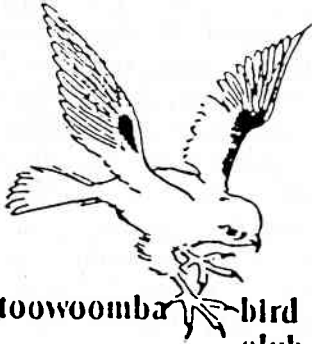


TOOWOOMBA BIRD CLUB NEWSLETTER



toowoomba bird club inc.

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MEMBERSHIP : Adults/Families \$18.00 Students \$10.00

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

EDITORIAL:

No. ~~197~~ ~~June~~ ~~1992~~ ?

Slowly, inextricably, our Toowoomba Bird Club species list continues to grow. The latest edition is the Bush Stone-curlew (detailed within) and takes our grand total to 274 species sighted by club members since the club inception in 1975. According to our constitution, to be valid for inclusion on our club list a new species must have been recorded by two or more members together. They must be in agreement on the identification, and since December 1991, their identification must satisfy the Rarities Committee of the club before the new species is added to the list.

Sometimes I wonder just when it is all going to end. (The growth of our club list, that is!). Is our tally drawing to a close or will it finish far in the future when a tropical cyclone finally unloads that long-awaited flock of Red-tailed Tropic-birds into Queens Park; maybe it will be a Leach's Storm Petrel (with a passion for adventure and exploration) barreling into a club-member's house-window early one morning, well into the next millennium? The mind boggles, yet we can be sure of only one thing, and that's the fact that there's nothing we can be sure of. One only has to examine the record of Sooty Tern on our club list (found dead on the Toowoomba range after cyclonic weather) or to know that Wedge-tailed Shearwaters have been found in our area, to realise that ridiculous things can actually happen.

Whereas we can't be sure of anything, it is possible for us to make judgements on the likelihood of certain un-recorded species visiting our area. These would range from birds like Little Wattlebird or Painted Honeyeater (which present fairly reasonable possibilities), to such species as Magellanic or Chinstrap Penguins which, even in the heart of the most optimistic "twitcher", must rate as fairly slim chances. Mind you, with our current level of club enthusiasm and member participation, if a small group of Chinstrap Penguins ever do waddle into our area I'm sure someone from the club will find them and make an identification!

Our "New or Unusual Bird Report Forms" are, as of now, fully-operational so if you indicate a bird with an asterix by its name on any future check-list, please ensure you have taken some good notes because Rod will ask you to complete one of these form with regard to the sighting (not necessary pre-July 1992).

TOOWOOMBA BIRD CLUB MAY OUTING - LOCKYER WATERS.

As leader of the TBC's May outing, one didn't need the silvered tongue of Cicero to convince the assembled company for a change of venue on the

day. The word had got out, " Freckled Duck at Seven Mile ", and the subtle chemistry of the " new " bird had worked its magic. All thoughts of the original venue, Ingoldsby and Junction View, had disappeared in a puff of duck feathers, a harsh judgement on these beautiful areas. A good turn out of TBC'ers, a smattering of QOS'ers and the lanky, ale-nourished form of the Flying Dutchman assembled at Apex Lake, Gatton, to pay court to this pointy-headed refugee from the lignum swamps outback. The pair of Cotton Pygmy-Geese on Apex Lake just couldn't compete. The fossil-fuelled conga set forth. On arriving at Lockyer Waters (Seven Mile to the Old Hands) a broadsheet of water presented itself, festooned with waterfowl. Just to think that not six months ago this lake was " drier 'n' a dead dingoes' d....r ". A stampede towards the waters' edge was only halted by the intervening barbed-wire fence where telescopes were hastily erected and a rabid scanning of binoculars commenced. Little need, as, there, within touching distance, bobbed four FD's. A collective sigh of relief. " Tick, now what else is here. ". And there was plenty.

Here, for our appreciation, was assembled a multitude of waterbirds. In perfect light, and at close quarters, we had clear views of the myriad of Pink-ears, Pacific Black Duck, Hardhead and Grey Teal, Eurasian Coots, four types of cormorant, pelican, swan and Australasian Grebe. The shallows were being worked by Little and Great Egret, the three ibis species, spoonbills spooning, Black-winged Stilts, Comb-crested Jacana, Pacific and White-faced Herons, and shadowed by terns; White-winged, Caspian, Gull-billed and Whiskered, and Silver Gulls. Water-loving raptors were about, a pair of young White-bellied Sea-Eagles, probably from the Atkinson's Lagoon eyrie, Whistling Kites and a first year Marsh Harrier patrolled overhead, drawn by this profligate bounty. All this without leaving the parking lot. After glutting ourselves, tripods were folded and a slow procession commenced to the north along the waters' edge. Here again, Seven Mile produced the goods. " Hands up! ", all who saw the three species of grebe on the day. Some did. We walked until an irrigation channel marred further progress, adding Australasian Shoveler, Chestnut Teal and Red-kneed Dotterel en route.

