



TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS inc.

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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. 227 - December 1994

EDITORIAL:

The issue of outing venues is always a difficult one. For the keener birders who have visited the local hotspots frequently and have seen most of the species on offer, local outings now hold little appeal. To cater for everybody, we will continue with the popular mid-monthly local outing and rely on a more distant and exotic locations at the end of the month to satisfy the more adventurous and the 'listers'. We hope the locations on the back page will meet with your approval.

Remember its your club, so please inform the executive if you would care to visit some special locale. Also, I can see from the members' bird notes that many of you are extremely mobile, so, what about it, how about a short entry regarding that special species sighted or district visited ?

NOVEMBER OUTING, BRISBANE WADERS and STRADBROKE ISLAND - 26/27.11.94

This venue is my favourite outing of the TBO year and, judging by the responses of the participants, likely to become an annual event. The format followed this year was identical to that of our inaugural Stradbroke Outing in 1993. Members chose either a two day option or a single days' birding to Stradbroke on the Sunday.

One carload ventured forth on the Saturday with various stops en route to arrive at Don's place at Thorneside, midday Saturday. Our first stop was Minden Lagoon where we encountered an inland drought refugee, a single Black-tailed Native-hen. There has been an implosion of this species into SE

Queensland recently with prior records from Wivenhoe and Atkinson's Dams. Our next stop was Archerfield Aerodrome where Oriental Plover and Little Curlew have been reported of late. Unfortunately the plovers were not to be seen but 32 Little Curlews obliged the company. On then to Sherwood Arboretum for good views of Baillon's Crake but no Little Bittern, our mid-morning idyll being disrupted by a Maori tug-o-war team in full cry, a formidable sight.

At Don's house we were joined by a Swiss visitor, Alex Huber who joined us for the weekend. Saturday afternoon was taken with wader watching around Wynnum, Wellington Point, Lytton areas but little of note was observed except for five White-winged Terns at the Wynnum Marina.

Early Sunday morning, the Saturday venturers were joined by several day-trippers to catch the 6:45 am barge to Stradbroke Island. The crossing was uneventful, unlike this leg of the voyage on last year's outing when Short-tailed Shearwaters were about in abundance. The first stop on the island was Amity Point where good birding was had. Species encountered here included Pied Oystercatcher, White-cheeked Honeyeater, a pair of White-breasted Woodswallows nesting atop a bollard, Mangrove Honeyeaters and Chestnut Teal. The humping backs of several grazing Dugong broke out to sea and a young Osprey was observed to take a Spotted Butterfish, *Scatophagus argus*. Two Whistling Kites so harried the Osprey that it abandoned its prey with one of the kites making an ineffectual attempt at retrieving the fish. The mud-flats and sandbars hereabouts were festooned with those great little crustaceans, the Soldier Crab, *Mictyris longicarpus* whilst an exposed clump of Eel Grass sheltered one of their larger and much more aggressive relations in the guise of a jenny Mud Crab, *Scylla serrata*.

From Amity Point we drove towards Point Lookout stopping at an area of heath to examine 'Don's sundew spot'. Two species of these bizarre carnivores were on show viz. Forked Sundew, *Drosera binata* and Spoonleaf Sundew, *D. spathulata*. On the tip of Point Lookout, telescopes were mounted and the sea-birding started in earnest. Once again the Point produced the goods as, over the next two hours, some very special sea-birds presented themselves to the onlookers. Particular species of note included several Short-tailed Shearwaters, four or five Common Noddies and the highlight of the day a lone Least Frigatebird, an uncommon species to SE Queensland waters. Bottle-nosed Dolphin and Green Turtle were about throughout our stay. After a protracted and leisurely lunch we headed back to Dunwich for the mid-afternoon barge home, the end of the idyll. One question remains to be asked, that being, "Alex, how do you intend getting a very smelly Spotted Porcupine Fish through Swiss Customs?"

Lastly, I would like to thank Graham and Nicci Thompson and Ann Shore for the use of their vehicles on the day, and Don Gaydon for his hospitality over the weekend.

