



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. 228 - January ^{1995 ?} ~~1994~~

EDITORIAL:

Welcome to a new birding year. With patchy rain in the last few weeks things were looking good but unfortunately the Lockyer Valley seems to have missed any decent falls. The western areas are flooding and no doubt quite a few waterbirds will be moving out that way soon.

Table Top Estate is resounding to the melodious calls of Grey Butcherbirds, warbling Magpies and the other day I had a group of ten Laughing Kookaburras drop in to see if there was a handout. On the down side the turkey mound is now higher than I am.

To help our excursion leader, could you please advise them if you are attending? The phone numbers are always on the last page.

This newsletter contains two outing report and several rare bird sightings and a new bird sighting. Could I please have articles for the newsletter?

MID-NOVEMBER OUTING to ATKINSON'S DAM - 16 November

With the drought continuing, Atkinson's Dam has become one of the hot spots for local birders to attend. The recent sightings of a Queensland rarity, the Pectoral Sandpiper and an easterly Black-tailed Native-hen had members on their toes. Twelve pairs of eyes checked every Sharp-tailed Sandpiper hoping to find a wader amongst them with the tell-tale heavily streaked breast of a Pec.

Unfortunately for all, it was not seen that day, and to my knowledge has not been seen since. As for the Black-tailed Native-hen, it also played hard to get, and was only seen by some other birders who pressed on further than our group was prepared to go on such a morning. Besides I had a wedding to attend in Brisbane and was quickly running out of time.

The morning's birding though, was still very successful. Many waders are frequenting the dam and apart from Sharp-tailed Sandpipers we also saw Red-capped Plover, Curlew Sandpiper, Marsh Sandpiper, and a lone Black-tailed Godwit. Red-necked Avocet was new for some, and everyone present was pleased to view the White-breasted Sea-eagles, even though they kept their distance. We were lucky to spot small numbers of Australasian Shoveler, among the numerous ducks present and to see the Pink-eared Duck which treated us to good observations both on and off the water. Whiskered Terns enchanted us with their graceful flight and when the Red-necked Avocets took to the air the sight was truly magical.

We spent a good deal of time checking out the birds on Atkinson's Dam that day and after morning tea at a site overlooking the dam, we decided to head for home rather than continue on to Bill Gunn Dam. This will be an interesting place to re-visit another day.

Pat McConnell

MID-DECEMBER OUTING, COAL CK, IPSWICH, continuing on to LOGAN'S OUTLET (WIVENHOE DAM) and RAVENSBOURNE NATIONAL PARK.

The small, compact area where Coal Ck joins the Brisbane River, known as Kholo Garden, comprises a variety of easily accessible habitats and is always worth a visit. On this occasion, the warm and humid morning presaging a hot day, it would have been at its best some while before the TBO arrivals.

Early birders on the scene saw a small band of Topknot Pigeons, heard the distant calls of Channel-billed Cuckoos and the closer ones of Cicadabirds while the nearby voice of an unseen Brush Cuckoo accompanied us wherever we went. Later we did see this elusive bird after sighting both Horsfield's and Shining Bronze Cuckoos as they foraged for insects in shrubby growth near the river.

Beyond the lawn and picnic areas, gently sloping tracks and pathways traverse the site, uphill and downdale, with small pockets of new plantings in between older interesting trees giving ample shade. The deep litter and mulch makes for great search and scratching grounds for Brush Turkeys, Whipbirds and Scrubwrens. The trickles of running water keep the place damp and cool.

The day being young, we opted for a round trip home heading first up the Brisbane Valley to Wivenhoe Dam. Little birdlife beyond the ubiquitous Noisy Miner was to be seen around the main picnic area, so we tried Logan Inlet. There were small numbers of Pelican, Cormorant, Royal Spoonbill and Glossy Ibis while the far-carrying and rather metallic songs of Brown Songlarks reached us from across the inlet. This hot and exposed spot was not one for lingering when cool rainforest beckoned so we speedily moved on to Ravensbourne via the highway to Esk and the winding and wooded road to the National Park.

Food and drink were the main priority but with tantalising calls coming from the canopy above amid the scattering of Black Bean flowers, we were soon on our feet. Being midday, not many species were in evidence but we found Eastern Spinebill feeding in a clump of Mistletoe, Golden and Rufous Whistlers, Rufous Fantails, a Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Noisy Friarbirds, Eastern Yellow Robins and of course Lewin's Honeyeaters. From deep in Palm Gully came the unmistakable voice of a Noisy Pitta but it remained hidden.

Altogether quite a passable day's birding for the end of 1994 with a total of 76 species gathered at three different locations.

Ann Shore

RARE BIRD REPORTS

SPECIES : **FRECKLED DUCK** *Stictonetta naevosa*

DATE : 20 Nov. 1994 (1 bird)
02 Dec. 1994 (2 birds)

TIME : 3:15 p.m., 20 Nov.
7:15 a.m., 02 Dec.

LOCALITY : Atkinson's Dam, SE Qld

OBSERVER/S : 20 Nov., Craig Eddie, Rod Hobson, Liz Horler, Terry Reis, Al Young
02 Dec., Rod Hobson, Michael Mathieson.

OPTICS : Various binoculars and telescopes

CONDITIONS : 20 Nov. Extremely hot and dry. Visibility good but with heat haze.
02 Dec. 90% overcast, drizzle throughout day. Visibility fair.

COMMENTS : On both occasions species noted in company of Grey Teal, Pacific Black Duck, Hardhead and Pink-eared Duck on water below exposed dam wall. Ducks noted on water and loitering on shoreline. Unable to distinguish breeding condition of birds on both occasions (base of bill colour not discernible). 'Ski-jump' bill and peaked head easily discernible on both sightings.

