



# TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS inc.

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

p.o. box 67 - darling heights - 4350

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

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## CLUB OFFICERS :

President -	Michael Atzeni	076 392761	Editor -	Ken McKeown	076 303774
Vice-President -	Jack Lund	076 976390	Records Officer -	Pat McConnell	076 976141
Secretary -	Ann Shore	076 303207	Librarian -	Sharyn Frederiks	076 331169
Treasurer -	Gloria Glass	076 307054	Committee Member -	Michael Hirst	076 325564

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**'To encourage the observation and study of the birds of the Toowoomba area'**

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NEWSLETTER No. 259 - September 1997

## EDITORIAL:

It's that time of the year again. This season, there have already been local sightings of **Latham's Snipe, Sacred Kingfisher, Channel-billed Cuckoo, Shining Bronze-Cuckoo, Rufous Fantail and Leadon Flycatcher**. First records for the annual spring/summer migrants are always interesting, not just for here but on a national scale, as it gives an idea of the migratory paths and rate of spread, so duly note your first encounters and advise the Records Officer.

This newsletter contains **Jack Lund's Helidon Report** held over from the last newsletter. Sorry about that Jack. **Michael Hirst** reports on his recent **Darwin Dalliance**. We also pay tribute to the late **Joe Deuble**.

Don't forget the **AGM** to be held on **13 October at the Withcott CWA Hall**. Our guest speaker will be Pat McConnell who will give a slide presentation in relation to some of his birding trips. We are also **hoping new people will take on Executive positions**. Historically, TBOI has managed to survive mainly because a small core of dedicated members who firmly believe in the merits of the club, continue to take on Executive positions, some year after year, usually because there are no other offers. Regretfully, with Ann's health rapidly declining (Ann is currently in St Vincent's Hospital), the Secretary position which she has held for so long, will now have to be filled by someone else. The rest of the Executive positions are also wide open, as some of us are hoping for a well-deserved break. Please take this opportunity to support your club by nominating for a position.

Outings for the next few months have been planned. Please enter these dates in your diary and come along. It would be nice to see some new faces. If you know of any private properties that would be suitable for future outings, then **please let us know**, as we are always keen to explore **new birding areas** but need the contacts.

Don't forget the annual species census. It's always a lot of fun and a good way, for new members especially, to get a feel for where to see particular species in the local region. Michael has included a couple of suggestions and a preliminary list of likely leaders for the different sectors.

## OUTING REPORT, HELIDON 27 July 1997.

A bright sunny morning welcomed a good crowd of birders at the Helidon Rest Area. We first took a walk along the creek below the rest area and encountered many bush birds including, Yellow Thornbill, White-throated Honeyeaters, Variegated Fairy-wrens and Olive-backed Oriole. These together with Azure Kingfishers on the creek, a Little Corella overhead and a Platypus diving and swimming in it kicked off the day in fine fashion! The latter a rare sight for most present.

From there, we went to Connor's Road in search of the Black-chinned Honeyeater which proved to be unfruitful. However, good views of Red-capped Robins, Brown-headed, White-throated and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, Yellow and Yellow-rumped Thornbills just to name a few kept everyone more than satisfied. Approaching our cars as we wound up a joyous morning, a Wedge-tailed Eagle soared over.

Jack Lund

**Species list:** Little Pied Cormorant, Pacific Heron, White-faced Heron, Cattle Egret, Straw-necked Ibis, Pacific Black Duck, Maned Duck, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Brown Falcon, Brown Quail, Dusky Moorhen, Masked Lapwing, Feral Pigeon, Spotted Turtle-dove, Peaceful Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, Crested Pigeon, Galah, Rainbow Lorikeet, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Little Lorikeet, Pale-headed Rosella, Little Corella, Azure Kingfisher, Laughing Kookaburra, Rainbow Bee-eater, Welcome Swallow, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Red-capped Robin, Jacky Winter, Golden Whistler, Rufous Whistler, Grey Fantail, Willie Wagtail, Eastern Whipbird, Superb Fairy-wren, White-browed Scrubwren, Speckled Warbler, Weebill, Buff-rumped Thornbill, Yellow Thornbill, White-throated Treecreeper, Striped Honeyeater, Noisy Friarbird, Little Friarbird, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Noisy Miner, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Fuscous Honeyeater, Brown-headed Honeyeater, White-throated Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, Scarlet Honeyeater, Mistletoebird, Spotted Pardalote, Striated Pardalote, Silvereye, House Sparrow, Double-barred Finch, Olive-backed Oriole, Figbird, Australian Magpie-lark, Pied Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Torresian Crow.

## OBITUARY - JOE DEUBLE (1914 - 1997)



Many of you will not have had the pleasure of knowing Joe Deuble as I did. Joe was a long term member of our club until last year when failing health saw him reluctantly relinquish his membership. I remember Joe from when I first joined the club. At the time, I was an enthusiastic but unlicensed teenager who could always count on Joe for a lift. While I thought I knew alot about generosity, diplomacy, and showing a genuine interest in others, Joe demonstrated there was a little bit more to it during the years when he regularly attended club outings and functions.

