



TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS inc.

(An Affiliated Group of the Bird Observers Club of Australia)

p.o. box 67 - darling heights - 4350

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

CLUB OFFICERS :

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

NEWSLETTER No. 251 - January 1997

EDITORIAL

Increasingly, we are asked to provide information on the birds of the Toowoomba region or specific places such as Redwood Park, the Toowoomba Waterbird Habitat and the Helidon Dip area. Often the requests are in relation to conservation issues and it is important to be able to offer comprehensive information.

The **Helidon Dip area** has long been one of the Club's favourite stamping grounds and one we most certainly want preserved. To date, no species list has been compiled for the area, so Michael Atzeni has published a **preliminary species list** in this newsletter. Please check your records for other sightings and advise our Records Officer, Pat McConnell. If there is enough interest, we will start a policy of publishing details of new and unusual birds seen in this and other significant areas. Such a policy would also make compilation of information for others a lot easier down the track.

Other features in this newsletter include the **reports on the November and December outings** to the **Mulgowie area and Ravensbourne National Park**, respectively, **book reviews on two Queensland Museum publications, members' bird notes** and a **list of new members**.

Michael Hirst has kindly offered to be the club's **local conservation representative for BIRDS PLUS**, the Conservation Network of BOCA, and will be involved with the exchange of local conservation news. Please inform him if your favourite patch of scrub is in a state of decline or is about to be ravaged, so we can capitalise on BOCA's clout and perhaps remedy the situation.

My nameless proof reader apologises for forgetting to update the front page details of the December issue. (Should we forgive him?). To avoid confusion with November's issue, an updated label is included for attachment to the December issue.

OUTING REPORT - MULGOWIE AREA, 24 November 1996

I took over this outing at short notice and paid the price for not having reconnoitred the area. Not only did I lead the first half of the outing into the Land of Nobb (No bush birds), but, after departing early in my bid to get home by 10.30 a.m. for my nephew's 11 a.m. baptism, I also missed the Glenore Grove road and ended up at Grandchester instead! I received a very rousing reception when I arrived home at 10.50 and lost untold birding brownie points!

My previous memories of a drive through the area were when a group of us recorded 125 species for the day in and around the Lockyer area. On that occasion, Laidley Creek was running, fig trees were laden with fruit and fig-loving birds and a few good waterholes along the way produced some interesting waterbirds. But that was over 10 years ago and things have changed. There were very few bush birds around, particularly south of Townson where the creek was bone dry. Apart from a most uncooperative Eastern Whipbird, Channel-billed Cuckoos, and a couple of Crimson Rosellas, there was little to write home about. The dearth of birdlife was disappointing but was somewhat counterbalanced by the pleasant drive through the picturesque, rural countryside.

We had better luck at the waterbird habitats, and had kicked off in style at Bill Gunn Dam where Ken McKeown picked up a White-bellied Sea-Eagle eating a fish on the ground. For the benefit of our new members, we set the scope up and pointed out some of the ducks - Australasian Shoveler, Hardhead, Grey Teal and Black Duck - and various other waterbirds.

After I left, Michael Hirst kindly took the reins and lead the posse down a couple of side roads where everyone got good looks at Red-backed Fairy-wrens. Keeping ahead of storms, a lunch stop at Gatton's Lake Apex produced Jacana and Coot. On to Karrasch's Lagoon where White Ibis, Great-crested Grebe, various egrets and a White-winged Triller were added. Lowe's Rd swamp produced Royal Spoonbills and the curiosity of the day, Black Swans with young, two of which were white with plain yellow beaks. They initially had everyone looking at alternatives, but based on the bill, other white swans such as Mute swans were eliminated, and going by the slender necks and body shape, geese were also ruled out.

