

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



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NEWS-SHEET No. 19 - JULY, 1977.

The Club recently received a letter from Mr. W. Horton, on behalf of the R.A.O.U. Atlas of Australian Birds, inviting members to participate in this most ambitious and immense project. It is a five year project to map the distribution of species throughout the continent and is being carried out by professional and amateur birders.

It is not necessary to know all the birds to participate - but to identify accurately those you do know. Contributing your knowledge to this scheme would add to the enjoyment of this great hobby of ours and at the same time you would be a part of a nationwide project of great scientific value.

The Club Secretary has written to the RAOU with a view to joining in on a club basis but individual members interested in taking part could write to: Mr. W. Horton, 4, Wagana Street, KENMORE, 4069.

The possibility of birds which have escaped from aviaries being seen and added to the club list, has been raised. We refer particularly to the Brown Quail admitted last month. While acknowledging the chance of such escapes, in this instance we had no particular reason to consider it as such and inasmuch as this species is known to occur in our local study area (but not having previously been confirmed by two members) it was added to the club list on that basis.

It is gratifying to note that the system of gold checklists is working well. With members in different sections of the area each submitting a monthly list, we will have, at year's end a broad and accurate summary of species seen in the local study area. The segment on the list devoted to member's bird notes is a good feature which perhaps could be given more use. In that segment you are invited to record any interesting sightings you have made which you would like to share with others. These notes appear in the News-sheet following receipt of your checklist and therefore the topicality of the observation is maintained. The sightings need not be confined to birds of the area but can be any species you come across in your travels. Please join in.

A date has been set for the most important Club activity of the year. Our second Annual Bird Count will take place on Sunday, 23rd October. With this count we begin to add to the knowledge gained from last year's effort and the patterns of population trends, densities and movements will begin to emerge. The effects of environmental changes on local species, whether brought about by pollution, industrial development or climatic reasons can be recognised through a bird census.

An approach is being made to the State High School Field Naturalists (Mt. Lofty) to enlist their aid with some of the common species. This would be of great value and we certainly hope that our overtures are successful. YOUR help also would be of great value in whatever capacity. Primary research is being carried out on the

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An approach is being made to the State High School Field Naturalists (Mt. Lofty) to enlist their aid with some of the common species. This would be of great value and we certainly hope that our overtures are successful. YOUR help also would be of great value, in whatever capacity. Drivers, counters, tickers, moral supporters - all are needed. Get the most out of your Club membership - set aside October, 23rd. as the day YOU take part in the Toowoomba Bird Club's second Annual Bird Count.

If you have been birding in the Drayton area recently and recorded a Sulphur-crested Cockatoo you might be interested to know that a local radio station carried a lost announcement concerning - would you believe?

Ron Hopkinson,
Editor.

NEW TOOWOOMBA BIRDS.

178. Ground Cuckoo-shrike (*Coracina maxima*). 19.6.77. Crows Nest Rd. Rod Hobson,
Ron Hopkinson, Bill Jolly.

Two birds on ground in open paddock south of Cawdor turn-off. Upperparts light grey,
wings black, tail black, underparts very pale grey to white with fine black bars.

179. Clamorous Reed Warbler (*Acrocephalus stentoreus*). 2.7.77. Lion's Park, Warwick
Road. Chris Bianchi,
Ron Hopkinson.

Two birds moving in and out of rushes in pool at Park. Plain darkish brown above,
buffish white below, pale eyebrow. Also heard singing and calling.

MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES.

Large Egret. 5.6.77. Ringmere, Withcott. REH. EJ. WJ.

Glossy Ibis. 8.6.77. Townsville. RGH.

Yellow-billed Spoonbill. 21.6.77. Ringmere, Withcott. EJ.

Whistling Tree-duck. 8.6.77. Townsville. RGH.

Plumed Tree-duck. 29.6.77. Dyer's Lagoon. CB. REH. (500 plus birds).

Crested Hawk. 7.5.77. Amby Creek. RE.

Grey Goshawk. 27.6.77. Harlaxton. GC.

Spotted Harrier. 12.6.77. Marburg. RGH. 12.6.77. Withcott. RGH.

27.6.77. Kingsthorpe. REH. 30.6.77. Oakey. JMC.

Swamp Harrier. 22.5.77. Stuart St. JMC.

Black Falcon. 24.6.77. Kingsthorpe. JMC.

Little Falcon. 18.6.77. Kingsthorpe. REH. 21.6.77. Centenary Heights. GC.

Spotless Crake. 27.4.77. Maranoa Treatment Works. RE.

Brolga. 27.5.77. Clevedon. NQ. RGH. (approx. 300 birds).

