



TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS inc.

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

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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. 258 - August 1997

EDITORIAL:

Talk about a coincidence, BOCA features the **Bush Stone-curlew** as endangered, Sharyn Frederiks writes about seeing them in her article and now **Toowoomba** has been home to one for at least a week, with several lucky members having good views of it ... eventually. There are only a handful of records for this species in our survey region and this is the first record for Toowoomba itself. This most welcome visitor is in a paddock in suburban Harlaxton, about 0.5 km along the Goombungee Road on the way to Wetalla Sewage Treatment Plant. The paddock has houses on the southern side and a grove of Camphor Laurels in the adjoining paddock. The bird is often seen sitting along the fenceline but has also been seen in the paddock on the opposite side of the road. Anyone interested can contact me or the Records Officer for further details.

Nearly as exciting, last Sunday I took my wife and her mother, Dawn Allen, to JC Slaughter Falls Park in Brisbane and linked up with Jan England from QOSI who kindly guided us to see the **two Powerful Owl chicks** we missed seeing in July as reported in the last newsletter..

But wait! There's more interesting **members' bird notes**, especially from **Rod Hobson**, still based on **Fraser Island**. What a list!! Closer to home **Jack Lund** reports on his **Helidon Outing** complete with **Platypus**, whilst our other Helidon birdo, **Records Officer, Pat McConnell** provides an update on **our area check-list** in line with the new taxonomic changes. As previously mentioned, **Sharyn Frederiks** recounts the trip she and Alex took to **Carnarvon Gorge National Park** last year.

Many thanks to all correspondents but we still need more articles every month. Remember the newsletter is your forum and is only as good as its contributions.

BIRDING OUT WEST AT CARNARVON

Our bird-watching hobby has resulted in us visiting many different places and, in October 1996, Alex and I went to Carnarvon Gorge National Park north of Roma.

I had no idea what birds we'd find, but Carnarvon did have a few interesting sightings in store. Our first such sighting was seen while driving on the dirt road into Carnarvon. Here we made several stops for birds. One such

stop revealed a pigeon in the middle of the road. This was the Squatter Pigeon and was the most exciting. This sighting was the first of many, and it was seen a few times in the camping grounds as well. Even though the Squatter Pigeon was not a new species for us, (we had seen it at Helidon Dip back in August 1991), it was great to see it again. This pigeon is rarely seen in the Toowoomba area.

One thing I learnt from Carnarvon is that you should never underestimate camping grounds - you never know what you might find. On the first night there, we heard the call of the Boobook Owl. We also heard another strange call which we could not identify. The next night while we were sitting outside our tent, I looked up and to my amazement saw two medium sized birds stroll past, and with the aid of a torch identified a new species for us - the Bush Stone-curlew.

Apart from being a new species, there was another reason why I thought it was special to see them there. The week before our trip to Carnarvon, I had set up a display on ground-nesting birds for Bird-Week, and as a result received information from the "Bird Observers Club of Australia." From this I learnt that sadly the Bush Stone-curlew's status is vulnerable, and therefore a "Friends of Stone Curlew" group has formed to advertise the plight of these birds. I was so thrilled to see these birds here and I had a talk to the Ranger who informed that recently a pair nested and successfully bred not far from the ranger's station, and also at the present time a pair lived up the road at the Oasis Lodge.

Carnarvon Creek provided our first sighting of a platypus in the wild. Not far from the camping grounds there is a walking track called the Nature Trail. We went on this track early one morning and had good views of platypus feeding in the weeds. Other birding highlights of Carnarvon were finding Common Bronzewing and Wonga Pigeons near our tent, seeing the Rainbow Lorikeets drop in to drink from the taps in the camping grounds, and watching the Apostlebirds' adorable behaviour. A number of times these birds were seen sitting side by side preening each other.

While travelling out west I was hoping we might see the Australian Bustard again. In September 1995 Alex and I saw one between Morven and Charleville. Fortunately we weren't disappointed when one appeared in front of us on the dirt road near Carnarvon, before slowly disappearing into the long grass.

Well that was our trip to Carnarvon, and remember if you happen to be up that way and haven't ticked off a Squatter Pigeon or Bush Stone-curlew yet, Carnarvon is the place to go.

Sharyn Frederiks

NEOPHYTE NINOX

Last Sunday, Wendy, her mother, Dawn, and myself met up with Jan England from QOSI at the JC Slaughter Falls Park hopefully to view the chicks of the Powerful Owls we viewed with Pat Solomon last month.