AND

Is it true that White-browed Babblers have at last reached Toowoomba ?!!!?

Rod Hobson

MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES: All sightings as submitted by members of Toowoomba Bird Observers Inc. Accuracy not vouched for by TBO. Please check with observer before citing.

Great Crested Grebe	01.11.94	Atkinson's Dam	R.H.
Great Crested Grebe	19.11.94	Cooby Dam	R.H., N.T.
Short-tailed Shearwater	27.11.94	Point Lookout	TBO outing
Least Frigatebird	27.11.94	Point Lookout	TBO outing
* Black Bittern	18.06.94	Sawpit Gully	C.D., R.H.
Black Bittern	05.07.94	Sawpit Gully	K.McK., N.T.
Freckled Duck (25)	26.06.94	Lake Bindegolly	P.McC.

Freckled Duck (1)	20.11.94	Atkinson's Dam	R.H.
Freckled Duck (2)	02.12.94	Atkinson's Dam	R.H.
Radjah Shelduck	23.09.94	Capricornia Wetlands	N.T.
Grey Goshawk	14.08.94	Redwood Park	M.A.
Black Kite	04.08.94	Woodlands	R.H.
Square-tailed Kite	28.08.94	Gulgong NSW	T.P.
Square-tailed Kite	17.10.94	Range escarpment, T'ba	N.T.
Black-breasted Buzzard (2)	05.07.94	Coongie Lake	P.McC.
Spotted Harrier	26.09.94	Barcaldine	N.T.
Black Falcon	09.08.94	Gatton Uni campus	R.H.
Black Falcon	18.08.94	Atkinson's Dam	R.H.
Grey Falcon	17.08.94	Gatton Uni campus	R.H.
Little Button-Quail	08.08.94	Woodlands	R.H.
Red-chested Button-Quail	10.08.94	Woodlands	R.H.
Black-tail. Native-hen	15.10.94	Lake Broadwater	N.T.
Black-tail. Native-hen	30.10.94	Atkinson's Dam	P.McC.
Black-tail. Native-hen	26.11.94	Minden	TBO outing
Baillon's Crake (1)	19.08.94	Lake Dyer	R.H., P.McC.
Australian Crake	02.12.94	Lake Dyer	R.H.
Bush Thick-knee	30.06.94	Sth. Stradbroke Is.	R.H.
Bush Thick-knee	11.07.94	Crows Nest	R.H.
Beach Thick-knee	30.06.94	Sth. Stradbroke Is.	R.H.
Painted Snipe	19.11.94	Cooby Dam	R.R., N.T.
Banded Lapwing (55+)	12.11.94	Atkinson's Dam	R.H.
Oriental Plover (100+)	15.10.94	near Winton	C.D.
Little Curlew	17.10.94	Cooby Dam	N.T.
Little Curlew	12.11.94	Atkinson's Dam	R.H.
Common Sandpiper	16.10.94	Lake Koolioo	C.D.
Wood Sandpiper	16.10.94	Lake Koolioo	C.D.
Common Noddy	27.11.94	Point Lookout	TBO outing
Diamond Dove (3)	10.07.94	Crows Nest	R.H.
Diamond Dove (1)	24.07.94	Helidon Dip	P.McC.
Topknot Pigeon (flock)	26.08.94	Hume St (nth) T'mba	M.A.
Red-tail. Black Cockatoo	24.07.94	Harlaxton	Booth family.
Red-tail. Black Cockatoo	July 94	Gilmour Ct T'mba	F.B., N.B.
Red-tail. Black Cockatoo	29.07.94	Cawdor	N.T.
Glossy Black Cockatoo	24.07.94	Lockyer Forestry	R.H., P.McC.
Glossy Black Cockatoo	27.08.94	Ravensbourne	P.McC.
Swift Parrot (1)	27.07.94	Gatton Uni campus	R.H.
Eastern Rosella (1)	06.07.95	Left Hand Branch	R.H.
Port Lincoln Parrot **	30.06.94	Owen St, T'mba	D.M.
Budgerigar	06.10.94	Back flagstone Creek	M.A., N.T., K/W.McK
Powerful Owl (2)	08.11.94	Redwood Park	P.McC., K.McK.
Masked Owl (road kill)	10.08.94	Spa Park, Helidon	P.McC.
White-throated Nightjar	30.06.94	South Stradbroke	R.H.
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo ***	20.08.94	Withcott	A.S.
Little Bronze-Cuckoo	09.11.94	Withcott	A.S.
Red-backed Kingfisher	19.06.94	Caffey	R.H.
Red-backed Kingfisher	09.10.94	Torrington	N.T.
Albert's Lyrebird	28.08.94	Carr's Lookout	TBO outing
Ground Cuckoo-shrike	15.08.94	Woodlands	R.H.
Logrunner	28.08.94	Carr's Lookout	TBO outing
Chestnut-br. Quail-thrush	01.10.94	near Adavale	C.D., R.H.

