

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

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NEWS-SHEET No. 24 - DECEMBER, 1977.

Much to everyone's regret the November camp-out to the Duma Mountains had to be called off because of the wet, windy weather which had prevailed at the time. However a small group compensated for the deferment by venturing to the North Coast for the week-end. Their report on the trip carries a suggestion for a larger party of Club members to make the journey. This could well be a refreshing change of pace for we land bound birders so if you would be interested in a week-end at the North Coast let us know, please, and perhaps early in the New Year we can make it.

The 10% discount on bird books still applies for members shopping at the Queensland Book Depot in Margaret Street. This is a good opportunity to fill some of the spaces in your bird library. All you need do is produce a current copy of this News-sheet.

Member Anne White has returned to Kiwi country. She takes with her our best wishes and the hope that our paths will cross again some day.

The visit by Don Vernon on Friday evening December, 16th is scheduled for the Teachers' Education Centre in Baker Street. Don will speak on endangered species as well as showing slides of the Wildfowl Trust taken on his recent trip. I would urge members to take advantage of this Club activity and attend what will be a most interesting evening.

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has much  
We are publishing a list of financial members in this issue. As will be seen the Club has grown during the last twelve months and hopefully will continue to do so. It might be appropriate here to remind members that subscriptions for 1978 are now being received. Payment could be made at the meeting on the 16th, the Field Day on the 18th or sent per post to Club Secretary, c/- Post Office, Darling Heights, Toowoomba.

As this is the final Editorial for 1977 we take the opportunity to thank those members who have supplied gold checklists through the year. This is a most important Club activity and it is satisfying to have this feed-back of observations each month. Also thanks go to those people who have supplied contributions to the News-sheet. This is a Club function and provides a chance to record your observations for others to read. With the hope that you will continue to supply us next year we wish all members "Good Birding" for the holidays.

Ron Hopkinson,  
Editor.

NEW TOOWOOMBA BIRDS.

In last month's News-sheet the diagnostic details regarding the White-throated Honeyeater were inadvertently omitted. The entry should have read:

✓ 182. White-throated Honeyeater (*Melithreptus albobularis*). 23.10.77.

Flagstone Creek. Ron Hopkinson, Roger Livesey.

Three of this species seen in creekside foliage close to the Flagstone Creek Rd. (Downrange block). Black head - white crescent shaped mark on nape. Identification based on white skin above eye as distinct from the reddish skin of the otherwise similar White-naped Honeyeater (*Melithreptus lunatus*). Though not possible to exactly determine extent of white below mandible, distribution of the white-eyed

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NEW TOONOOMBA BIRDS (cont/d.)

form of the White-naped Honeyeater would preclude this being considered.

Also last month we were unable to supply details of the two species identified by Rod Hobson and Rheta Wright. However this is now to hand and these entries now read:

- ✓ 183. Topknot Pigeon (*Lopholaimus antarcticus*). 23.10.77. Redwood Park.  
Rod Hobson, Rheta Wright.

Two birds. Grey with black band near end of tail. Swift, powerful flight high over treetops. "Topknot" evident on leading bird.

- ✓ 184. Barking Owl (*Ninox connivens*). 23.10.77. Redwood Park.  
Rod Hobson, Rheta Wright.

Single bird. Upperparts brown with white flecks on wings. Underparts boldly streaked. Dull yellow feet. Large conspicuous, yellow eyes.

MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES.

Correction: John and Ruth Walter apologise to members for a slip in last month's Bird Notes. The Regent Honeyeater reported at Black Duck Creek was in fact Australian Regentbird.

Crested Hawk. 23.10.77. Stenner St. IN.

Scrubfowl. 14.9.77. Cardstone. RH.

Channel-billed Cuckoo. 30.11.77. Bass Street. REH.

Dollarbird. 20.10.77. Prince Henry Drive. RW.

Ground Cuckoo-shrike. 17.11.77. Ringmere. EJ. WJ. (Three birds).

Grey Whistler. 13.9.77. Cardstone. RH.

Bower's Shrike-thrush. 13.9.77. Cardstone. RH.

Little Friarbird. 8.10.77. Esther Street. IN.

Graceful Honeyeater. 13.9.77. Cardstone. RH.

Yellow Oriole. 12.9.77. Bilyama Creek. RH.

RH: Rod Hobson. REH: Ron Hopkinson. WJ: Bill Jolly. EJ: Eileen Jolly.  
IN: David Newlands. RW: Ron Wilson.

