological mechanisms of the senses supply only part of the understanding. We also need to know how the senses are used in various departments of bird behaviour and how the different senses are integrated. For instance, flying requires the sense of balance, centred in the inner ears; vision to help balance by watching the horizon; and the sense of touch which, through forces acting on the feathers tells the bird about the airflow over the body. There is also the sense called proprioception, in which tiny sense organs buried in the muscles record their state of contraction or relaxation. (Proprioception is the sense which enable us to clap our hands while our eyes are shut.) So four senses are used to control flight, but exactly how the information they supply is integrated to keep the bird in the air has yet to be fully explained.

At present it is only possible to examine each sense separately, describe the information it collects, investigate the role it plays in bird life and perhaps show how any one species of bird is using its senses for a particular purpose. Sense-organ physiology has largely been investigated in a small number of birds commonly used for experimental studies, notably chickens and pigeons. Generalizations have many exceptions, and it is not often known whether the results of experiments on one bird can be applied to birds in general. Nor is it always obvious how they relate to a wild bird's behaviour in its natural environment away from the confines of the laboratory.

by Barbara Weller

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

NUMBERS' BIRD NOTES.

Magpie Goose (800+)	8/7/90	One Mile Lagoon	B.W.
Glossy Ibis (20+)	"	" "	"
Cotton Pygmy Goose (10)	"	" "	"
Comb-crested Jacana (20+)	"	" "	"
Olive-backed Oriole	19/7/90	Muir Street.	"
Crimson Rosella	25&29/7/90	" "	"
White's Thrush	11/2/90	Redwood Park	L.B.
Barn Owl	2/4/90	Cooper St; T'mba	M.A.
Peregrine Falcon	25/4/90	Helidon	M.A. P.M.
Little Eagle	29/4/90	"	M.A.
Pale Headed Rosella (23 at one location)	17/6/90	Flagstone Creek	K.T.
Plumed Whistling Duck (800+)	24/6/90	Carpendale Road (Sector 8)	K.T.
Red Goshawk (pair)	29/5/90	Grantham	R.H.
" " "	30/5/90	"	R.H. R.E.H. W.J.
" " (male)	22/7/90	Karrasch's Lagoon	R.H.
" " (female)	29/6/90	"	R.H.
" " (male)	22/7/90	Iredale	R.H.
Australian Crake (2 birds)	26/6/90	Grantham	R.H.

Powerful Owl (pair)	21/7/90	Slaughter falls	R.H.
" " "	25/7/90	" "	R.H. R.E.H.
" " "	26/7/90	Helidon Hills	R.H.
Red-chested Button-quail	10/7/90	Gatton Forestry	R.H. K.T.
" "	20/7/90	Helidon Hills	R.H.

B.W. - Barbara Weller; L.B. - Lesley Beaton; M.A. - Michael Atzeni; P.M. - Pat M^CConnell; K.T. - Keith Treschman; R.H. - Rod Hobson; R.E.H. - Ron Hopkinson; W.J. - Bill Jolly.

FUTURE OUTINGS

TOOWOOMBA BIRD CLUB

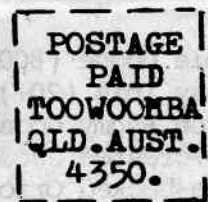
- Sunday, 26th August - Blanchview and Silverpinch. Meet at the Waterbird Habitat at Mackenzie Street entrance for 7.30 a.m. departure. The monthly system of recording will be demonstrated on this outing. Leader Lesley Beaton. Ph. 308481
- Sunday, 23rd September - Goomburra Forest Park. Meet at the main forestry camping ground at 9.00 a.m. Leader Pat M^CConnell. Ph. 352980
- Friday, 21st to Sunday, 30th September - Camp-out at Dawn Allen's place west of Mitchell. Come for the entire time or for a few days.
- Sunday, 28th October - Summer Bird-a-thon. More details later.
- Sunday, 25th November - Gatton Forestry area.

QUEENSLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

- Wednesday, 15th August - Brisbane Forest Park. Bellbird Grove. Meet at 7.30 a.m. Leader Dawn Muir. 07 870 8076
- Saturday, 18th to Sunday 19th August - Camp-out at Running Creek Camping ground which borders Mt. Chingee National Park south-east of Rathdowney. Leader Duncan Cape. 07 398 6821

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