



TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS inc.

p.o. box 67 - darling heights - 4350

MEMBERSHIP: Adults/Families \$20 Students \$10

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

NEWSLETTER No. 240 - February 1996

EDITORIAL:

The drought is definitely over in some areas and last weekend some lucky members visited a swamp, the legacy of some 325 mm or 13 inches in the old language. What was in this particular swamp was fascinating to birdos concerned with the recent whereabouts of many of our waterbirds. Thousands of nests covered the trees with an abundance of egret, cormorant, heron and many other species. Hopefully, a more detailed report will appear in a future newsletter.

Many thanks to this newsletter's contributors:- Pat McConnell reports on a mean streak in Common Mynas, Koji Tagi continues his account of his birdwatching trip in the Cairns area, John Harris provides the Bunya Mountains outing report and Ann Shore, who makes a welcome return, reports on recent observations along Flagstone Creek.

Could we please share your experiences as we are always in need of fresh material for the newsletter? Observations of unusual behaviour and interesting sightings always make interesting reading and accounts of these need be no longer than a paragraph or two. I don't expect literary masterpieces. As the Nike ad advises -JUST DO IT!!!

BUNYA MOUNTAINS OUTING - 28 January 1996

A warm day, not to mention Nicci and Michelle Thompson and visitor Rob Kernot, greeted us as we (Ken, Trent and myself) arrived at the Ranger Station at Dandabah, one hour late as one of us had slept in on such a long weekend. [ED. This person lives in the Gatton area.]

After initial discussions, we headed off to the Paradise Carpark for a walk to Big Falls. On this walk we had numerous chances to observe Black-faced Monarch, White-browed and Yellow-throated Scrubwrens, a close look at Scarlet Honeyeaters and some debate over a young cuckoo being fed by a White-browed Scrubwren. The species was narrowed down by elimination and confirmed by a field guide as a Fan-tailed Cuckoo.

Once out of the rainforest and onto the Balds that the Bunyas are also renowned for, the birds thinned out a bit but those other flying colours, the butterflies became more numerous. Several species including Orchard Swallowtail, Green and Blue Triangles and Clear Wings were observed.

Upon return, we indulged in the usual obligatory morning tea before we all headed [ED. bravely through copious Stinging Nettles] to the Cherry Plains Lookout with Dalby in the distance to the west. Being later in the morning, fewer birds were present although we added eight species to our list, including Regent Bowerbird, Variegated Fairy-wren and Peregrine Falcon.

Our day finished after a quick walk around the Bunya Bunya track at Dandabah. The highlight of this area was the Satin Bowerbird bower close to the track. Although not as resplendent as when I was there a few months ago, probably all the hard work had been done on the male's part, so why put in the extra effort?

Forty-two species were seen in all. The highlights apart from those already mentioned were Emerald Dove, Australian King-Parrot, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Topknot Pigeon, Rufous Fantail, Green Catbird, Russet-tailed Thrush and hearing both Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove and the Noisy Pitta.

John Harris

AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR IN THE COMMON MYNA

While reading the latest NatureSearch newsletter I was reminded of a incident I saw last spring. The article, "The not so Myna", by Liz Horler refers to the pugnacious nature of this species and this is just the behaviour I witnessed.

While having morning tea on the verandah at work on 12 October I was watching a pair of Common Myna repeatedly flying back and forth to a hole in the roof of the Biology Laboratories at the University of Southern Queensland. This behaviour continued for several minutes before one of their departures was accompanied by a huge commotion. One of the mynas on this occasion had a large chick in it's bill and had a Common Starling in hot pursuit. The myna carried the chick for about five metres before dropping it to its death on the bricks below. The young starling was about one third adult size and covered in down. It was a large weight for the myna to carry.

One myna entered the hole another time followed by a parent starling. Again the starling was not able to stop the myna from removing its chick and dropping it into a nearby garden where it was four and eaten by Pied Currawongs. The mynas are now nesting for a second time in this location.

I do not really care if Common Mynas displace Common Starlings from nesting holes. But, if mynas are aggressive enough to displace the also aggressive starling then many of our smaller native species do not have much of a chance.

Pat McConnell

FLAGSTONE CREEK

After being restricted to birding just around "Shorelands" for some weeks due to ill-health, I almost began to feel "starved for birds" as fellow member Adele Warburton put it when she returned from a long spell in Sydney.