Joe was always supportive of me in my previous role as the Records Officer and was a regular monthly checklister, and a great one for pinpointing the annual arrival of the White-headed Pigeons in town, as they use to feed in the Camphor Laurels around his Bridge St home. Joe and past member, David Newlands, recorded the first official record of the Red-capped Robin for the club at the Toowoomba Cemetery in July 1979. He and David then went on to discover the first Scarlet Robin for the club in south Toowoomba (Nelson St) in April 1980. To date the Scarlet Robin remains one of the least reported species (3 records to my knowledge) in our survey area.

Having heard the tributes of his loving family at his funeral service, I now understand Joe's life was profoundly peaceful because his outlook was nothing but positive. He kept a notebook of sound philosophies and lived by them, an unselfish, dedicated father and husband, a keen gardener and a nature-lover, especially birds.

And fittingly, at his funeral service, the background music was a cavalcade of Australian birdsong and one couldn't help but picture a bespectacled Joe, binoculars draped around his neck, looking on with his big cheery smile, happy and contented.

His family have kindly donated several bird books and other items to the club on top of previous donations from Joe, including two videos courtesy of his son, Peter. Our sincerest condolences go out to Joe's family. We, his birding friends, acknowledge your great loss and we will miss him too.

Michael Atzeni

### DALLIANCE IN THE DRY

Margaret and I went to Darwin in August to attend the University of the Third Age (U3A) Conference and to visit our daughter Mary and her family. Though I didn't have much opportunity for birdwatching in Darwin itself, it was interesting to see Torresian Pigeons present when we arrived in the middle of the month: whether they had remained over the dry season or had returned early I don't know. The Black Kites, a winter visitor to the city, were in force. The most common garden street birds were the Figbirds, as well as White-gaped and Rufous-banded Honeyeaters. The Orange-footed Scrub-fowl I often saw on the edge of the cliffs overlooking the harbour, within sight of Mary's garden. I only saw a few waders on the shore, a couple of Tattlers, a Curlew, a Common Sandpiper, a Reef Egret (dark) and a Striated Heron.

As part of the Conference, we visited the Berry Springs Nature Park, nothing much new, though we had good close-ups of Green Pygmy-Geese from the hide at the lagoon. Here we also saw a couple of Water Monitors, one with a huge bloody gash in its tail, either from a rival or a Freshwater Crocodile. We also watched a White-bellied Sea-Eagle, a Black Kite and a Barking Owl, which were being re-habilitated and flown to lures by their ranger handlers.

After the Conference, the family went camping at Koolpin Creek, a tributary of the South Alligator River, at the southern end of Kakadu NP, about 30 km from the better-known Waterfall Creek. We drove via Pine Creek, where we watched White-winged Trillers, Black-faced Woodswallows and a Great Bowerbird as we lunched in the park.

After crossing the Mary River, and the South Alligator three times, we arrived at the Koolpin Camping Area. Sharyn Frederiks is quite correct - never underestimate a camping area! When we arrived a pair of Chestnut-quilled Rock Pigeons was peacefully foraging in the dust. We also heard the Bush Stone-curlew every night. Numbers at the camping area are restricted and a key is necessary for entry to the area. Koolpin Creek descends the escarpment in a series of falls, and there is a beautiful waterhole below the camp, where we swam. The creek flows, in the dry season that is, for another kilometre or less below the hole before disappearing into sand. The great banks of sand, on either side of the main channel, are testimony to the abrasive force of floods in the wet and extend 50-100 metres on either side. As I have no head for heights, I did not climb up the gorge above the camp, though some of the family went as far as the first waterfall. The creek below the camp is dominated by paperbarks; one by the swimming hole was flowering and every morning swarmed with Friarbirds, mainly Helmeted with some Little. I searched in vain for a Silver-crowned, though they could have been there among the masses. (I would love to see the Helmeted and Silver-crowned perched quietly together so I could compare them!) Red-collared Lorikeets also added to the bustle and noise. In the bush at the top end of the waterhole a Great Bowerbird had his bower. His playground was decorated with snail shells, a few bones and some crumpled foil.

Birds I saw along the creek included Red-tailed Black Cockatoos, Varied Lorikeets, Northern Rosellas, Azure Kingfishers, Blue-winged Kookaburras, Rainbow Bee-eaters, Lemon-bellied and Leaden Flycatchers, Northern Fantails, Grey-crowned Babblers, Red-backed Wrens, White-throated, Brown and Bar-breasted Honeyeaters. On trips to the South Alligator we saw Masked Finches.

A visit to the waterfall produced a most obliging Rainbow Pitta, which stayed long enough for the whole family, including a noisy and impatient 4 year old grandson,, to come up and have a good view. I hope Mary's photo comes out.

Waterfall Creek, now Gumlon, is a much more sophisticated than when we camped there with the QOSI in 1988, when the only facility, a one-holer earth toilet, was the main social gathering place!