Shining Bronze-cuckoo. 22.5.77. Redwood Park. JMC. BK.

White-backed Swallow. 7.6.77. Harlaxton. JEC. 27.6.77. Harlaxton. JEC.

18.6.77. Bedford St. RGH. 19.6.77. Ringmere, Withcott. MD. WJ.

Varied Triller. 5.6.77. Redwood Park. WJ. SK. RS.

Rose Robin. 5.6.77. Wards Hill, Withcott. REH. EJ. WJ. 27.6.77. Kearney St. REH.

Restless Flycatcher. 15.6.77. Flagstone Creek. RGH. 2.7.77. Lions Park. CB. REH.

Large-billed Scrubwren. 5.6.77. Redwood Park. WJ. SK.

Yellow-throated Scrubwren. 11.6.77. Ravensbourne Nat. Park. CB. REH.

Weebill. 19.6.77. Redwood Park. RGH.

White-naped Honeyeater. 5.6.77. Wards Hill, Withcott. REH. EJ. WJ.

Apostlebird. 5.6.77. Gowrie Junction. CB. REH. 18.6.77. Miles. JMC.

Black-faced Woodswallow. 20.6.77. Kingsthorpe. REH. 3.7.77. Kingsthorpe. JMC.

CB: Chris Bianchi. JMC: John Coman. GC: Graham Corbin. JEC: Jim Corbin.
MD: Mick Dolley. RE: Reg Eley. RGH: Rod Hobson. REH: Ron Hopkinson.
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BINOCULAR LORE.

First of all, there is no such thing as a seven by fifty binocular. This misnomer
came into being when someone decided to leave out the comma and identify glasses as
7X50, 8X30 etc. The "X" refers to "times" or magnification. Thus a pair of 7X,50
glasses makes an object seven times larger than when seen with the unaided eye; or
brings an object seven times closer to you.

What about the "50"? Most people think this has something to do with the field of
view. Not so. It is simply the diameter of the objective (or front) lens expressed
in millimetres.

The exit pupil of a pair of binoculars is the diameter of the ray of light which
reaches your eye through the eyepiece and is determined by dividing the diameter of
the objective lens by the power of the magnification. Thus a pair of 7X,35 glasses

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The exit pupil of a pair of binoculars is the diameter of the ray of light which reaches your eye through the eyepiece and is determined by dividing the diameter of the objective lens by the power of the magnification. Thus a pair of 7X,35 glasses has an exit pupil of 5mm. which is about average, while a 7X,50 binocular has a whopping 7.1mm. The exit pupil is important if you're looking for glasses which produce a bright image in dim light, because the larger the exit pupil the better the binocular's ability to "see" at night or through haze and fog. Normally, the pupils of our eyes are contracted to about 2mm. in bright sunlight, but in low light level situations they open to about 7mm. and that's when glasses with a large exit pupil come into their own. No, glasses designed for night use won't harm the eyes if used in bright sunlight because the eye's pupil will automatically contract to 2mm.

(Cont/d.)

BINOCULAR LORE (cont/d.)

Field of view is controlled by the optical design of the lenses and a wide angle field can be achieved, though not necessarily, with lenses of smaller diameter than glasses of larger size. The field is expressed as a certain number of feet at 1000 yards. Usually the glasses are engraved with "Field 7.5" or "Field 11". At 1000 yards, each degree equals 52.5 feet: therefore, a binocular with an 11' field of view would cover 577.5 feet at 1000 yards. The wider the field the easier it is to follow fast moving objects such as the horses in the backstretch (or should that be slow moving objects?).

Binoculars consist of two optical systems (one for each eye) and the care and precision employed in matching them accounts, in part, for the difference in price between two brands of similar specification. Better quality lenses are coated to improve light transmission, which adds to the clarity of image, and cuts out glare. Poorly matched lenses cause coloured edges to appear around objects, impair the sharpness of the image and tire the eyes.

All binoculars deserve some care to maintain them. The lens caps should be replaced after use. Inevitably dust will settle on the surface of the lens. The worst possible way to remove it is by wiping with the finger. The salts present on human skin can, in time, attach to the soft optical glass and degrade the image. Dust should be removed by flicking with a soft sable or camel hair brush. Smears and smudges can usually be moved by fogging with the breath and gently wiping with lens cleaning tissue. But do not take a sheet of tissue and massage the lens with the flat of it. This will only grind any impurities into the glass. Instead, take a sheet of tissue and roll it up into a tube, like a cigarette. Now tear it in half and apply the torn end to the lens surface in a circular motion. Do not apply more pressure than you can exert from the end of the rolled up tissue.

Ron Hopkinson.