We set about remedying this speedily and decided to try our luck in the Flagstone Creek area. Numbers of birds were visible as we approached via the Blanchview Road with small finches scattering as we drove past. Following so many droughty years it was a treat to see and hear running water as the

Monkey Water Holes had fast become a fast flowing miniature creek, criss-crossing the roadway as it hurtled down to eventually meet the Lockyer, with the backdrop of rich green hills instead of the brown landscape to which we had become accustomed.

Flagstone Creek Road was short on birds as we pulled in at the foot of the hill although again we revelled in the lushness with rushing water accompanied by the croaking of frogs, silent for too long. With brief stops we carried on to the Stockyard Creek turn-off. This proved most rewarding. We were soon joined by two knowledgeable birders from Toowoomba with whom we had an a very interesting chat about birds. Unfortunately, they had no interest in the TBO. They alerted us to a Tawny Frogmouth family on a branch, two nestlings snuggling close below the parent. Bee-eaters were busy while the bushes were alive with small birds:- Speckled Warbler, White-winged Triller, Chestnut-breasted Mannikins, Zebra Finches and Fairy-wrens. An elusive cuckoo called frequently but denied us certain identification, although I thought it probably a Horsfield's Bronze.

Ann Shore

WILDLIFE WATCHING AT CAIRNS PART 2

We decided to search mainly for rainforest species and left Cassowary House at 7:00 am. Above, Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos were flying and feeding close to us. We arrived at the Crater at 8 o'clock. Many birds' voices were around but we could not see them easily. Bridled Honeyeater and Tooth-billed Catbird were the most prevalent species. We stopped at the Golden Bowerbird's bower but failed to see it this time.

Next we dropped in at the Wongabel State Forest. Bower's Shrike-thrush and the Atherton Scrubwren were in attendance. However the most notable species we saw was not a bird. A big monkey-like creature with a long tail was taking a rest on a slightly higher branch. We had seen nothing like it before. A Lumholtz's Tree-kangaroo?? When we returned to the Cassowary House that night, we asked our host, John, who confirmed our suspicion.

Lake Eacham is located about 15 km west of Atherton. We searched carefully to locate both the Brolga and the Sarus Crane on our way. There were certainly several Sarus Cranes but we could not find a Brolga. John later told me the Crane was replacing the Brolga on the Atherton Tablelands. Unfortunately we were late because of poor timing and arrived at the lake about 11:00 am. However we started on the circuit around the lake which is surrounded by dense rainforest. We saw a few Pied Monarch and other common rainforest species. We decided to have lunch at the picnic ground. A male Victoria's Riflebird was calling loudly. We found him easily and he continued displaying and calling while we were there. (To be continued in next edition...)

Koji Tagi

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

Blue Bonnet	28/01/96	Brymaroo	NT,MT
Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove (dead)	31/01/96	T'mba Uni Centre	DM
Major Mitchell Cockatoo (escapee)	01/02/96	Lake Apex, Gatton	JWH
White-bellied Sea-Eagle	12/02/96	Lake Apex, Gatton	JWH
Australian Crake	11/02/96	Helidon Spa	AS,BJ
Forest Kingfisher (dead)	16/02/96	Helidon	JWH

JWH	John Harris	DM	Darryl Mears	MT	Michelle Thompson
AS	Ann Shore	NT	Nicci Thompson	AW	Adele Warbuton

COMING EVENTS

March Outing: **Location:** Ravensbourne N.P.
Date: Sunday, 31 March
Leader: Michael Atzeni 076 392 761
Time: 7.30 a.m.

Meet at the bottom picnic area. BYO everything.

April Outing: **Location:** Silver Pinch/Blanchview area
Date: Saturday, 27 April
Contact: Pat Cleary 076 303 352
Time: 7.30 a.m.

Meet at the Blanchview turnoff on the Upper Flagstone Ck Road. BYO everything.

May Outing: **Location:** Redwood Park
Date: Sunday, 26 May
Leader: Pat McConnell 976 141

Full details next newsletter.

June Outing: **Location:** Girraween N.P.
Date: Sunday, 30 June
Leader: Sharyn Frederiks 331 169

Full details next newsletter.

If undeliverable return to
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