



TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS inc.

p.o.box 67 - darling heights - 4350

MEMBERSHIP : Adults/Families \$18 Students \$10

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'To encourage the observations and study of the birds of the Toowoomba area'

NEWSLETTER No. 223 - August 1994

EDITORIAL:

Thankyou to all members regarding the current plethora of Black Cockatoo sightings. I couldn't mention them all in this issue. Even President Michael, after 15 years of searching, can claim to have seen them in the TBO area. He was also pretty pleased when he and his father, Laurie, visited the Helidon Dip and observed two Diamond Doves (a single bird had been seen on several occasions) thereby dispelling thoughts of escapees. Lots of Plum-headed Finches, Dusky Woodswallows and Little Lorikeets were too. Well Done.

Nicci Thompson also recently observed 60 Dusky Woodswallows in Redwood Park, unfortunately it was on fire at the time. As well Nicci saw Crimson Rosellas at Black Gully on the Western Side of town.

Further down the range Rod Hobson was apparently planning his next treatise when a Swift Parrot flew overhead. Talk about being in the right place at the right time.

For myself, nothing unusual really, two Peregrine Falcons at the Prince Charles Hospital, a Spotted Harrier at Samford, Blue-winged Kookaburras at the back of the Mt Nebo Cafe and about 1000 Little Corellas near Talgai Homestead west of Allora.

This issue has two outing reports, a Kakadu outing and more on those beautiful Red-tailed Black Cockatoos plus many smaller articles and notices. Could I please have more stories for the next issue?!

MID-JULY OUTING-LINTHORPE ENVIRONMENTAL PARK 17 JULY

Gloves and warm jackets were much in evidence as we gathered at the BP Service Station before driving through open agricultural land to the Linthorpe turnoff and a more treed and hilly terrain where we did some more roadside birding.

Initially, the birds were as cold as we were and hugged the sunny side of the trees which just happened to be the side away from us, but as the morning warmed we had better views. By the time we reached the Environmental Park the Double-barred Finches and Silvereyes were in full voice in the Callistemons along the creek, but were soon eclipsed - in interest anyway - by a Rose Robin in the large angophora in the picnic area. There was only one small creek and as we watched, many little birds came in to drink. We pondered on their chances of survival when that too was gone.

Leaving the environmental park and heading towards Aubigny and Oakey we passed many Kestrels and Black-shouldered Kites and one lone Brown Falcon. Keong's Dam was our objective and it supported a variety of waterbirds. As we watched, a large flock of Straw-necked Ibis came into the western end, followed a little later by a flock of Masked Lapwings (in excess of 40) who settled at the eastern end. Suitable bodies of water for flocks of that magnitude must be difficult to find in this part of the state.

As we were finalising our ticks on the check list and preparing to depart a Black-shouldered Kite landed on a nearby fence post with an object clutched in its talons. As we trained our binoculars on the bird, it pulled at the prey with its beak, stretching it out to show the form of a mouse - no one in the group was prepared to make a more specific identification. We all watched fascinated as the kite tore off and ate pieces until it was finished - a nice cameo of life in the raw to complete a very pleasant morning's birding.

Nicci Thompson

JULY OUTING MT GLORIOUS 31 JULY

When I offered to lead this outing I had the idea we would see lots of rainforest birds in a beautiful setting and of course at a lower altitude it would be much warmer than Toowoomba. When questioned as to the wisdom of a 0700 start, I recall I made some derisory comments that the TBO was there to see birds and we weren't tourists etc.

What a cold and windy day we had!! So cold in fact, the troops rebelled after morning tea and the leader had to make a hasty decision and leave the hills to get out of the wind.

After an uneventful drive we passed the huge Wivenhoe Dam and resolved to return soon and view the waterbirds. We headed up Northbrook Parkway and near Cedar Flats (another great future spot for us to visit) we had our fix for the day. Two massive dark birds lifted slowly off the verge of the road. One flew into a nearby tree and the other decided the side of a hill was a good vantage point to view the intruders. Beauty!! Two wedgies at a kill. We sauntered over to view the remains and found a supine hare with just four legs pointing skyward. How efficient they are.

With our excuse for being late intact, we arrived at the Maijala carpark to find our group already viewing Turkeys, Eastern Spinebills, Figbirds and a large flock of Topknot Pigeons.

At the ranger's suggestion we headed off to see Greene's Falls before the usual weekend hordes invaded the area. The wooden walkway made the going very easy and some members saw White's Thrush for the first time. The only other things of interest we found were White-browed Scrubwrens and

John and Joan Sheath arriving. After this trip, we decided to have a break.

Morning tea at the Thompson's rented cottage adjacent to the rainforest was just what was needed. Warm and out of the wind, these charming little cottages are ideal for nature lovers and are surrounded by birds.

After our break, I had intended to complete the southern track but was outvoted 9-1 as the wind had become even colder. We then moved down to the Manorina Bush Camp to find some place out of the wind. On the way, we stopped to enjoy the western views afforded at Westridge Outlook. The wind here was too cold and we virtually ran around the viewing platform and retreated to the warmth of our vehicles.

At Manorina, we walked through some interesting palm groves and huge fig trees to the escarpment overlooking the beautiful Samford Valley. On the return journey, we found a Satin Bowerbird's bower complete with numerous blue spoons stolen from the camping area.

To complete our day, we stopped at the Mt Nebo Cafe and tucked into their fabulous hot food whilst listening to the bellbirds across the road. In all we saw 30 species.