LETTER FROM THE NORTH.

I was very happy to receive a backlog of Newsletters, Nos. 12 to 17, yesterday. They have put my birdwatching back in perspective after trying to come to grips with this riot of northern species. I must congratulate the Editor and contributors on a job well done.

I would like to thank Reg Eley and Ruth Walter for their replies regarding my query on the heron I sighted on Bulcock Beach in 1975. I found them most interesting.

With reference to telephone calls with Bill Jolly (editorial - News-sheet No. 17, May 1977), I would like to make an apology. A few discrepancies appear to have been made due in part to a poor telephone link and also to the fact that I did not have my records handy at the time of phoning. The Chestnut Rail near Ingham was actually a Red-necked Rail and the Broad-billed Flycatcher was sighted at Balgal Beach not Bingil Head. A more precise location of the Palm Cockatoos was in the Dulhunty River region north of Moreton.

If I may be allowed space I would like to make comment on John Coman's articles (News-sheets Nos. 15 and 17) regarding "Observations on a pair of Black-shouldered Kites". Whilst working at Aubigny last October I observed a Black-shouldered Kite attack and kill a Red-rumped Parrot. It then flew off with the body, no doubt to eat it. The parrot had been feeding on the ground in company with other birds of the species at the time. Having observed these Kites quite often I have come to the conclusion that, on the Darling Downs at least, reptiles form a large percentage of their diet. I have seen them take White's Skink, Striped and Copper-tailed Skink and Yellow-faced Whip Snake, among other reptiles.

In the same article John Coman mentions an instance of a Black-shouldered Kite foraging over the sea. Recently, whilst lunching on Palarenda Beach (Townsville) I observed a Wedge-tailed Eagle flying fairly low over the sea. This in itself aroused my interest but I was more surprised when the bird swooped in an attempt to catch a fish from schools passing parallel with the beach (Caspian Terns were having a field day with these same shoals). This seems to be very unusual behaviour to what is generally accepted as the Wedge-tail's normal feeding and hunting habitat and prey. Has anyone else experienced or read of similar behaviour in these Eagles? If so I

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Rod Hobson.

LETTER FROM AMBY.

Since the rain out here has risen the fresh water levels in dams etc., over the last three weeks I have noticed Black Duck, Grey Teal and Wood Duck now are accompanied by broods of over six in each; the most being 11 in a family of Wood Duck, on a small dam not more than 30 feet square.

Although good for wildfowl it has proved disastrous for waders, the birds just disappearing after the first heavy rain, though an occasional Black-fronted Dotterel does turn up.

Over the last month also the local Cockatiel and Galah populace has built up to hundreds of each. Possibly these species group together or the young leave and outsiders move in, but one Cockatiel is a pure white bird and we have noticed it for nearly a week now. It was not here at this time last year. These birds fly past our place about six times each day to drink at a dam not far from us.

On the subject of white birds, the query by John Comon on his odd Pied Currawong leads me to the opinion that this was a young bird with white outer tail feathers. Most species of birds have at some time been recorded with some variations of white and even pure white birds are seen, but not many true albinos are recorded.

Reg Eley.

SPARROWS.

Some years ago our place in the country was infested with sparrows, which were a nuisance in the late afternoon when the poultry was fed. Swooping down in hordes, they would snatch the grain from under the beaks of the slower fowls. Nothing seemed to frighten them for more than a moment or two. They became so exasperating my brother bought some fine shot, "sparrow dust", and started to shoot the sparrows after the fowls had been shut up for the night. The sparrows became very wary after they had been shot at several times and seldom returned after the first shot. One night after he had fired at them my brother saw a sparrow on the ground with an injured wing. He was about to enter the yard to get the injured bird when he saw one of the flock which had risen at the shots come flying back. Hiding behind a bush, he saw the returning sparrow ignore the grain to approach its wounded mate, trying with beak and wing to assist it to rise. After a time the wounded bird got strength or help for the two rose and flew off together, very slowly. There was no more firing at the sparrows, for my brother said that after what he had seen he had not the heart to shoot the "bloody little beggars".

Letter from a reader of the Melbourne Age quoted in "Birds of Paradox" (Lansdowne 1967).

SPOONBILLING.

Having a dam in full view of the house, I am sure there is not much that goes unnoticed, especially the conspicuous arrival of a bird like the White-necked Heron, who is a fairly regular visitor to the water's edge here. The other day while watching a White-necked Heron move his slow-motion legs through the water there arrived almost beside him an even more spectacular bird - a Yellow-billed Spoonbill, who is a much less frequent visitor.