Michael Atzeni / Michael Hirst

Species List:

Great-crested Grebe, Australasian Grebe, Australian Pelican, Darter, Great Cormorant, Little Black Cormorant, White-faced Heron, Cattle Egret, Great Egret, Little Egret, Intermediate Egret, Australian White Ibis, Royal Spoonbill, Plumed Whistling-Duck, Black Swan, Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal, Australian Shoveler, Hardhead, Wood Duck, Black-shouldered Kite, Brown Goshawk, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Australian Kestrel, Dusky Moorhen, Purple Swamphen, Eurasian Coot, Comb-crested Jacana, Masked Lapwing, Black-winged Stilt, Marsh Sandpiper, Feral Pigeon, Spotted Turtle Dove, Peaceful Dove, Crested Pigeon, Galah, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Rainbow Lorikeet, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Cockatiel, Crimson Rosella, Pale-headed Rosella, Red-rumped Parrot, Pallid Cuckoo, Common Koel, Channel-billed Cuckoo, Pheasant Coucal, Laughing Kookaburra, Sacred Kingfisher, Dollarbird, Welcome Swallow, Fairy Martin, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, White-winged Triller, Willie Wagtail, Eastern Whipbird, Golden-headed Cisticola, Red-backed Fairy-wren, Noisy Friarbird, Little Friarbird, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Noisy Miner, Brown Honeyeater, Mistletoebird, Striated Pardalote, Common Starling, Common Myna, Figbird, Australian Magpie-lark, Grey Butcherbird, Pied Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Pied Currawong, Torresian Crow

OUTING REPORT - RAVENSBOURNE NP, 16 December 1996

Ravensbourne, thankfully, had been spared from recent fires in the district and there was plenty of bird activity in the picnic area where a small enthusiastic group gathered for the final outing of 1996.

Things looked promising from the outset when we noticed extremely fresh platelets near the start of the walking track in the top picnic area. This indicated the Black-breasted Button-Quail had not long been scratching for breakfast or perhaps dinner the night before. However, we had to be content with high hopes as they once again eluded us. I would have to say my strike rate for seeing them at Ravensbourne must be about 5%. They are an incredibly difficult species to locate.

Not far into the walk Jack Lund picked up the shadowy form of a Noisy Pitta hopping across the track and the more fortunate of us glassed it. He appears to be a permanent fixture in that particular patch of rainforest bordering the top picnic area. A little further on, we enjoyed good looks at Brown Cuckoo-dove, Spectacled Monarch, Yellow-throated and Large-billed Scrubwren, Rufous Fantail, Green Catbird and Russet-tailed Thrush. A highlight was a female Paradise Riflebird indulging in culinary investigations - no sign of a male though, despite a search around the edge of the rainforest where we'd been dazzled by one on the previous Ravensbourne outing. A Rose-crowned Fruit-dove teasingly delivered its pheasant coucal - like call from who-knows-where, exasperating all, particularly Ken McKeown who was hoping for a "lifer". By the end of the outing we had heard several but were unable to pick up any in the thick canopy. Anyway, they're not nearly as cute when handed out on a platter, Ken, and you'll appreciate them all the more when you eventually see them. (Feel any better?).

Mid-morning, we were joined by Clare and Ken Gover and then tackled a couple of the walks at the bottom area of the park, eventually walking to the Caves. It was fairly quiet and there were no signs of the Glossy Black Cockatoos we had hoped to see in the Casuarinas around the Caves. As some compensation, we were treated to a close encounter with a stunning male Scarlet Honeyeater - that vibrant colour certainly isn't captured in any of my field guides! After our return from the Caves we met up with Michael and Margaret Hirst, Adele Warburton and Ann Shore, then knuckled down to a bite to eat and some Christmas cheer.

Michael Atzeni

Species highlights:

Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove, Topknot Pigeon, White-headed Pigeon, Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Sacred Kingfisher, Noisy Pitta, Cicadabird, Russet-tailed Thrush, Spectacled Monarch, Rufous Fantail, Large Billed Scrubwren, Yellow-throated Scrubwren, Brown Gerygone, Striated Thornbill, Scarlet Honeyeater, Regent Bowerbird, Green Catbird, Paradise Riflebird

BIRDS OF THE HELIDON DIP

We are increasingly being asked to provide species lists and details on specific species for various sites around the region, whether it be for other birders, government departments or private industry. It is usually a major task to extract the information from the club records and various individuals, and invariably, the list compiled is still incomplete and significant sightings are poorly documented.