By now a cold wind was blustering and dark clouds scudded from out the west. Conditions had turned and waterfowl were beginning to become lost in the wind-formed troughs, so we headed back. On our return walk another speciality presented itself, flushed from high up the bank, out of the long grass, a male Painted Snipe, a rare and beautiful bird. The "snipe" took to wing, finally going to earth amidst a half dozen or so grazing horses. A slow and studied approach and he was captured in the telescopes, a "first" for the great majority of those assembled, easily ranking with the Freckled Duck in "twitch-ability". We had met Chris and Lisa Corbin just prior, and, at this juncture, Chris suggested we return through the long grasses verging the roadside. Pat, Andrew, Gijs, Chris and I did so accordingly and were rewarded with good views of a catapulting Stubble Quail, a fitting finale to the morning. Oh yes! and a second Painted Snipe.

Lunch was had at the parking area, Freckled Ducks again enjoyed and autopsies held before sated birdwatchers dispersed under an ever blackening sky. I shall not bore readers further, especially with those long listings of every bird sighted on the day; those pointless, rambling space-fillers. Who reads them anyway? Suffice to say that eighty-seven species were recorded. There was, Hoary-headed Grebe, White-winged Tern, Stubble Quail, Painted Snipe, Freckled Duck .....

R.Hobson.  
INGOLDSBY.  
02.06.92

NEW TOOWOOMBA BIRD : No.274  
 : BUSH THICK-KNEE, *Burhinus grallarius*  
 Time/Date : Throughout afternoon, 22.05.92  
 Place : Amos Rd., Withcott  
 Observers : P.Cleary, J.Lyons  
 Optics : " Hanimex " 10 x 50 binoculars  
 : " Tasco " 8 x 30 binoculars  
 Weather Conditions : Cool, windy. Visibility good.  
 Distance to Subject : Variable, approx. 30 Mtrs.  
 Comments : Bird observed throughout afternoon standing and  
 : crouched in corner of house garden. Garden verges  
 : on strip of grassland running to tall, open woodland.  
 : Bird disappeared that evening. Not seen since.  
 Field Marks : A conspicuously marked bird. All field marks  
 : observed clearly. Unnecessary to reiterate.  
 : Interested readers refer literature.  
 Similar Species : BEACH THICK-KNEE, *Esacus magnirostris*  
 considered. : An inhabitant of reefs, beaches, coastal  
 : mud-flats. Wrong habitat aside to differing  
 : physical aspects.

Precis of " Toowoomba Bird Club - New or Unusual Bird Report Form ", submitted 04.06.92, accepted 04.06.92

Records Officer

"AN INNOCENT VICTIM ?"

In recent weeks I have, on odd occasions, been able to take my lunch and spend a short time in the middle of the day at the Toowoomba Waterbird Habitat. It was during one of these midday visits in late April that I observed three very aggressive Magpie Larks. A young Pacific Heron (the grey sheen still present on the neck) was standing on the platform of the man-made jetty while the three Magpie Larks took turns to "dive-bomb" the youngster. The heron made no attempt to retaliate, just hunching his neck and shoulders with each attack. Finally, however, he flew up to the railing where he perched with out-stretched neck and wings. He met the continued attack of the magpie-larks by flapping his wings as they came in, which seemed to prevent their making any direct hits but didn't discourage them. Unfortunately, I had to return to work before the dispute was resolved so cannot report the outcome. As there were other large birds present - two Great Cormorants on the railings of the jetty and a White-faced Heron on the platform - I am left wondering why the magpie-larks chose to take exception to the presence of the Pacific Heron ?

Nicki Thompson

Footnote: Who knows? Generally birds mob other species who present a threat to either them or their young/nest. Maybe Pacific Herons are known by pee-wees as nest raiders? There exists a record of a Pacific Heron taking a young duckling (Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds, Vol 1, p 958). Another heron-like group of birds, the bitterns, certainly have a propensity for nest-raiding. It's also very easy to confuse a heron in flight with a raptor. Maybe the magpie-larks were responding to this stimulus and continued the attack after the heron had alighted?