Spotted Quail-thrush	03.07.94	Seventeen Mile Road	R.H.
Hall's Babbler	04.07.94	near Charleville	C.D.
Hall's Babbler	30.09.94	Langlo area	C.D., R.H.
White-winged Fairy-wren	Aug 1994	Charleville area	C.D.
Eyrean Grasswren (2)	04.07.94	Coongie Lake	P.McC.
Redthroat (breeding)	01.10.94	near Adavale	C.D., R.H.
Western Gerygone (3)	29.07.94	Pechey Swamp	R.H.
Western Gerygone	07.08.94	Helidon Dip	M.A.
Slate-backed Thornbill	01.10.94	near Adavale	C.D., R.H.
Red-browed Treecreeper	28.08.94	Carr's Lookout	TBO outing
White-browed Treecreeper	01.10.94	near Adavale	C.D., R.H.
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	15.08.94	Tor St, T'mba	M.A.
Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater	20.11.94	Near Gowrie Junction	A.S., N.T.
Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	21.08.94	Highfields Falls	A. & S.F.
Brown-headed Honeyeater	19.08.94	Helidon Dip	L.A., M.A.
Black Honeyeater	Jul/Aug 94	Charleville area	C.D.
Pied Honeyeater	Jul/Aug 94	Charleville area	C.D.
Plum-headed Finch (40+)	19.08.94	Helidon Dip	L.A., M.A.
Masked Woodswallow	1-3.10.94	Sylvan Ct, T'mba	M.J.
Masked Woodswallow	14.09.94	Withcott	D.McC.
White-brow. Woodswallow	14.09.94	Withcott	D.McC.

* First recorded by Don Gaydon 13.06.94.

** Aviary escapee. This species appears to be establishing itself in the wild in the Mt Lofty area, Toowoomba. (Port Lincoln Parrot now a form of Ringnecked Parrot (Ringneck) race *zonarius*).

*** Juvenile. Observed, on several occasions, being fed by Yellow-rumped Thornbills.

L.A.	L. Atzeni	F.B	F. Belcher	N.B.	N. Belcher
M.A.	M. Atzeni	C.D.	C. Dollery	A. & S.F.	A. & S. Frederiks
R.H.	R. Hobson	M.J.	M. Jacobs	P. McC.	P. McConnell
D.M.	D. Mears	T.P.	T. Pacey	D. McC.	D. McCowan
R.R.	R. Roberts	A.S.	A. Shore	K./W. McK.	K. & W. McKeown
N.T.	N. Thompson				

R. Hobson.

UNDER AFRICAN SKIES

It started in earnest, again under the Southern Cross, on a trip to South Africa, at the end of 1992. As I drove along with South African friends and avid bird observers, Pearl and Derek Scotney to our fenced camp in the Kruger National Park. Past the flat-topped thorn trees, we saw movement in the understorey and after some concentrated viewing, the barely discernible coat of a leopard with its kill, a small antelope. That would have been exciting enough had Pearl and Derek not pointed out the heavy, untidy Lappet-faced vultures *Torgus tracheliotus*, lurking and squabbling for prime position, waiting for the leopard to leave any remains of its kill so that they could begin their hungry feasting.