You can't keep a determined birder down. Over the years Dawn had often been on the trail of the Powerful Owl but had somehow missed out, often because the going was too steep. This time, she was in Brisbane to see her heart specialist. She also suffers from chronic arthritis and has a very stiff right leg. Lucky she isn't a horse! As the trip was twice the distance we journeyed in July, those who know the terrain will realize what this bird meant to her.

Sometimes in birding, the script goes according to plan and this night, all went well. On the way in we saw the unusual sight of a Fan-tailed Cuckoo nearly on the ground harassing a Large-billed Scrubwren. As we waited for the young owls to appear, White-throated Nightjars began calling as they flew up and down the small valley we had visited. Then in the distance, we heard the wailing of a solitary Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo which actually flew up our small valley probably looking for its mates in the darkness.

As we sat waiting, we heard a shrill tremulous call coming from across the valley. A white bundle plopped in to view and sat on a branch bobbing up and down. The chicks are now about 45 cm long, snowy white and have speckled wings, back and face. This particular chick kept up his bobbing act with vocals for twenty minutes or so then came and sat in the tree directly above us. Soon after, the other one joined it and gave us wonderful views. Great rejoicing, a new bird for both Wendy and Dawn! Thankyou Jan.

What a great night for birding. No one seemed too disappointed that the adults hadn't shown up. At last Dawn had seen the bird at the top of her wish list. Now has anyone out there seen a Black-breasted Button-Quail within close walking distance to a road?

Ken McKeown

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

Brush Cuckoo	23/2/97	Puzzling Ck., Iredale	M.A., L.A.
Brolga	21/5/97	Saltwater Ck.	R.H.
Beach Stone-curlew	23/5/97	Orange Ck., F.I.*	R.H.
Sanderling	25/5/97	Wathumba Spit, F.I.	R.H.
Black Kite	1/6/97	Keong's Dam	R.H., M.M.
Black Falcon	1/6/97	Dalby	R.H., M.M.
Black Petrel	5/6/97	Govi Ck., F.I.	R.H.
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross**	9/6/97	Indian Head, F.I.	R.H.
Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove	18/6/97	Dundonga Ck., F.I.	R.H.
Hutton's Shearwater**	20/6/97	Dilli Village, F.I.	R.H.
Wandering Albatross**	23/6/97	Eurong, F.I.	R.H.
Logrunner	10/7/97	Lamington N.P.	A.S.
Little Corella (4)	25/7/97	Helidon	P.M.
Eastern Rosella	25/7/97	Black Gully	NT, MT
Powerful Owl (2 imm)	25/07/97	JC Slaughter Falls	K&W McK
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	25/7/97	JC Slaughter Falls	K&W McK
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	25/7/97	JC Slaughter Falls	K&W McK
Latham's Snipe	16/8/97	Gowrie Junction	GG
Bush Stone-curlew	23/8/97	Harlaxton	PM, KW

*F.I. Fraser Island ** Specimen held at Queensland Museum

L.A. L.Atzeni; M.A. M.Atzeni; G.G. G. Glass, R.H. R.Hobson; P.M. P.McConnell; M.M. M.Mathieson, AS. A.Shore; N.T. N.Thompson; M.T. M.Thompson; K&W McK. K & W McKeown, K.W. K Watson.

CHANGES TO THE LOCAL SPECIES CHECKLIST

As mentioned in a recent newsletter, taxonomic changes have taken place with respect to Australian bird species. These changes have meant a change in the listing order of Australian bird species as well as a number of name changes. These changes have been accepted by the RAOU and are in use in recent Field Guides. The Toowoomba Bird Observers will now follow this new taxonomy and accordingly I have updated the Club's checklist. The following list now has all 283 species confirmed by TBOI in the local area as well as the taxonomic changes.

In the list you will notice certain species have been asterisked. Sightings of these species will need to be accompanied by an **Unusual Bird Report Form** which are available from me. Not only does this enable the Record's Officer to verify the sighting but it also means a more complete database of unusual sightings can be maintained and collated. The list of unusual birds has been reviewed. Little Bittern for example still has an asterisk because, not only is it rare locally it is also rarely recorded in south-east Queensland. The Marsh Sandpiper has lost its asterisk because it is very common in the rest of the Lockyer Valley even though sightings in our study area are infrequent. I have not asterisked Little Corella despite the fact that it has only recently been confirmed in the local area. The reason for this is that they now seem to be established in both Toowoomba and Helidon, being reported in most months.