Editor

"ANY THERMAL IS A GOOD THERMAL...."

...even if it's artificial. Recently at work, drilling for oil, I noticed an interesting thing. We had reached a point in the operations where a gas burn-off had become essential. The by-products of this were water-vapour, some carbon dioxide, and a lot of heat. And I mean a LOT of heat! The burning gas formed a tongue of flame up to 10 metres long. It also made the ground shake and one could feel the heat up to 50 metres away. Basically, it was hot. Anyway, to the interesting bit. With all this heat floating around, two birds of prey in a neighbouring paddock were seen using this sudden artificial thermal to their advantage. Before long "they" (perhaps Fork-tailed Kites?) had floated out of view. Just goes to prove you can bird-watch anywhere!

David Hill  
JACKSON OILFIELD  
07.06.92

MEMBER'S BIRD NOTES. All sightings as submitted by members of Toowoomba Bird Club. Accuracy not vouched for by T.B.C. Please check with observer before citing.

Hoary-head Grebe (40+)	Keong's Dam, Oakey	20.04.92	D.G., R.H.
Providence Petrel	27.16'S.: 158.32'E.	06.06.92	R.H.
Tahiti Petrel	" "	"	"
Fairy Prion	" "	"	"
Wilson's Storm-Petrel	" "	"	"
Rufous Night Heron	Lockyer Sdg.	09.01.92	L.B.
" " "	Waterbird Habitat	12.2./27.3.92	K.T.
Magpie Goose (2)	Jandowae Town Dam	01.04.92	T.P.
" "	Lockyer Abattoir Ponds	16.04.92	K.T.
Pink-eared Duck	Hood's Dam	28.03.92	L.A.
Blue-billed Duck	Lake Clarendon	23.05.92	R.H.
Square-tailed Kite	Chinchilla	19.04.92	D.G., R.H., T.P.
Red Goshawk	Withcott area	14.03.92	P.C., R.H.
Little Eagle	Nelson/West Sts., T'mba	31.03.92	K.T.
Spotted Harrier (2)	Kapernick's Bridge	16.04.92	"
Peregrine Falcon	McDougall St., T'mba	23.01.92	L.B.
Red-backed B.-quail*	Jones' Rd., Withcott	23.05.92	R.H.
Red-chested B.-quail	Muir St., T'mba	22.01.92	B.W.
" " " "	Mt. Kynoch	02.02.92	L.B.
Buff-banded Rail	Jone's Rd., Withcott	22.05.92	P.C.
Painted Snipe (male)	Hood's Dam	10.05.92	D.G., R.H., P.McC
" " (female)	East Haldon	30.05.92	" " "
Red-kneed Dotterel	Hood's Dam	15/25.04.92	K.T.
Double-band Plover	Thorneside	27.04.92	D.G.
" " "	Luggage Point	16.05.92	R.H., P.Mc C.
Broad-bill Sandpiper**	Luggage Point	16.05.92	" "
Common Sandpiper	Helidon Spa	08.04.92	P.Mc C.
Silver Gull (2)	Lake Annand	17.01.92	B.W.
" "	T'mba City Centre	16.01.92	P.Mc C.
Diamond Dove (8)	Barakula Forestry	24.05.92	T.P.
Red-tail B. Cockatoo+	Gilmour Court, T'mba	25.03.92	F. & N.B.
" " " " (35+)	Rocky Ck., Withcott	13.06.92	P.C., R.H.
Glossy Black Cockatoo	Hodgson Vale	31.03.92	L.A.
S.-crested Cockatoo	Waterbird Habitat	15.02.92	A.S.
Crimson Rosella (4)	Laurel Bank Park	29.04.92	P.C., J.L.
Ground Cuckoo-shrike	Flagstone Ck.	11.04.92	D.H.

Red-capped Robin++	Gabbinbar	25.03.92	K.T.
" " "	Meadows Rd., Withcott	28.04.92	A.S.
Western Gerygone	Amos Rd., Withcott	04.06.92	P.C. et al
Inland Thornbill	Lake Broadwater	20.04.92	D.G., R.H., T.P.
Ch.-rump. Thornbill	" "	" "	" " "
Painted Honeyeater	Inverai	19.04.92	" " "
Plum-headed Finch	Flagstone Ck.	25.01.92	J.B., L.B.
" " "	Iredale	28.03.92	L.A.
" " "	Hood's Dam	16.04.92	K.T.
White-winged Chough	Helidon Dump	5,8,10.02.92	J. & C.L.