After three nights at Koolpin, we returned by the northern route, taking the old Jim Jim gravel road across to the Arnhem Highway. We stopped for lunch at Barramundi Creek, before turning off the Kakadu Highway. The creek was not flowing, but I went across to a nearby waterhole, where there were many Whistling Kites and what appeared to be a recent nest of theirs. I was distressed to see an apparent juvenile hanging upside down, with fluffed-up feathers, from a twig somewhat like a galah on a powerline. It did not fly off when I clapped my hands, so I assumed it was trapped by a length of fishing line or twine. It was unfortunately too high to reach. I returned later with Mary and grandson and was relieved to see it had gone. I have no scientific reason, but a hunch that it was "anting", maybe using one of the numerous green ants' nests, and that was why its feathers were fluffed up.

A pair of beautiful Forest Kingfishers frequented the pool, and Mary saw some Crimson Finches disappear into a bush. I went to investigate and was rather non-plussed to disturb a lame and rather disgruntled boar. We both retreated, the boar muttering porcine threats as he went.

The only other outing we had was to Fogg Dam. There was not time to see much, mainly egrets and jacanas as I walked the embankment, and three brologas flew in. But from a new walking track and boardwalk, I had my first sighting of a Broad-billed Flycatcher, a fitting ending to a very enjoyable stay in the Top End.

Michael Hirst.

### **SEARCH FOR COXEN'S FIG PARROT**

The club recently received *SPECIES RECOVERY*, the newsletter of the Threatened Species Network (Qld) (TSN). TSN is a community based program of Environment Australia and the World Wide Fund for Nature - Australia, supported in Queensland by the Queensland Conservation Council. In the accompanying letter, members of the TBOI have been invited to join TSN and the recovery team in a major search for one of Australia's most endangered birds, the **Coxen's Fig Parrot**.

Volunteers will monitor fig trees for Coxen's as well as documenting other visiting frugiverous species at sites near Cambridge, Talloom and Mebbin in north-east NSW. The surveys will be conducted from the 4 to 12 October. Food and base camp are provided. For more information contact Maria VanderGragt at TSN on (07) 3221 0573.

KenMcKeown

### **OCTOBER SPECIES CENSUS PREPARATIONS**

Last year I felt we didn't spend enough time in some of the more important sectors in the survey area. To avoid a repeat of that I have drafted up a plan of likely leaders for different sectors at some stage over the weekend, preferably with an early morning start in all sectors on one or both days. If you would like to participate, please advise me of your plans in advance so we can maximise our resources over the two days.

This year I would also like to record the numbers of several species for one reason or another. These include all the cuckoo family, birds of prey and waterfowl, and any species marked as rare or unusual on the latest checklist (i.e. asterisked species).

Sector	Likely Leader(s)	Key areas to be covered
1	Gloria Glass	Gowrie Junction, Gowrie Mountain, Wetalla sewerage treatment plant,
2	Sharyn Frederiks	Wellcamp, Spring Creek
3	Michael Hirst	Redwood Park, Jubilee Park, Toowoomba Aerodrome, Harlaxton/Mt Kynoch, Ballard
4	Mick Atzeni	Preston, Upper Flagstone Creek, Echo Valley area
5	Ken McKeown	Withcott, Iredale, Postman's Ridge, Lockyer Siding
6	Mick Atzeni	Lower Flagstone Creek
7	Pat McConnell	Gatton Creek, Helidon Dip, Connor's Rd, 17 Mile Rd, Hood's Lagoon, Helidon Spa, Back Flagstone Ck Rd
8	Pat McConnell	Flagstone Ck Wier, Morex lagoon, Carpendale Rd

Michael Atzeni

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 1997 AGM will be held on **13 October** at the **Withcott CWA Hall**, starting at **7:30 pm**.

This year our guest speaker will be another well-known birder and budding author **Pat McConnell** who will speak about his birding expeditions to Lord Howe Is, Western Queensland and North Queensland. Pat will also illustrate his topics with his beautiful slides.

Members please provide nibbles and drinks. Nominations for office bearers should be returned by **29 September**.

**TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS INC**  
**NOMINATION FORM FOR EXECUTIVE POSITIONS 1997-98**  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD MONDAY 13 OCTOBER 1997**

**POSITION:**.....

**NOMINEE:**.....

**NOMINATED BY:**.....

**SECONDED BY:**.....

**ACCEPTANCE: (Signature of Nominee):**.....

**DATE:**.....1997.

**COMING EVENTS**

**September Outing:**

**Location:**

Withcott

**Date:**

28 September

**Leader:**

Pat Cleary

076 303 352

**Time:**

7:00 a.m.

**Info:** Meet in the Withcott Hotel carpark. BYO everything.

**Annual General Meeting**

**Location:**

Withcott CWA Hall

**Date:**

Monday, 13 October

**Time:**

7:00 for 7:30 start

**Guest Speaker:**

Pat McConnell