BLUE-WINGED KOOKABURRA.

We have had another report of this species, following on from the note in last month's News-sheet. This sighting was by Rod Hobson and Rheta Wright, near Grantham on October, 24th.

Ron Hopkinson.

BLACK KITE.

My daughter Sue and I were in the garden on Wednesday, November 23rd when the birds began sending out a "Red Alert". A quick upward look and we saw a bird of prey being harried by the usual Crows, Magpies, Butcherbirds and Magpie Larks.

Leaving Sue to keep an eye on the bird I dashed inside for the binoculars. Sue claimed it was a Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*) and inspection proved her correct. The dark bird with, flat dihedral and little underwing pattern and the forked tail always swishing this way and that, rode an updraught to escape its tormentors.

Ruth Walter.

BLACK-TAILED NATIVE-HEN.

On November 25th at Macquarie Downs, near Leyburn, a party of 20 plus of this species was sighted in a swampy area below the wall of the dam. We would be very interested to hear from members of any other sightings of this bird, on the Downs or Lockyer Districts.

An interesting point is that Macquarie Downs is now owned by King Ranch Pty. Ltd. Their policy is "No Shooting" and therefore the birds on the dam were very much quieter.

John and Ruth Walter.

ENLARGED LOCAL STUDY AREA.

As notified in previous News-sheets, as from January 1st, 1978 the Club Local Study Area will be enlarged from the present 10km. radius circle of the Margaret Street Post Office.

The area will incorporate two 10' blocks which will co-incide with the requirements of the RAOU Atlas of Australian Birds scheme. The reference to 10' blocks is of course 10 minutes of Latitude and/or Longitude. The blocks will be known as Uprange and Downrange for checklist purposes and the dividing line between the two is the line of 152 degrees East longitude.

It is our purpose here to define various landmarks located on or near where the border lines cross roads and highways passing into or out of the area, beginning with the line of separation common to the two blocks (the above mentioned 152 degrees East Longitude).

This line passes a little East of Katoomba Point and crosses the Range (Warrego) Highway about two hundred metres East of the Yukana Vale Camp sign. This means that all of Redwood Park is included in the Uprange block. On the Flagstone Creek Road the line crosses at the junction with the Blanchview Road.

The Northern boundary of the Uprange block crosses the Crows Nest road one kilometre North of the Murphy's Creek turnoff. Morris' Road and Gowrie Junction are just within the boundary.

The Western boundary line crosses the following roads at the points given.  
Warrego highway: Immediately East of Gowrie Mountain (cuts the lower slopes).  
Cecil Plains Road: One kilometre West of the junction with O'Mara's Road.  
Pittsworth Road: Immediately West of Bunkers Hill (near Westbrook Training Centre).  
Wyreema-Umbiran Road: Two kilometres West of Wyreema.

Southern Boundary.

Wyreema-Cambooya Road: One km. South of Wyreema.  
Drayton Connection Road: One km. South of Vale View School.  
New England Highway: At the point where the Hodgson Vale road crosses the highway (approximately two kilometres South of Lion's Park).

The only major road leaving the Downrange block is the Warrego Highway.

The Eastern border crosses the highway about three kilometres beyond Dinner corner at a point where the road and the rail line are closely parallel. The point is marked by a small gravel side track which turns North off the highway and passes under the rail line.

Members wishing to enlarge on this detail are welcome to view the maps held by Bill Jolly or myself. The maps used are the National Topographic Series, scale 1 : 100 000 available from the Lands Office, Toowoomba.

Ron Hopkinson.

REPORT OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Toowoomba Bird Club held at "Ringmere", Withcott, on Friday, 21st October, 1977.

The meeting opened at 7.30 p.m. with colour films.

Attendance: Chris Bianchi, John Coman, Veronica Coman, Mick Dolley, John Duff, Phillip Elms, Ron Hopkinson, Rod Hobson, Bill Jolly, Eileen Jolly, Roger Livesey, David Newlands, Lyn Newlands, Marilyn Jacobs, Sandy Pottinger, Margaret Robinson, Robert Shaw, Anne White, Rheta Wright.

Apologies: The Corbin family, Vera Simon.

Minutes: The minutes of the previous annual meeting were read and accepted.

Moved: R. Hopkinson  
Seconded: E. Jolly.

There being no business arising from the minutes the meeting moved on to the President's report.