From here on, we will endeavour to document the species and new additions for the Helidon Dip and several other key sites so that there is published information that can be readily accessed.

We have started the ball rolling, with a preliminary list for the Helidon Dip area, located 3 km north-west of Helidon township. The habitat includes open areas around the cattle dip and along the railway line, casuarinas, acacia scrub (Black wattle), dry sclerophyll forest and some small dams. The list also includes species seen adjacent to the dip and in the Helidon Explosives Magazine.

Species list

Little Pied Cormorant, White-faced Heron, Cattle Egret, Straw-necked Ibis, Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal, Australian Wood Duck, Pacific Baza, **Square-tailed Kite**, Whistling Kite, Brown Goshawk, Collared Sparrowhawk, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Spotted Harrier, **Peregrine Falcon**, Australian Hobby, Brown Falcon, Australian Kestrel, Australian Brush-turkey, **Painted Button-Quail**, **Red-chested Button-Quail**, Buff-banded Rail, Masked Lapwing, Black-fronted Dotterel, Peaceful Dove, **Diamond Dove**, Bar-shouldered Dove, Common Bronzewing, Crested Pigeon, **Squatter Pigeon**, **Red-tailed Black Cockatoo**, **Glossy Black Cockatoo**, **Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo**, Galah, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Rainbow Lorikeet, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Musk Lorikeet, Little Lorikeet, Australian King-Parrot, Cockatiel, Pale-headed Rosella, **Turquoise Parrot**, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Shining Bronze-Cuckoo, Common Koel, Channel-billed Cuckoo, Pheasant Coucal, White-throated Needletail, Laughing Kookaburra, Sacred Kingfisher, Rainbow Bee-eater, Dollarbird, Welcome Swallow, Tree Martin, Richard's Pipit, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike, Cicadabird, White-winged Triller, Rose Robin, **Red-capped Robin**, Eastern Yellow Robin, Jacky Winter, Crested Shrike-tit, Golden Whistler, Rufous Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Leaden Flycatcher, Grey Fantail, Willie Wagtail, Eastern Whipbird, Grey-crowned Babbler, Superb Fairy-wren, Variegated Fairy-wren, Red-backed Fairy-wren, Speckled Warbler, Weebill, **Western Gerygone**, Brown Thornbill, Buff-rumped Thornbill, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Yellow Thornbill, White-throated Treecreeper, Varied Sittella, Striped Honeyeater, Noisy Friarbird, Little Friarbird, Noisy Miner, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Fuscous Honeyeater, **Black-chinned Honeyeater**, Brown-headed Honeyeater, White-throated Honeyeater, White-naped Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill, Scarlet Honeyeater, Mistletoebird, Spotted Pardalote, Striated Pardalote, Silvereye, Red-browed Firetail, **Diamond Firetail**, Double-barred Finch, **Plum-headed Finch**, Olive-backed Oriole, Figbird, Spangled Drongo, **White-winged Chough**, Australian Magpie-lark, **Masked Woodswallow**, **White-browed Woodswallow**, Dusky Woodswallow, Grey Butcherbird, Pied Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Pied Currawong, Torresian Crow

MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES: All sightings were seen by members of the Toowoomba Bird Observers. Accuracy not vouched for by TBO. Please check with observer(s) before citing.

Black-faced Woodswallow (3)	18.04.96	Hodgsonvale	LA
Black-faced Woodswallow (2)	24.05.96	Hodgsonvale	LA
Barn Owl	14.07.96	Coronation Pk, Harristown	LA, MA
Hoary-headed Grebe (2)	06.10.96	Hood's Lagoon, Helidon	MA, PM
Chestnut Teal (1)	06.10.96	Hood's Lagoon, Helidon	MA, PM
Marsh Sandpiper (1)	06.10.96	Hood's Lagoon, Helidon	MA, PM
King Quail	02.11.96	Lake Samsonvale	MA, PM, KM
Noisy Pitta (heard calling at night)	02.11.96	Anderson's Rd, Helidon	MA, PM, KM
Cotton Pygmy-Goose	03.11.96	Karrasch's Lagoon, Placid Hills	MA, PM, KM
White-winged Triller	23.11.96	"Shorelands", Withcott	AS
Blue-winged Kookaburra	28.12.96.	Near 7 Mile Lagoon, Lockyer Waters	PM, KW
Red-lored Whistler (3)	18.12.96	Round Hill Nature Reserve	PM
Yellow-eyed Cuckoo-shrike	05.01.97	Redwood Park	MA, PM

