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

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

Secretary/Treasurer: Robert Shaw,

c/- Post Office, Darling Heights, Toowoomba, 4350.

Editor/Librarian: Ron Hopkinson,

50, Bass Street, Toowoomba. Ph: 35.4952



NEWS-SHEET No. 21 - SEPTEMBER, 1977.

As mooted in last month's News-sheet, further discussion has led to the decision to expand our local study area into one which aligns with the two 10' blocks referred to in that issue. It is felt that the increased number of active observers can well cope with the larger area.

This decision will take effect as from 1st. January, 1978. The new boundaries will be clearly defined through the medium of this News-sheet, before that date.

Two other events important to our Club will take place in October. The Annual Meeting date has been set down for Friday, 21st. October, at 7.30 p.m. The venue will be Bill and Eileen Jolly's home, "Ringmere", Withcott. The agenda for the meeting appears elsewhere in this issue.

Planning for the Second Annual Bird Count has gone forward. Co-ordination of this project is in the hands of Club Secretary, Robert Shaw. It will be conducted over the new, larger area mentioned above so that the information gained from such a concentrated effort can be fed back to R.A.O.U. Atlas.

As well as regular Club members, a team from John Coman's State High School Field Naturalists will be participating. The area has been separated into divisions based on habitat and teams of two have been allotted to them. Two members are necessary to confirm aural as well as visual contacts.

Further details will be advised by Robert Shaw who can be contacted by telephone at 30.1300. Many members are already committed to the project --- how about YOU?

It has been said that, in regard to camping, it is not the man who is actually on camp who is having all the fun, it is the fellow who is getting ready to go. The November field trip is to be a camp-out at Bunya Mountains, National Park, so if you are a camper start planning rations and checking over your duffel. It will take place over the week-end of 19th-20th. November. Non-campers will be welcome to join in on a day basis. Further details will be advised.

Ron Hopkinson, Editor,

NEW TOOWOOMBA BIRDS.

181. <u>Japanese Snipe</u> (Gallinago hardwickii). 3/5.9.77. Ringmere, Withcott. Bill and Eileen Jolly.

First noted zig-zagging away from reed-fringed dam at dusk. Subsequent sightings showed lengthwise stripes of buff on head. Disproportionately long bill. Underparts light greyish. Feeding in muddy fringes of dam.

MEMBERS BIRD NOTES.

Australian Pelican. 17.8.77. Apex Park, Gatton. EJ. WJ. Little Pied Cormorant. 23.8.77. Fast Creek Park. DIN.

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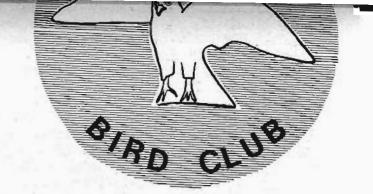
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Royal Spoonbill. 12.8.77. "Corandru", Withcott. CD. MD.

White Pygmy-goose. 24.8.77. Apex Park, Gatton. EJ. WJ. CB. WM. JD.

Green Pygmy-goose. 24.7.77. Townsville Common. RGH. RW.

Crested Hawk. 7.8.77. Rocky Ck. National Park. VS. Ruth W.

Grey Goshawk. (White phase) 25.7.77. Mt. Stuart, Townsville. RGH.

White-breasted Sea-eagle (two birds). 14.8.77. Atkinson's Dam. CB. REH.

Little Eagle. 28.7.77. Cotswold Hills. JMC.

14.8.77. Warana Avenue. CB. REH.

MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES (cont/d.)

Swamp Harrier, 27.7.77. Townsville Common. RGH. Peregrine Falcon. 30.8.77. Stenner Street. WJ. Brush Turkey. 28.8.77. Burleigh Heads Nat. Park. (50 plus birds). WJ. REH. Japanese Snipe. 14.8.77. Atkinson's Dam. (9 birds). CB. REH. Emerald Dove. 28.8.77. Burleigh Heads Nat. Park. WJ. REH.