They seemed very content for a while feeding away in each others company on the far side of the dam until the Spoonbill decided to fly across to the near side obviously in the hope of better things. By now I could see him really well as he would only have been about 15m from the house. He then took it into his head to investigate further and walked away from the water's edge and proceeded to 'stroll' around the garden area in between the shrubs! How could something like this go unphotographed, but alas as usual on these occasions there wasn't a photographer or camera to hand. So this is the only means by which I can share this unusual and rather ludicrous experience of having a Spoonbill take on the character of a garden bird.

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Eileen Jolly.

FIELD DAY REPORT - 26.6.77.

"Balance of Nature" is a term much used in these environment conscious days. A slightly different interpretation could have been made on Sunday, 26th June when twelve members turned out for the Field Day to Ravensbourne National Park.

The cold, windy weather was a definite weight on the debit side of the scale, but balance was restored by several good sightings and a couple of "firsts" for some members. "Tick-hunters" might be disappointed at the size of the list but mere numbers are never the whole story. It is the enjoyment of pursuing our hobby in company with others of similar interest that can turn a cold day in the rain-forest into something pleasant. As evidence, who did not enjoy the lunch time session in the sun?

The journey home set the crown on the day when the King and Queen of the air gave us a view of their mastery of the skies.

Ron Hopkinson.

Composite list of species recorded in the Park and en route.

Little Grebe	Eastern Whipbird
Little Pied Cormorant	Superb Blue Wren
Little Black Cormorant	White-browed Scrubwren
Straw-necked Ibis	Brown Thornbill
Black-shouldered Kite	Yellow Thornbill
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Striated Thornbill
Nankeen Kestrel	White-throated Treecreeper
Brush Turkey	Noisy Miner
Dusky Moorhen	Lewin's Honeyeater
Domestic Pigeon	Mistletoebird
Brown Pigeon	Striated Pardalote
Rainbow Lorikeet	House Sparrow
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Red-browed Firetail
King Parrot	Common Starling
Crimson Rosella	Common Mynah
Pale-headed Rosella	Green Catbird
Kookaburra	White-winged Chough
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Australian Magpie Lark
Eastern Yellow Robin	Grey Butcherbird
Grey Shrike-thrush	Australian Magpie
Grey Fantail	Pied Currawong
Willie Wagtail	Torresian Crow.

FIELD DAY FOR JULY.

Date: Sunday, 24th July, 1977. Place: Western perimeter of Local Study Area.

Leader: Chris Bianchi. Assembly Point: Pigott's Car Park. Time: 8.30 a.m.

Itinerary provides for morning tea stop and barbecue lunch at Lion's Park, Warwick Rd.

FIELD DAYS FOR 1977.

August 21st. - Redwood Park (top end).

September 25th. - Northern perimeter of Local Study Area.

* October 23rd. - Second Annual Bird Count.

November 20th. - Lakes Dyer and Clarendon.

December 18th. - Withcott.

NEW MEMBER.

The Club is pleased to welcome the following new member:

twelve members turned out for the Field Day to Ravensbourne National Park.

The cold, windy weather was a definite weight on the debit side of the scale, but balance was restored by several good sightings and a couple of "firsts" for some members. "Tick-hunters" might be disappointed at the size of the list but mere numbers are never the whole story. It is the enjoyment of pursuing our hobby in company with others of similar interest that can turn a cold day in the rain-forest into something pleasant. As evidence, who did not enjoy the lunch time session in the sun?

The journey home set the crown on the day when the King and Queen of the air gave us a view of their mastery of the skies.

Ron Hopkinson.

Composite list of species recorded in the Park and en route.

Little Grebe	Eastern Whipbird
Little Pied Cormorant	Superb Blue Wren
Little Black Cormorant	White-browed Scrubwren
Straw-necked Ibis	Brown Thornbill
Black-shouldered Kite	Yellow Thornbill
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Striated Thornbill
Nankeen Kestrel	White-throated Treecreeper
Brush Turkey	Noisy Miner
Dusky Moorhen	Lewin's Honeyeater
Domestic Pigeon	Mistletoebird
Brown Pigeon	Striated Pardalote
Rainbow Lorikeet	House Sparrow
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	Red-browed Firetail
King Parrot	Common Starling
Crimson Rosella	Common Mynah
Pale-headed Rosella	Green Catbird
Kookaburra	White-winged Chough
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Australian Magpie Lark
Eastern Yellow Robin	Grey Butcherbird
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NEW MEMBER.

The Club is pleased to welcome the following new member:

Miss Rheta Wright, 59, Queens Road, Hermit Park, Townsville.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

Urimbirra, Vol. 11, No. 6, June, 1977.

Darling Downs Naturalist, June, 1977.