President's Report: The President outlined the aims and objectives of the Club and reviewed the Club's progress along these lines since it began. With the Club's participation in the "Atlas of Australian Birds" the new year will  
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REPORT OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (cont/d.)

see the original area - a ten kilometre radius from the Toowoomba Post Office - enlarged to two ten minute blocks to coincide with the Atlas's requirements. This will give additional area and with the different habitat club members can look forward to adding new varieties to the already extensive list of birds under study.

Editor's Report: The Editor thanked contributors for their bird notes over the year and made some general remarks on the growth of the Club.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer advised that the bank balance of the Toowoomba Bird Club stood at \$41.15 with one subscription for 1978 to be banked and one account outstanding \$1.60 for printing.  
Annual accounts accepted.

Moved: R. Shaw.  
Seconded: A. White.

Election of Officers: The first nomination being that of President, the President left the chair and the Secretary took over proceedings.

President: Bill Jolly nominated by Chris Bianchi.  
There being no other nominations for the position Bill Jolly was elected unopposed.

The President having been re-elected, resumed the chairmanship of the meeting.

Secretary/Treasurer: Robert Shaw nominated by David Newlands.  
There being no other nominations for the position Robert Shaw was declared elected.

Editor: Ron Hopkinson nominated by Bill Jolly.  
There being no other nominations for the position Ron Hopkinson was declared elected.

The election of Officers completed the President offered a vote of thanks to the Secretary and the Editor for their work during the year. The Editor thanked Eileen Jolly for the typing necessary to produce the monthly news-sheet.

General Business: The only item of general business was the Second Toowoomba Bird Count to be conducted on Sunday, 23rd October. Full discussion and details to follow the conclusion of the formalities of the meeting.

There being no other business the meeting was declared formally closed at 8.30p.m.

Robert Shaw (Secretary).

Bill Jolly (President).

LIST OF FINANCIAL MEMBERS AT 5TH DECEMBER, 1977.

Chris Bianchi	Maree Jenner
David & Kath Blackburn	Bill & Eileen Jolly
Leslie Boyce	Shane Kennedy
Susan Bright	Barry Kenway
John Coman	Roger Livesey
Maurie Coman	Bill McKenzie
Graham Corbin	David & Lyn Newlands
-Jim & Jane Corbin	Jeff Nolan
Mick & Coranne Dolley	Sandra Pottinger
John Duff	Margaret Robinson
Reg & Chris Eley	Robert Shaw
Phillip Elms	Vera Simon
Alan & Sylvia Graham	John & Ruth Walter
Paul & Hazel Green	Bob Weis
Rod Hobson	..Anne White
Ron & Dawn Hopkinson	Ron & Viv Wilson
Marilyn Jacobs	Rheta Wright.

HIGHFIELDS SCRUB.

After being disappointed at the washout of the Bunyas trip, we decided to make a trip to Highfields scrub at 4.30 p.m. In the short time we were there we had a very close view of two Rufous Fantails and a Crested Shrike-tit.

Cicadabirds were heard calling through the trees and a few fleeting glimpses of them in the treetops were seen. Several Satin and Leaden Flycatchers were observed flitting noisily through the trees during the whole visit.

On the way home we were rewarded with the sight of a Channel-billed Cuckoo being chased by several Currawongs which gave up when it landed in a nearby tree.

Species list - Highfields - 19.11.77.

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|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Nankeen Kestrel         | Rufous Fantail             |
| Galah                   | Grey Fantail               |
| Scaly-breasted Lorikeet | Thornbill spp.             |
| Channel-billed Cuckoo   | White-throated Treecreeper |
| Kookaburra              | Noisy Miner                |
| Sacred Kingfisher       | Lewin's Honeyeater         |
| Dollarbird              | Brown Honeyeater           |
| Cicadabird              | Mistletoebird              |
| Crested Shrike-tit      | Red-browed Firetail        |
| Golden Whistler         | Aust. Magpie Lark          |
| Leaden Flycatcher       | Pied Currawong             |
| Satin Flycatcher        | Torresian Crow.            |

The Corbin Family.

SORTING THEM OUT - RAVENS & CROWS.

Back in November 1975 I asked members at an early Toowoomba Bird Club meeting if they would consider the question "In our area do we have only Torresian Crows (*Corvus orru*), only Australian Ravens (*Corvus coronoides*), or both?"

A short item discussing some of the field characteristics of each species was published in News-sheet No. 4 - January 1976 together with a further plea for members to gather any evidence as to the status of each in our local study area, but we were a smaller club in those days and very little information came to hand.