And from that moment my binoculars took in an ever-fascinating spectrum of feathered life. Looking for birds in the Kruger National Park was an unexpected, exciting and infinitely rewarding activity, on a trip where my primary ambition had been to see giraffes, baboons, monkeys, elephants, hippos, zebras, lions, leopards and cheetahs. Soon I had the binoculars focussing on the large Yellow-billed Hornbills *Tockus flavirostris*, the delicately coloured Carmine Bee-eaters *Merops nubicoides*, the soaring Martial Eagles *Polemaetus bellicosus*, the tall, grey and gangly Secretary Birds *Sagittarius*

arpentarius, the Hadedda Ibis *Hagedashia hagedash*, the Purple-crested Louries *Gallirex porphyreolophus*, the Paradise Whydahs *Steganura paradisaea* with their long black tails floating behind them, the busy nest-builders - the Lesser Masked Weavers *Ploceus intermedius*.

And so amongst those well-known African animals I began to appreciate the other occupiers of the savannah. What a thrill it was as I continued my journey around South Africa, to see the shimmering turquoise of a Woodland Kingfisher *Halcyon senegalensis* as it returned to feed its young, to follow the haunting calls of two adult African Fish Eagles *Haliaeetus vocifer* with a juvenile, as they perched in a tree, on sunset, beside the Vergesof an Eastern Cape river, to observe a handsome Hoopoe *Upupa africana* looking for food in a garden lawn, to hear the Helmeted Guinea Fowl *Numida meleagris* and its unmistakable rattling call and to listen to the resonating and soothing sound of the Cape Turtle Dove *Streptopelia capicola*.

Here was a haven amidst the political tensions, not untouched by its ramifications, but for me a very special beginning for a still-rewarding and treasured activity.

Ritamay Roberts

PARE BIRD REPORT

SPECIES: PECTORAL SANDPIPER *Calidris melanotus*

DATE: 29 OCT. 1994

TIME: 11 a.m.

LOCALITY: Atkinson's Dam, SE Qld

OBSERVER/S: Rod Hobson, Terry Reis

OPTICS: Two of 20 x 60 Carton telescopes

CONDITIONS: 50% overcast, windy. Visibility good.

COMMENTS: Single bird observed in company of small group of Sharp-tailed Sandpipers feeding on shoreline below exposed dam wall. Closed to within 5 m of subject for clear and protracted views. Noted fieldmarks clearly especially grey breast, upper belly clearly demarked from white middle/lower belly. Heavily streaked breast observed. Bird observed in same general area next week. Other field marks remarked in this period included upright stance, "budgerigar-like" alarm call and larger, (than Sharp-tailed Sandpiper), down-curved bill with yellowish base. Bird photographed by Ian Gynther, Nature Search 2001, on the morning of 01 Nov 1994.

Rod Hobson. 09.12.94

Membership Dues: These are to be paid by 01 Nov as per front cover of this Newsletter.

New Members: Michael and Margaret Hirst, 41 Curtis St, Toowoomba.

May the birds follow you.

**** COMING EVENTS ****

December Outing

Location: Coal Creek
Date: 18 December
Leader: Ann Shore (303 207)
Time: 0730

An interesting variety of accessible habitats. BYO everything. Turn off the Warrego Highway at KHOLO sign and turn left. Follow signs to the Mine Museum. Gate is on the right.

Mid-January Outing

Location: Ravensbourne Nat Park
Date: 15 January
Leader: Michael Atzeni (392 761)

Meet 7am at the bottom picnic area.

January Outing

Location: Leslie Dam
Date: 29 January
Leader: Ken & Fiona Wells

More next newsletter.

Mid-February Outing

Location: Cooby Dam
Date: 12 February
Leader: Nicci Thompson

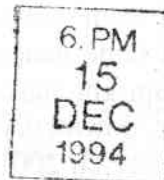
More next newsletter.

February Outing

Location: Crows Nest
Date: 26 February
Leader: Rod Hobson

Visit the property of Rodney Kerr of Greening Australia.

If undeliverable return to
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