SPECIES : **SPOTTED BOWERBIRD** *Chlamydera maculata*

DATE : 17 Dec 1994

TIME : 9:15 a.m.

LOCALITY : Near junction of Ingoldsby Rd and Caffey Connection, Tent Hill via Gatton, SE Qld

OBSERVER/S : Rod Hobson

OPTICS : Zeiss 10 x 40B binoculars

CONDITIONS : Severe drought conditions persist throughout area. Hot, humid pre-thunderstorm weather on day. Visibility very good. Distance to subject various. from about seven metres.

HABITAT : Cleared agricultural land. Wet, very heavily vegetated gully nearby to sighting. Hillside onto which bird flew very steep with sandstone outcropping; heavily vegetated, Spotted Gum, *Eucalyptus maculata*, Narrow-leaved Ironbark, *E. crebra*, in association with dense undergrowth, also Velvet Tree Pear, *Opuntia tomentosa*, Carrol, *Backhousia myrtifolia*, and Bottle Tree, *Brachychiton rupestre*.

COMMENTS : Single bird observed from stationary vehicle in sandy gravel on roadside verge (feeding ?). Bird flew across road and up adjoining steep hillside. Came to rest in low woody shrub. Believe bird to have been a female as crest inconspicuous. Had very clear views of all characteristics. Very familiar with this bird from previous sightings in western Queensland.

SPECIES : LETTERWING KITE *Elanus scriptus*

DATE : 06 Dec. 1994

TIME : 3:30 p.m.

LOCALITY : Oakey Creek, Dalby, SE Qld

OBSERVER/S : Craig Eddie, Rod Hobson,

OPTICS : Nikon 8 x binoculars
Zeiss 10 x 40B binoculars

CONDITIONS : Hot, clear, good visibility.

COMMENTS : Lone bird found perched in River Red Gum, *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* growing on creek bank. Bird very confident, able to observe from directly below perch. Raptor about 5 metres above ground level. Viewed for approximately ten minutes. About half-hour later bird put to flight by Laughing Kookaburra. Able to identify with clear views of diagnostic underwing markings.

NEW TOOWOOMBA BIRD: No. 281

- SPECIES** : **BLACK HONEYEATER, *Certhionyx niger***
- DATE** : 03 Oct. 1994
- TIME** : 4:45 p.m.
- LOCALITY** : Back Flagstone Creek Road, Lockyer Creek crossing.
- OBSERVER/S** : Rod Hobson, Pat McConnell (TBO)
also T.Reis, A. Young
- OPTICS** : Zeiss 8 x 30 binoculars
Zeiss 10 x 40B binoculars
- CONDITIONS** : Fine, good visibility.
- COMMENTS** : Species first observed on Lockyer Creek about .5 km from above sighting, W. Jolly, 02.10.94. Birds in residence along creek with last reported sighting being two birds by M. Atzeni et al., 30.10.94. Five birds originally sighted with up to thirty birds subsequently reported. Honeyeaters feeding on blooms of Weeping Bottlebrush, *Callistemon viminalis*. Large mixed flocks of White-browed Woodswallow, *Artamus superciliosus* and Masked Woodswallow, *A. personatus* and small number of Budgerigar, *Melopsittacus undulatus* observed in the same area in this period. (Reports of Black-faced Woodswallows, *A. cinereus* rejected. Believed to have been mistaken with juvenile Masked Woodswallow.)
- FIELD MARKS** : Male - Black with sides of breast and abdomen white. Female - Brown above with pale line behind eye. Pale buff below with brown scalloping on breast.
- SIMILAR SPECIES** : Male conspicuous, unlikely to be confused with any other bird. Female likely to be confused with local species, female Scarlet Honeyeater, *Myzomela sanguinolenta* or Brown Honeyeater, *Lichmera indistincta*. Female Scarlet Honeyeater lacks pale line behind eye and scallops on breast. Also has pale reddish chin. Brown Honeyeater has yellowish gape (except for breeding male when gape is black), edges of wing-feathers greenish-yellow and a small yellow area at rear of eye. Lacks breast scallops.

Records Officer. 09.12.94

Membership Dues. If you have a **RED** sticker this will be your **LAST** newsletter. **Subs are to be paid by 01 Nov** as per front cover of this Newsletter.

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

January Outing

Location: Leslie Dam
Date: 29 January
Leader: Ken & Fiona Wells 61 11 05
Time: 7:30 am

Meet at the parking area below the dam wall. BYO everything including scopes.
Drive through Warwick and remain on the Cunningham Highway heading towards Inglewood.
Turn LEFT off the highway 12 km west of Warwick.

Mid-February Outing

Location: Cooby Dam
Date: 12 February
Leader: Ann Shore 303 207
Time: 7:00 am

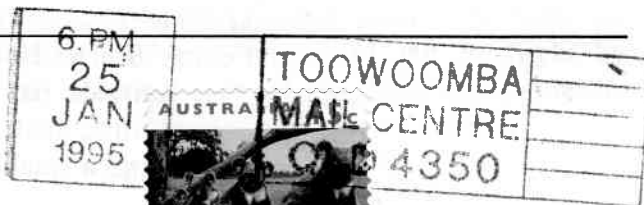
Meet at Loveday Cove. BYO everything.

February Outing

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

Visit the property of Rodney Kerr of Greening Australia.

If undeliverable return to
Toowoomba Bird Observers Inc
PO Box 67
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