Barry Kenway's recent item concerning a possible Raven's nest alongside Rifle Range Road has however prompted the inclusion in this "Sorting Them Out" series of a resurrected version of that earlier item in the hope that our larger present-day membership will feel encouraged to do just that, i.e. sort them out.

The Torresian Crow (*Corvus orru*) is widespread across the Northern regions of Australia, its distribution overlapping with that of the Australian Raven in Queensland, East of the Divide and in Eastern parts of the Northern Territory. Toowoomba thus falls well within the recorded range of the Torresian Crow, while being at the Eastern edge of the known distribution of the Australian Raven.

How then may these two birds (which are the only crows at all likely to occur in Toowoomba) be told apart? We should first perhaps state their obvious similarities, i.e. they are much of a size and equally black, each with a distinctly white eye. There are however three observable characteristics which will enable the careful observer to separate *Corvus orru* from *Corvus coronoides* in the field:

- i) The throat feathers (hackles) of the Australian Raven are conspicuously long and fan as the bird calls. This is not the case with any other Australian crow.
- ii) The base of the body feathers, (normally concealed, but sometimes visible when the breeze ruffles feathers, or if a bird is in the hand), is white in the Torresian Crow, but grey in the Australian Raven.
- iii) The calls of the two birds are held to be distinctly different, that of the Australian Raven being generally described as a powerful

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SORTING THEM OUT - RAVENS & CROWS (Cont/d.)

"aah-aah-aahaah", the last note tailing off in a lower-pitch jingle, whereas the call of the Torresian Crow is a nasal, and high-pitched, repeated "uk" or "ok", with the Reader's Digest Complete Book of Australian Birds emphasising that this bird never utters an "a" sound as does the Australian Raven.

There are several other points of difference which depend more upon the subjective judgement of the observer, such as the Torresian Crow's habit of shuffling its wings on landing and its practice of breeding one or two months later than the Australian Raven, but dependence on these could lead us into the corner already occupied by the English bird-watcher who, when trying to separate Carrion Crows (*Corvus corone*) and Rooks (*Corvus frugilegus*) on the basis of their differing social habits, wrote:

For those who really need to know  
One single rook's a certain crow.  
Whilst rows of crows, despite their looks,  
Are rooks.

Three club members have thus far suggested, independently, that Ravens do occur in the Mt. Lofty/Rifle Range area of Toowoomba. The club would value greatly any and all Crow/Raven observations from members, in order to help establish and record the local status of these two species. (Don't forget road casualties you may see. These could allow a closer look at the throat and base of other feathers)

References.

- FRITH H. (Cons. ed.), Reader's Digest Complete Book of Australian Birds, Reader's Digest, Sydney, 1976.  
MACDONALD J.D., Birds of Australia, A.H. & A.W. Reed, Sydney, 1973.  
ROWLEY I.C.R., A fourth species of Australian corvid. Emu. 66 pp 191-210.  
ROWLEY I.C.R., First record of the Australian raven in the N.T. Emu. 69 pp 183-4.  
SLATER P.J., A Field Guide to Australian Birds: Passerines, Rigby, Adelaide, 1974.  
VERNON D.P., Birds of Brisbane & Environs, Queensland Museum, Brisbane, 1968.

Bill Jolly.

NEXT FIELD DAY.

Date: Sunday, 18th December, 1977.  
Place: Dyer's Lagoon - Lake Clarendon - Apex Lake.  
Leader: Bill Jolly.  
Assembly Point: Pigotts car park. Time: 8.30 a.m.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

Urimbirra, November, 1977. Vol. 11, No. 10.  
Q.O.S. Newsletter, October, 1977. Vol. 8, No. 9.  
Darling Downs Naturalist, December, 1977.

SPECIAL VISIT FROM DON VERNON.

Mr. Don Vernon, Ornithologist at the Queensland Museum will be coming to Toowoomba in order to address the Club on Friday, 16th December, 1977.

Don will be talking on the topic of endangered species and will be bringing specimens with him. He will also be showing slides taken during his recent trip to England and will have available copies of the enlarged new edition of his booklet "Birds of Brisbane and Environs".

Mr. Vernon's previous visit to us has remained one of the highlights of the Club's early activities. Those attending this Friday will be assured of an informative and thoroughly enjoyable evening. (Bring a friend. Coffee/tea and biscuits available).

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