L.A.	L. Atzeni	M.A.	M. Atzeni	KM	K.Mc Keown
PM	P. McConnell	AS	A. Shore	KW	K. Watson

OUTINGS ATTENDANCE PROTOCOL

Just a reminder for **all members and visitors attending outings** to **contact the leader** by the **Friday** before the outing. Firstly, we don't want to leave anyone in the lurch, by setting sail without them if they have been slightly delayed. Secondly, it is important for insurance purposes that the leader is aware you are intending to come, and that all attendees **sign the Attendance book**.

BOOK REVIEW

If you're still wondering what to give that special birder in your life. perhaps as a belated Christmas present, here's two books published by the Queensland Museum all birders would appreciate.

Wildlife of Greater Brisbane has been around for about a year now and is a full colour guide as well as a comprehensive introduction to more than 600 of the animals which share our diminishing wilderness, sprawling urban environs and even the intimacy of our homes. Snails, spiders, insects, fish, frogs, mammals and more than 100 birds are included in easy-to-read entries which describe the physical appearance of each animal and where it is most likely to be found. This book covers many animals from the TBO area as well.

Wild Places of Greater Brisbane is the sequel to the previous book and features magnificent photography of the "wild places" of the greater Brisbane region. With a radius extending to within 180 km of Brisbane, beauty spots such as the Conondale Ranges, Moreton Island, Boondall Wetlands and Mt Barney National Park are beautifully portrayed.

Ken McKeown

NEW MEMBERS The club warmly welcomes the following new members:-

Pauline Horton
41 Cleary St
Toowoomba

Mary & Tomi Petr
27 McLeod
Toowoomba

Jim & Mary Grant
27 Flinders St
Toowoomba

Malcolm & Marj Wilson
PO Box 524
Dalby 4405

Chris & Mary Cameron
PO Box 6040
West Toowoomba

Wesley & Norma Sturdee
9 Muir St
Toowoomba

"May the birds follow you"

UPDATED LABEL FOR DECEMBER ISSUE

To avoid confusion, please correct the newsletter details on December's edition by pasting over them with the correct details below. My apologies for the oversight.

Michael Atzeni

COMING EVENTS

January Outing

Location: "Silverbrook", Oakey
Date: Saturday, 25 January
Leader: Michael Hirst 076 325 564
Time: 7 a.m.

Info: Meet Michael at the Devon Park turnoff 3 km west of Oakey. This turnoff is on the right (i.e. the northern side) of the Warrego Highway. Our hosts, the Ford's, property is a further 3 km so wait for Michael to guide you there.

February Outing

Location: Franklinvale
Date: Sunday, 23 February
Leader: Michael Hirst 076 325 564
Time: 7:00 a.m.

Info: This is new territory for us and should be quite interesting following the recent rain. Go through Laidley and then east to Grandchester. Meet Michael at the T intersection just before you arrive at Grandchester. The left road goes to Grandchester and the right and southern road goes to Mt Mort and the property Old Hidden Vale. Franklinvale is 12 km south.

March Outing:

**** **Location:** Flagstone/Stockyard Cks
Date: Sunday, 23 March
Contact: Ann Shore 076 303 207
Time: 7:00 a.m.

**** Note the new date. Transferred from 30 March (Easter Sunday).

Info: From Toowoomba, head down the Flagstone Ck Rd and meet at its junction with the Stockyard Ck Rd. The junction is clearly signposted and there are several industrial garbage bins by the roadside.

If undeliverable return to
 Toowoomba Bird Observers Inc
 PO Box 67
 DARLING HEIGHTS Q 4350



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