Red-tailed Black Cockatoo. 15.8.77. Cecil Plains. CB.

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo. (In company with Galahs, possible escapee). REW. King Parrot. 29.8.77. Mt. Kynoch. JC. Red-winged Parrot. (Pair) 15.8.77. Cecil Plains. CB. Brush Cuckoo. 24.7.77. Townsville Common. RGH. RW. Pheasant Coucal. 16.8.77. Ballard. GC. Barking Owl. (Pair) 31.7.77. Townsville Common. RGH. RW. Noisy Pitta. 28.8.77. Burleigh Heads Nat. Park. WJ. REH. Mangrove Warbler. 29.7.77. Tom Nichol Creek, Townsville. RGH. Varied Sittella. 7.8.77. Ballard. GC.
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BURLEIGH HEADS NATIONAL PARK.

Although having for years successfully resisted the blandishments of the Gold Coast, I recently found myself camped there for a week-end. It was all I had expected --- high rise buildings --- endless traffic --- crowds --- and what must be the pride of some developers heart, a fairy-tale castle-cum-restaurant sitting atop a hill where you see it whether you want to or not. (UGH!!)

However, sitting atop another hill is the 58 acre subject of this piece and daybreak on the Sunday found Bill Jolly and myself entering. Within minutes we had a quiet little Emerald Dove not far from us, then a glimpse of a Noisy Pitta. As we approached the crown of the hill we came upon a few Brush Turkeys —— then a few more —— then another group. We were in the midst of a colony at the start of the breeding season, with several males working on their mounds.

Repeatedly we saw mature males driving younger ones out of their territory. We saw and heard as they afterwards inflated their yellow wattles and bowed forward to give the grunting call of this species. This was real birding, to be close at hand observing this fort of activity without disturbing the birds.

So if you find yourself on the Gold Coast and want an antidote to fairy-tale castles, visit this little gem at daybreak in the breeding season, or any other for that matter and you will come away refreshed.

Ron Hopkinson.

BIRDS AND FLIGHT.

Few wonders touch man as deeply as the power of natural flight. Our mechanical approximations are coarse by comparison and we are well aware of it. Natural flight joins creature and sky. There is no intrusion. No bird is foreign to the wind. When we lift ourselves away from the earth it is our superb intelligence that is putting us there but there is not intelligence enough to find a way in for us. We can never really join the sky. We understand many of its forces and we can call upon them with steel and glass and tons of wire and rivets. But our sense of alienation is never alleviated.

We have been watching the birds since before we were men. They flicked their

Brush Turkey. 28.8.77. Burleigh Heads Nat. Park. (50 plus birds). WJ. REH.

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We have been watching the birds since before we were men. They flicked their shadows across our path with elegant disdain when we were yet without language. We listened to the wind in their feathers from our perches in the trees. And when we progressed enough we marvelled at their beauty of colour and form. Man has always wondered about the bird.

It would be a tragedy beyond measure, far beyond comprehension, if the course we

(cont/d.)

BIRDS AND FLIGHT (cont/d.)

have set should leave us nothing to wonder about but ourselves. Indeed, then, man might well wonder about man. In the meantime prayer would not seem out of order. We might well pray that our intelligence not have as its end product the elimination of beauty from earth, and bird from sky.

(Introduction to the book "Birds and Flight" by Roger Caras. Published by Westover Publishing Co.)

UNGRATEFUL BIRDS.

Rumours have it that sparrows just don't know when they are better off. Well the sparrows which inhabit the area around my house fit that description to a "t".

About five weeks ago, I built a bird house, from the instructions in a World Book Encyclopedia. The bird house was well ventilated and fully waterproof, like all bird houses should be. At first it looked as though it wasn't going to be used. Then about two days after erection a pair of sparrows began to build a nest in the bird house. The nest was about half finished when they stopped building it.