Ken Mc Keown

KAKADU NATIONAL PARK

In May I was fortunate enough to spend a week at the Top End and visit Kakadu National Park. A boat cruise took us through the Yellow Waters Billabong to see the myriad waterbirds and freshwater crocodiles in their natural habitat. This billabong stretched as far as the eye could see and was dotted with hundreds of waterbirds amongst the white and mauve waterlilies including the Sacred Lily which has huge large pink flowers and huge round leaves.

I had my first close-up of the Jacana or Lotusbird as it stepped carefully on each lily pad. We also encountered Magpie Geese, Burdekin Duck, Rufous Night Heron, Brolga, Ibis, Egrets, Stilts, Cormorants and Darter. Several White-bellied Sea-Eagles were nesting in the trees on the bank. Our highlight was to see the Jabiru on the return journey to Kakadu Village.

Also worth seeing was the new Territory Wildlife Park - over 400 hectares of natural bushland - only an hour out of Darwin.

Nancy Belcher

Red-tailed Black Cockatoos

The Red-tailed Black Cockatoo have been visiting Gilmour Court every day for weeks now. We counted 26 one day but recently they have dwindled to 5 or 6. They have been feeding off the little nuts which are on the four White Cedar trees opposite our place. As the nuts are almost finished, I expect the birds will move on to new feeding sites. Last year they arrived about the same time of the year, only in smaller numbers.

Nancy and Frank Belcher

.....and one flew over Withcott

I couldn't believe that I was actually seeing one Red-tailed Black Cockatoo flying with three Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos. After witnessing this strange occurrence on 22 July, my neighbour informed me that he had one Red-tail on his property. Perhaps this unusual happening has been seen by others?

On 03 August, at about 8:30, six Red-tailed Black Cockatoos flew from the east following Rocky Creek at the end of Jones' Road, Withcott. I have not seen the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos since then but they have been around over the last couple of months.

Pat Cleary

A.G.M.- MONDAY 17 OCTOBER

This year, the guest speaker is Michael Hutchinson, project co-ordinator for the R.A.O.U.'s Murray-Darling Basin Waterbird Project - a very important survey of wetlands. This area covers a huge catchment with Toowoomba being on the edge of the area to be surveyed. Some 200 volunteers including several TBO members are already working in the field. It should be a most interesting evening.

WILDFLOWERS FIELD DAY

Members of our club are invited to attend a Wildflower Field Day on 27 August at Nicki and Stephen Forrest's property near Goombungee. Meet at the Museum at the corner of George and Mocatta Streets at noon. BYO picnic lunch. Contact Ann 303 207 for more details.

ACTORS' STUDIO

One for your diary. The Actor's Studio will present "Halfway Up A Tree" by Noel Coward on 06 December. This is a fundraiser for the TBO and always good fun. More in the next newsletter.

RAOU CALENDARS

Once again the TBO will offer 10 RAOU Bird Calendars for sale at the AGM 17 October. Order now by phoning Ann Shore 303 207. They also make great presents.

BOOK REVIEW Australian Owls, Frogmouths and Nightjars by Jill Morris, illustrated by Lynne Tracey. Greater Glider Books.

If you have an abiding interest in owls, frogmouths and nightjars and perhaps need a bird book as a birthday or Christmas present, then *Australian Owls, Frogmouths and Nightjars* could be the book for you. Of course David Hollands' *Birds of the Night*, Reed Books, 1991 is the definitive owl book in Australia at the moment but at approximately \$50 is not cheap.

Primarily written as a children's book, writer Jill Morris and illustrator Lynne Tracey have provided delightful elements - both textual and visual to appeal to young readers. The gouache illustrations have an almost luminous clarity which would have been impossible to reproduce in a mere photographic record; the text is informative and contains short poems that evoke the sound of the birds.

I noticed the author thanked David Hollands, Glen Ingram, Greg Czechura and Dr Les Hall for editorial assistance and readers would know the standing of these gentlemen in the world of birds. The book also contains a Glossary and a page of the birds in silhouette with their respective sizes in metric which is very useful.

Price HC \$29.95 or SC \$15.95 from all good book stores.

**TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS INC.
NOMINATION FORM FOR EXECUTIVE POSITIONS 1994-1995
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD MONDAY 17 OCTOBER 1994**

1 POSITION:
NAME of NOMINEE:
NOMINATED by:
SECONDED by:
ACCEPTANCE (Signature of Nominee):
DATE:1994

2 POSITION:
NAME of NOMINEE:
NOMINATED by:
SECONDED by:
ACCEPTANCE (Signature of Nominee):
DATE:1994

3 POSITION:
NAME of NOMINEE:
NOMINATED by:
SECONDED by:
ACCEPTANCE (Signature of Nominee):
DATE:1994

****** COMING EVENTS ******

August Outing

Location: Queen Mary Falls
Date: 28 August
Leader: Nicci Thompson
Time: 7:30 a.m.

Queen Mary Falls occurs within a 78 ha reserve on the western slopes of the Great Diving Range. Drive through Warwick to Killarney and follow the signs to the left. Do not enter NSW. Meet at the picnic grounds. There is a kiosk opposite the entrance to these grounds. Allow about 2 hours.

Mid-September Outing

Loca. : Stockyard/Rockmount
Date: 11 September
Leader: Ann Shore 303 207
Time: 7:00 am

Meet at the junction of Stockyard Creek and Flagstone Creek Roads.
BYO everything.

September Outing

Location: Crow's Nest - Blackbutt
Date: 25 September
Leader: Ken Mc Keown 303 774
Time: 7:00 am

More info next newsletter.

If undeliverable return to
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**SURFACE
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