

"To encourage the observation and study
of the birds of the Toowoomba area."

President: Bill Jolly,
Ringiers, Withcott, 4344.
Ph: 30.3206

Sec./Treasurer: Alan Graham,
Naliandrah, H.S.224, Helidon.
Ph: 30.3138

Editor/Librarian: Ron Hopkinson,
50, Bass Street, Toowoomba.
Ph: 35.4952



NEWS-SHEET No. 17 - MAY, 1977.

Thank you to those members who have returned the gold checklist for the month of April. This feedback is valuable and enables us to maintain a more comprehensive list of Toowoomba's birds. To those members who did not return their checklist we say "Please join in". If your list is of a hundred birds or only five it will be of equal value, the point being that the more observers are involved the more reliable our summary is likely to be, particularly if we are able to receive regular lists from members in a variety of Toowoomba localities.

We also value your contribution to Members' Bird Notes. These need not be observations confined to the Toowoomba area, but any bird of interest seen during the month. There is a section on the checklist for this purpose.

Completed lists should be returned as soon as possible after the end of the month to:- Ron Hopkinson, 50, Bass Street, Toowoomba, (phone 35.4952).

Members will be interested to learn that reference to accurate maps has enabled us to draw more clearly-defined boundaries to our 10 kilometre local study area. This now shows that the Lion's Park on Warwick Road is definitely within the area, and as this is a locality where Reed Warblers have been recorded the opportunity now arises for members to add this species to our local area list. With next month's issue we will print a sketch map locating the local area boundary in relation to various landmarks and features.

Bill Jolly has had several telephone calls from Rod Hobson in Townsville. Rod is still birding and mentioned a few species he has seen - Cassowary and Chestnut Rail (near Ingham), Palm Cockatoos (100 miles North of Cooktown), Broad-billed Flycatcher (Bingil Head) and Golden Bowerbird (Mt. Spec).

Finally this month, a personal "Thank you" from your Editor to members who conveyed get-well wishes during my recent sojourn in hospital. The visits and thoughts expressed were very much appreciated.

Ron Hopkinson,
Editor.

MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES.

Little Pied Cormorant. 22.4.77. Ringiers, Withcott. EJ. WJ.
Mankeon Night-Heron. 30.4.77. Flagstone Creek. AG. SG.
Black Bittern. 30.4.77. Flagstone Creek. AG. SG.
Straw-necked Ibis. 14.5.77. Byers Lagoon. 20 plus birds. CB. REH.
Little Heron. Throughout April. Ringiers, Withcott. EJ. WJ.
White-bellied speckle-shoulder. 9.4.77. Withcott. WJ. SK.
Jacky Winter. Throughout April. Ringiers, Withcott. EJ. WJ.
Possum Flycatcher. 30.4.77. Flagstone Creek. AG. SG.
Red Wattlebird. 28.4.77. Mionic Point. AG.
Zebra Finch. 30.4.77. Flagstone Creek. AG. SG.
Spangled Cuckoo. 9.4.77. Withcott. WJ. SK.
Satin Bowerbird. 30.4.77. Echo Valley, Toowoomba. AG.

NEW TOOWOOMBA BIRDS.

John Conran has added Brown Quail to the Toowoomba list. Details next month.
(Also Stop Press information on a large party of Pied Cormorants in early May. Again, full details in next month's News-Sheet).

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FOOTNOTE TO "OBSERVATIONS ON A PAIR OF BLACK-SHOULDERED KITES".
News-sheet No. 15 - February, 1977.

Since writing this article I have spent considerable time trying to find a satisfactory explanation for this behaviour. A search of Australian scientific literature has not provided any help. Only a few references are made to *Elanus notatus* although reams have been written about *Elanus scriptus* (Letter-winged Kite). Two articles record sightings of *E. notatus* in Tasmania where it is rarely observed and does not breed. One article notes the capture of a specimen at night in an exercise to study night hunting of hawks and falcons.

The other article is entitled "Unusual Kite Behaviour" by A.R. Sifton and was published in "Emu" Vol. 66 No. 4 June, 1967. This article records observations of foraging over sea water by *E. notatus* at Bellambi, 45 miles south of Sydney. Another unexplained observation!

It appears as if little of the biology of *E. notatus* (which is this club's emblem) is known to the scientific world - at least it has not made print.

Mr. N. McKilligan is of the opinion that the Red-rumped Parrot (*Psephotus haematonotus*) is too large to be food for the kite but maybe large enough to be chased out of its territory. Mr. McKilligan reports the kite to be extremely territorial. He has been attacked by one in the grounds of Darling Downs College of Advanced Education.

John Cowan.

REPLY TO "A BLUE-WINGED KOOKABURRA".
T.B.C. News-sheet No. 16.