There was a short break and the birds began to build a nest in the gutter of the next door neighbour's roof.

Now the nest in the neighbour's roof gutter is being used and the box I had made for hem is empty. Ungrateful aren't they!

Apart from being in a tree with no leaves, the box is in an ideal position as every morning I feed the birds bread and water, and the box has proved to be cat and currawong proof on several occasions.

Perhaps you can offer some explanation why they decided to move out!

Bill McKenzie.

SORTING THEM OUT - THORNBILLS.

There are not really too many problems attached to sorting out that conglomeration of small brown birds that many a birdwatcher has been known to dismiss as "Thornbills of some kind".

There are in fact only five species of thornbill which have been recorded in our local study area, these being the Brown Thornbill (Acanthiza pusilla), Yellow-rumped Thornbill (A. chrysorrhoa), Yellow Thornbill (A. nana), Striated Thornbill (A. lineata) and the Weebill (Smicrornis brevirostris).

'ese five birds may be categorised for our convenience as follows:

Two thornbills with whitish underparts streaked with black -

Brown Thornbill and Striated Thornbill.

Two smaller birds with basically yellow underparts -

Yellow Thornbill and Weebill.

One thornbill with a yellow rump - Yellow-rumped Thornbill.

Our most difficult task is likely then to be in separating the Brown from the Striated Thornbills and the Yellow Thornbill from the Weebill. The chart which follows has been designed to assist in that differentiation and represents the consensus to be found in a number of publications as to the basic field characteristics of these five local birds together with the Buff-rumped Thornbill (Acanthiza reguloides), not yet recorded here, but a definite possibility.

Field marks which are especially relevant to the separation of a particular species from another are boxed in heavy ink by way of emphasis. Where a species is known to exhibit geographic variation the information recorded here relates to the locally occurring form.

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References.

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1	Species.	Thead	Grown	Back	Rump	Teil	Throat	Breast	到ye	ê	General
	Yellow-rumped Thornbill (Acanthiza chrysorrhoa).	black with white tipe	black with white spots	buff/ greenish	yellow	dark,' whitish tip	buff/ white	white to yellow/ rufous buff	Grey		black stripe through eye. White stripe above eye.
	Buff-rumped Thornbill (Aconthiza reguloides).	spotted white	olive/ brown	olive/ brown	yellow/ buff	base pinkish/ cinnamon broad dark terminal band	greyish speckles	whitish	Pale greyish	rish	ish
÷ 4	Brown Thombill (Acanthiza pusilla).	rufous with grey speckles	olive/ brown	olive/ brown	cinnamon/ rufous	brown tipped white blackish sub-terminal band	off-white, streaked, black	off-white streaked black	Deep red	de de	Pale olive undertail
•	Striated Thornbill (Acanthiza lineata).	olive/ brown streaked white	olive/ brown streaked white	olive/ brown tinged yellovish	olive/ brown tinged yellowish	grey/brown, black sub-terminal band	whitish streaked black	whitish streaked brown/black lower: pale yellowish	Dull grey	еу 11	Cinnamon/buff undertail. ey Head and throat look slightly paler than body.
	Yellow Thombill (Acanthiza nana).	olive/ green brownish	olive/green and bro∀nish	olive/green and brownish	olive/ green & brownish (same as back)	grey/brown black sub-terminal band	yellow	yellow	dark brown	ek ovm	Side of head: dull yellow finely streaked. Black behind eye.
	Weebill (Smicrornis brevirostris).	As Little but:	Thornbill,	a) NO black st b) WITH cream and behind c) Very short	streaks amy line and eye. rt bill.	om face. before, above			yell	yellowish	owish wee-eet-wit-it or pec-pec-p weep, also throaty TCHIK or