Monthly recorders should familiarise themselves with the new listing. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me. The more people providing monthly sightings the more complete our records are. All records have been kept and are held by me. With the help of Club members these will be added to the master copy and yearly reports updated.

Pat McConnell, Records Officer.

List of species confirmed by TBOI in the Toowoomba/Helidon region (Total: 283)

Australian Brush-turkey	Square-tailed Kite *	Red-capped Plover
Stubble Quail	Black Kite	Black-fronted Dotterel
Brown Quail	Whistling Kite	Red-kneed Dotterel
King Quail *	White-bellied Sea-Eagle	Banded Lapwing
Magnie Goose	Spotted Harrier	Masked Lapwing
Plumed Whistling-Duck	Swamp Harrier	Silver Gull
Wandering Whistling-Duck	Brown Goshawk	Gull-billed Tern
Blue-billed Duck *	Grey Goshawk	Caspian Tern
Musk Duck	Collared Sparrowhawk	Sooty Tern #*
Freckled Duck *	Red Goshawk *	Whiskered Tern
Black Swan	Wedge-tailed Eagle	White-winged Black Tern
Australian Shelduck *	Little Eagle	Rock Dove
Australian Wood Duck	Brown Falcon	White-headed Pigeon
Cotton Pygmy-goose	Australian Hobby	Spotted Turtle-Dove
Mallard	Black Falcon *	Brown Cuckoo-Dove
Pacific Black Duck	Peregrine Falcon	Emerald Dove
Australasian Shoveler	Nankeen Kestrel	Common Bronzewing
Grey Teal	Brolga *	Crested Pigeon
Chestnut Teal	Buff-banded Rail	Squatter Pigeon *
Pink-eared Duck	Lewin's Rail *	Diamond Dove *
Hardhead	Baillon's Crake	Peaceful Dove
Australasian Grebe	Australian Spotted Crake	Bar-shouldered Dove
Hoary-headed Grebe	Spotless Crake	Wonga Pigeon
Great Crested Grebe	Purple Swanphen	Wompoo Fruit-Dove #*
Darter	Dusky Moorhen	Superb Fruit-Dove #*
Little Pied Cormorant	Black-tailed Native-hen *	Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove
Pied Cormorant	Eurasian Coot	Topknot Pigeon
Little Black Cormorant	Red-backed Button-quail *	Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo
Great Cormorant	Little Button-quail *	Glossy Black-Cockatoo *
Australian Pelican	Red-chested Button-quail	Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo
White-faced Heron	Painted Button-quail	Galah
Little Egret	Black-breasted Button-quail *	Little Corella
White-necked Heron	Latham's Snipe	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Great Egret	Black-tailed Godwit	Cockatiel
Intermediate Egret	Whimbrel *	Rainbow Lorikeet
Cattle Egret	Marsh Sandpiper	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet
Nankeen Night Heron	Common Greenshank	Musk Lorikeet
Little Bittern *	Common Sandpiper	Little Lorikeet
Black Bittern *	Red-necked Stint	Australian King-Parrot
Glossy Ibis	Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	Red-winged Parrot *
Australian White Ibis	Curlew Sandpiper	Crimson Rosella
Straw-necked Ibis	Red-necked Phalarope *	Eastern Rosella
Royal Spoonbill	Painted Snipe *	Pale-headed Rosella
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	Comb-crested Jacana	Swift Parrot *
Black-necked Stork	Bush Stone-curlew *	Red-rumped Parrot
Osprey *	Black-winged Stilt	Budgerigar *
Pacific Baza	Red-necked Avocet	Turquoise Parrot *
Black-shouldered Kite	Pacific Golden Plover	Oriental Cuckoo *