The bird which Ron Wilson observed from the rail motor train near Rosewood, could, in my opinion, easily have been a Blue-winged Kookaburra. In Members' Bird Notes, T.B.C. News-sheet No. 12 - October, 1976, I recorded this species near Lake Clarendon on 24.10.76. This was an aural identification of which I am quite positive, having spent many years in North Queensland where this bird was the commoner of the two species. Three distribution maps which I consulted show the bird as occurring this far South. None of this, of course, can make Ron's sighting a "definite" but at least it may be a "positive".

Ron Houkison.

THE MARCOCHYDORF SEWAGE POND.
(Observed 14.1.77.)

In the short space of one mile of road length you pass through such a diversity of habitat that this area is a veritable birdwatchers paradise.

At the turn-off from the main Maroochydorff-Nucosa highway, to the sewage ponds there is a large area of mangrove mudflat. Within the space of a quarter-hour I obtained good views of a Little Pied Cormorant roosting in a dead tree, a lone White-faced Heron quartering the mudflat, a Large Egret fishing successfully in about 50cm. of water from the bank, a group of Bar-tailed Godwits, a single Common Sandpiper performing its bobbing dance routine and a stately Eastern Curlew probing the mud at the water's edge. Just as I was leaving a pair of White-breasted Sea-eagles circled over the small island in the middle of the estuary and dropped out of sight.

A half mile up the road is the sewage pond where I was heading in an attempt to photograph the Little Grebe which is resident on the pond. As you get out of the car, to the right is more mudflat - mangrove bordered by *Melaleuca/Banksia* open forest interspersed with large patches of tall grassland. To the left are the sewage ponds - a large concrete sided settling pond and a smaller one which has some reed growth around the side. To the left of the ponds is a sugar-cane farm and to the right, on the mountain side, some good *Eucalypt/Melaleuca* forest. There were so many birds calling it was difficult to decide where to look next. Several male Tailor Birds or Golden-headed Cisticolias were displaying above the grass on the roadside drainage ditch and singing their rich beautiful song.

I spent two hours in the one spot without moving and thoroughly enjoyed myself. The ponds should be put on your list of places to visit. Below is a list of birds I saw in the short time I was there. I am sure that with more observers and a longer time, the list could be enlarged.

Little Grebe, Little Pied Cormorant, Little Black Cormorant, White-faced Heron, Large Egret, White Ibis, Straw-necked Ibis, Black Duck, Grey Teal, White-breasted Sea-eagle, Swamphen, Masked Plover, Pied Stilt, Eastern Curlew, Common Sandpiper, Bar-tailed Godwit, Silver Gull, Spotted Dove, Crested Pigeon, Rainbow Lorikeet,

(cont/2.)

THE AUSTRALIAN BIRDS (cont/d.)

Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Woodswallow, Mangrove Kingfisher, Welcome Swallow, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Willie Wagtail, Golden-headed Cisticola, Red-backed Wren, Mangrove Warbler, Red Wattlebird, Little Wattlebird, Noisy Friarbird, Noisy Miner, New Holland Honeyeater, House Sparrow, Chestnut-breasted Mannikin, Aust. Magpie Lark, Grey Butcherbird, Aust. Magpie, Pied Currawong.

John Gosan.

COLLOQUIAL NAMES.

Some time ago I was talking with a friend from Flagstone Creek. He happened to mention that he had recently heard a Banshee Owl in the deep, timbered gullies behind his home. I was intrigued by his name for this bird and after some discussion ascertained that the owl in question was the Barking Owl. It was the conspicuous mating call of this bird that he had heard and it was this call, no doubt, which gave the bird the richly descriptive, local name of Banshee Owl. I questioned the origin of the name and was informed that he had known the bird as such all his life, as had his parents and all the other locals of the Flagstone/Stockyard Creek area. I found it all the more puzzling as I had not heard the name before despite having spent a good part of my life in this picturesque area.

This incident prompted me to list the vernacular names of many of the common species of birds found now, or in times past, around Toowoomba within a 30 km. radius of the city. Alongside this I listed their colloquial name/s. I hope this list may be of use to anyone encountering these unusual and sometimes misleading names.

Several of the smaller passerines such as the family Maluridae or the family Hirundinidae are simply and collectively known as wrens or swallows. Members of other families are singled out, based on the fact that they are the most common member in the area, and given a colloquial name e.g. White-faced Heron (Blue Crane). Some names have Australian-wide adoption e.g. Australian Magpie Lark (Pee wee) whilst others are unique to our area e.g. Straw-necked Ibis (Middle Ridge Turkey). Some are wonderfully descriptive e.g. Grey-crowned Babbler (Chatter box) and others hopelessly misleading e.g. Little Grebe (Diving Duck). Many colloquial names, especially those of parrot and finch have been adopted from the aviary trade name e.g. Scaly-breasted Lorikeet (Green Lark) and Zebra Finch (Shellies).