\* : Road Kill, Male Bird.

\*\* : Part of Queensland Wader Study Group Count: 2 Broad-billed Sandpipers - one in Summer breeding, 40 Double-banded Plovers, 871 Curlew Sandpipers, 99 Bar-tailed Godwits, 77 Red-necked Stints - some in breeding, 8 Red-kneed Dotterels, 20 Red-necked Avocets, 164 White-winged Stilts, 5 Whimbrels, 20 Mongolian Plovers and bogged to the knees in mangrove mud. Used the "crocodile" method to extricate.

+ : Four birds feeding in White Cedar, *Melia azederach*.

++ : First sighting this year, predates " D.Gaydon et al ", N.S. 195, April 1992. Apologies, Keith.

Footnote : Aviary escapees; Scarlet-chested Parrot, Little Corella, Turquoise Parrot, Withcott - P.C., A.S., .02/.03.92.

L.A., L.Atzeni; J.B., J.Ball; L.B., L.Beaton; F. & N.B., F. & N.Belcher; P.C., P.Cleary; D.G., D.Gaydon; D.H., D.Hill; R.H., R.Hobson; J. & C.L., J. & C.Lund; J.L., J.Lyons; P.Mc C., P.Mc Connell; T.P., T.Pacey; K.T., K.Treschman; A.S., A.Shore; B.W., B.Weller.

- Records Officer.

#### "QUEENSLAND WADER STUDIES GROUP"

"Queensland wader enthusiasts have followed the examples of Victoria and New South Wales by forming their own Wader Study Group. Some activities have already been held, including cannon-netting, and more are planned for the future. Membership of the group costs \$10.00. For more information contact : QWSG, c/- Mr Kees Hulsman, Division of Environmental Sciences, Griffith University, Nathan, Qld 4111 (Phone 07 297 0384 A.H.)." - extract from "The Stilt", Number 20, April 1992.

T.B.C. members may be interested in the above. "The Stilt" is the biannual of the Australasian Wader Studies Group of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union. All enquires re this group should be addressed to Brenda Murlis, Administrative Secretary, 34 Centre Rd., Vermont Vic 3133.

Have fun in the mud, visit sewage works, meet "different" people! Become a Wader-Watcher. Join "The Blind Mulletts of Luggage Point", Toowoomba Bird Club Wader Group, Gang of Three. Contact - Records Officer.

Footnote: Wader-watchers rate amongst the craziest and least-conventional of bird-watching groups. A certain large, bearded, TBC official (no names mentioned) was recently sighted spread-eagled on the mud at Brisbane's Luggage Point, arms and legs desperately flailing in an attempt to extricate himself from a bog whilst searching for Broad-billed Sandpipers.

Editor

"FIRST SPOTTED REDSHANK FOR AUSTRALIA"

A Spotted Redshank, *Tringa erythropus*, sighted at Carrum Purification Plant, Victoria, on the 14 March 1992 was the first authenticated Australian sighting of this Northern Hemisphere vagrant. The few previous sightings had not been properly verified. Spotted Redshank breed across northern Eurasia, wintering in Central Africa, India, and South-East Asia. The honour of this sighting goes to Mr Aiden Sudbury.

Also from Victoria, their sixth record of the Buff-breasted Sandpiper, *Tryngites subruficollis*, sighted by Bob Swindley at MMBW Werribee on 21 March 1992. This is the eighth confirmed sighting of this bird in Australia.

North Queensland Naturalist Club sighted a Freckled Duck, *Stictonetta naevosa*, on Durham Dam, Georgetown, NQ, on 18 April 1992. This bird makes "our" birds look like "stay-at-homes" !

(reference: "THE BIRD OBSERVER" #270 June 1992)

\*\*\*\*\* COMING EVENTS \*\*\*\*\*

June 1992 Outing:

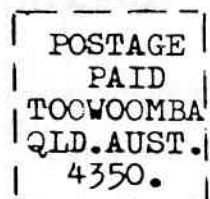
Queen Mary Falls National Park  
Date: 28 June 1992  
Leader: Ken Wells, Phone (076) 612547  
Assembly Point: main picnic area  
Time: 8.30 a.m. (Allow 1hr 45 min from Twmba)

July 1992 Outing:

Withcott Area  
Date: 26 July 1992  
Leader: Pat Cleary

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