Pallid Cuckoo	Striated Thornbill	Ground Cuckoo-shrike
Brush Cuckoo	Red Wattlebird	White-winged Triller
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Spiny-checked Honeyeater	Varied Triller
Black-eared Cuckoo *	Striped Honeyeater	Olive-backed Oriole
Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo	Noisy Friarbird	Figbird
Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	Little Friarbird	White-breasted Woodswallow
Little Bronze-Cuckoo *	Blue-faced Honeyeater	Masked Woodswallow
Common Koel	Noisy Miner	White-browed Woodswallow
Channel-billed Cuckoo	Lewin's Honeyeater	Black-faced Woodswallow
Pheasant Coucal	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Dusky Woodswallow
Powerful Owl *	Fuscous Honeyeater	Little Woodswallow
Barking Owl *	Black-chinned Honeyeater	Grey Butcherbird
Southern Boobook	Brown-headed Honeyeater	Pied Butcherbird
Sooty Owl *	White-throated Honeyeater	Australian Magpie
Masked Owl *	White-naped Honeyeater	Pied Currawong
Barn Owl	Brown Honeyeater	Australian Raven *
Tawny Frogmouth	Eastern Spinebill	Torresian Crow
White-throated Nightjar	Black Honeyeater *	White-winged Chough
Spotted Nightjar *	Scarlet Honeyeater	Apostlebird *
Australian Owlet-nightjar	Jacky Winter	Regent Bowerbird
White-throated Needle-tail	Scarlet Robin *	Satin Bowerbird
Fork-tailed Swift	Red-capped Robin	Singing Bushlark
Azure Kingfisher	Rose Robin	Richard's Pipit
Laughing Kookaburra	Eastern Yellow Robin	House Sparrow
Forest Kingfisher *	Grey-crowned Babbler	Zebra Finch
Red-backed Kingfisher	Eastern Whipbird	Double-barred Finch
Sacred Kingfisher	Spotted Quail-thrush	Plum-headed Finch
Rainbow Bee-eater	Varied Sitella	Red-browed Finch
Dollarbird	Crested Shrike-tit	Diamond Firetail *
Noisy Pitta	Golden Whistler	Chestnut-breasted Mannikin
White-throated Treecreeper	Rufous Whistler	Mistletoebird
Superb Fairy-wren	Grey Shrike-thrush	White-backed Swallow
Variegated Fairy-wren	Black-faced Monarch	Welcome Swallow
Red-backed Fairy-wren	Spectacled Monarch	Tree Martin
Spotted Pardalote	White-eared Monarch	Fairy Martin
Striated Pardalote	Leaden Flycatcher	Clamorous Reed-Warbler
White-browed Scrubwren	Satin Flycatcher	Tawny Grassbird
Large-billed Scrubwren	Restless Flycatcher	Little Grassbird
Speckled Warbler	Magpie-lark	Rufous Songlark
Weebill	Rufous Fantail	Brown Songlark
Brown Gerygone	Grey Fantail	Golden-headed Cisticola
Western Gerygone	Willie Wagtail	Silvereye
White-throated Gerygone	Spangled Drongo	Bassian Thrush
Brown Thornbill	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Common Starling
Buff-rumped Thornbill	Barred Cuckoo-shrike	Common Myna
Yellow-rumped Thornbill	White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike	
Yellow Thornbill	Cicadabird	

* Requires the submission of a "New or Unusual Bird Report Form"

Record is of a dead specimen only

COMING EVENTS

August Outing **Location:** White Rock
Date: 31 August
Leader: Pat Solomon 076 303 774 (McKeown)
Time: 7:30 a.m.

Info: Refidex 235. J 16. Follow Redbank Plains School Road 4 km south from Redbank to its end where there is a carpark. White Rock is the major feature of the recently declared White Rock Conservation Park. This park boasts impressive flora and fauna and requires a 50 min walk from the carpark. There are no facilities so BYO everything. Here's a few avian morsels to tempt you:- Peregrine Falcon, Grey Goshawk, Powerful Owl, Glossy Black Cockatoo, Black-chinned Honeyeater and Spotted Quail-thrush. For more details consult Wild Places of Greater Brisbane. Page127.

September Outing: **Location:** Withcott area
Date: Sunday, 28 September
Leader: Pat Cleary 076 303 352
Time: 7:00 a.m.

Info: Meet in the Withcott Hotel car park on the Warrego Highway. BYO everything.

Annual General Meeting: **Location:** Withcott CWA Hall
Date: Monday, 13 October
Time: 7:30 p.m.

Annual Species Census: **Date:** 25/26 October

Reminder to Leaders

Leaders should take the Attendance Book and First Aid Kit on all Outings. All attending members and visitors should sign the Attendance book for insurance purposes.

If undeliverable return to
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MAIL**



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130 +
MF Honey
29/8/97
→ south h.