Many of the colloquial names are now fast disappearing along with the bush, the birds and the bushmen who gave them these names. Perhaps this is better for the cause of ornithology but the colloquial names smacked of a oneness with the bush and to many associated with Pee wee and Junkies the passing is with deep regret.

The vernacular names I have taken from "Checklist of the Birds of Australia - Part 1, Non-Passerines" by H.F. Condon - R.A.O.J. 1975 and "Interior List of Australian Songbirds - Passerines" by R. Schodde - R.A.O.U. 1975. The colloquial names I have taken from Murphy's Creek, Stockyard Creek and places like that.

VERNACULAR NAME. (RAOU)

COLLOQUIAL NAME/S.

* <u>Little Grebe</u>	* <u>Diving Duck, Deb Deb, Babchick</u>
Darter	Shag, Snake Bird
Pied Cormorant	Shag
Little Pied Cormorant	Shag
Black Cormorant	Black Shag
Little Black Cormorant	Black Shag
* <u>White-faced Heron</u>	* <u>Blue Crane, Crane</u>
<u>Straw-necked Ibis</u>	<u>Middle Ridge Turkey</u>
Plumed Crag-duck	Whistle Duck, Whistler
Black-shouldered Kite	Australian Kite
Whistling Kite	Pish Hawk
Brown Goshawk	{ Chicken Hawk
Collared Sparrowhawk	{ Chicken Hawk
Peregrine Falcon	Duck Hawk
Little Falcon	Duck Hawk, Chicken Hawk
* <u>Hankeon Warbler</u>	* <u>Chicken Hawk, House Hawk</u>
<u>Wren Warbler</u>	<u>Green Turkey</u>
Land Rail	Flicker
Dusky Moorhen	Sparrow, Whistler
Bustard	Plain Turkey
Masked Plover	Sparrowed Plover
<u>Red-eyed Antbird</u>	Condipper

Black-fronted

(cont/d.)

FIELD DAY REPORT - 24.6.77.

After several abortive attempts the club finally made a visit to the Koorootang plateau just below Prince Henry Drive. Nine intrepid club members with 'sly' high expectations of some worthwhile sightings parked their cars near the church building and thence proceeded on foot to the plateau.

Had we decided to take the cars to the plateau we would probably have missed the outstanding sighting of the day viz. the Crested Hawk which flew just overhead and perched conveniently in a tree-top. The plateau area itself however yielded few sightings of note.

The approach road from Withcott school yielded better sightings with thornbills, a Mistletoe Bird, several finches and a Richard's Pipit being the most noteworthy.

Alan Graham.

List of species sighted.

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Crested Hawk | Yellow Thornbill |
| Wedge-tailed Eagle | Striated Thornbill |
| Little Eagle | Noisy Friarbird |
| Nankeen Kestrel | Noisy Miner |
| Galah | Lewin's Honeyeater |
| Pale-headed Rosella | Yellow-faced Honeyeater |
| Kookaburra | Brown Honeyeater |
| Welcome Swallow | Mistletoe Bird |
| Richard's Pipit | Spotted Pardalote |
| Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike | Striated Pardalote |
| Jacky Winter | Silvereye |
| Grey Fantail | Red-browed Firetail |
| Willie Wagtail | Double-barrred Finch |
| Eastern Whipbird | Australian Magpie |
| White-throated Warbler | Pied Currawong |
| Yellow-rumped Thornbill | Torresian Crow. |

FIELD DAY FOR MAY.

Date: Sunday, 29th May, 1977. Place: Flagstone Creek. Leader: Bill Jolly.

Assembly Point: Cnr. Mackenzie and Stenner Streets (opp. Gabbinbar School).

Time: 8.30 a.m.

NEW MEMBERS.

The club is pleased to welcome the following new members:-

- Mick & Corramo Dolley, "Corramuru", Withcott. (ph.30.3129)
- Robert Shaw, c/- Darling Downs Institute. (ph.30.1300) Annex White

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

- Urimburra, Vol. 11, No. 4.
- Q.O.S. Newsletter, Vol. 8, no. 4.

Contribution of publications from club member Marilyn Jacobs:

- Sunbird, Vol. 5, Nos. 2, 3 & 4
- Vol. 6, Nos. 2, 3 & 4
- Vol. 7, Nos. 1, 2, 3 & 4
- Q.O.S. Newsletters, Vol. 5, Nos. 6 to 11
- Vol. 6, Nos. 2 to 11
- Vol. 7, Nos. 1 to 9 & 12
- Vol. 8, No. 2.