nis ris)	. 22		- a	ed es).	nped	
As Little but:	olive/ green brownish	olive/ brown streaked white	rufous with grey speckles	spotted white	black with white tipe	·F'head
Thornbill,	olive/green and brownish	olive/ brown streaked white	olive/ brown	olive/ brown	black with white spots	Crown
a) WO black b) WITH or and beh c) Very sh	olive/greer and brownish	olive/ brown tinged yellowish	olive/ brown	olive/ brown	buff/ greenish	Back
WITH creamy line be and behind eye. Very short bill.	green & brownish (same as back)	olive/ brown tinged yellowish	cinnamon/ rufous	yellow/ buff	yellow	Rump
on face. before, above	grey/brown black sub-terminal band	grey/brown, black sub-terminal band	brown " tipped white blackish sub-termiral band	base pinkish/ cinnamon broad dark terminal band	dark, whitish tip	Teil
	yellow	whitish streaked black	off-white streaked black	greyish speckles	buff/ white	Throat
	yellow	whitish streaked brown/black lower: pale yellowish	off-white streaked black	whitish	white to yellow/ rufous buff	Breast
yellowish	dark brown	Dull grey	Deep red	Pale greyish	Grey	Eye
CALL: short high-pitched warble, wee-eet-wit-it or pee-pee-pwee-weep, also throaty TCHIK or TIZ.	Side of head: dull yellow finely streaked. Black behind eye.	Cinnamon/buff undertail. Head and throat look slightly paler than body.	Pale olive undertail	,	black stripe through eye. White stripe above eye.	General
pitched warble, pee-pee-pwee-	constant harsh TZIT.	constant ZIT.	Short warble, wich-wich-wichy-woo. Churring chatter and sharp TZIT.	Tinkling or jingling notes.	Melodious descending trill. high-pitched twitter. Harsh TSCHAIK.	call.
179/Lun					G	CONTROL OF

FIELD DAY REPORT - Redwood Park, 21.8.77.

Our first field trip since our direct involvement in the R.A.O.U. Atlas project began did in fact enable us to gather information in both of the 10' blocks embraced by our local study area. This situation comes about by virtue of whatever chance it was that placed Redwood Park neatly astride the line of longitude 152 E.

The day proved to be somewhat windy and for the first time on a club outing to Redwood the birds were not to be seen in their usual numbers. There were however intermittent moments of high excitement as occasioned by the dramatic influx of a foraging flock of Scarlet Honeyeaters or the speedy exodus of a lone Emerald Dove. A new addition to the club's Redwood records was the Dusky Wood-smallow, a party of which enjoyed their aerial feastings high above the canopy while we consumed our own lunch in its shade:

While a future Redwood outing might be seen to be more rewarding a little later in the year when the Spring migration is well under way and some of our seasonal Northern visitors are with us, it is none-the-less valuable for the club to record Winter residents also. In fact it would be of great value if members could come to arrange between them that at least one visit is made to Redwood Park at least once a month by someone with a checklist. A number of our local records have come only from Redwood Park and our monthly feedback must be less than accurate if we do not jucceed in including a look at Redwood with each month's returns.

Any member who could spend even one morning or afternoon once a month in Redwood would be sure to find some new birds for himself, and possibly for the area. Ron Hopkinson is keen to organise a simple roster. If you can help at all, please could you let him know.

Nill Jolly.

Species List - Field Day - 21.0.77.

Brown Pigeon Emerald Dove Fan-tailed Cuckoo E. Yellow Robin Golden Whistler Grey Shrike-thrush Grey Fantail Eastern Whipbird Variegated Wren White-browed Scrub-wron White-throated Warblor Brown Thornbill White-throated Tree-creeper Noisy Miner Lewin's Honeyeater Yellow-faced Honeyeeter White-naped Honeyeater Brown Honeyeater Scarlet Honoveater Mistletoo Bird Spotted Pardalote Striated Pardalote Silvereye Red-browed Firetail Olive-backed Oriole Australian Regentbird Dueky Wood-swallow

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