



TOOWOOMBA BIRD OBSERVERS inc.

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

P.O. Box 4730, Toowoomba East 4350

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

CLUB OFFICERS:

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

NEWSLETTER No. 266 - May 1998

Editorial

This newsletter has been posted early to give people a belated opportunity to attend the **Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Workshop** this coming weekend (16/17 May) at the DPI Conference Rooms, Tor St, Toowoomba. If you have toyed with the idea of becoming a wildlife carer, and need some expert information or encouragement, then I strongly recommend you attend. Registrations close on Friday. Full details are included in this newsletter.

This month we have a couple of **anecdotes concerning raptors** from Nicci Thompson and Rosalie Rudduck, and Michael Hirst's **Bowenville outing report**, which attracted a large number of attendees. All TBO outings have been well supported lately, indicating a welcome resurgence of club spirit. Thanks to all those who have attended outings lately. And please don't forget if you'd like to lead an outing, it's just a matter of saying so.

Good to see a group of members participated in the recent **Regent Honeyeater and Swift Parrot Surveys**. I understand the co-ordinators were also *very* pleased to have a group surveying in SE Queensland. Whilst none were found, confirming their absence from areas where they have been previously recorded is equally important in piecing together the movements and whereabouts of these two rare species.

I've also been encouraged by the number of members willing to monitor Grey-crowned Babblers. To keep the ball rolling, I intend designing a dedicated recording sheet for you for the next newsletter.

With the Atlas due to begin in August, I hope everyone is itching to get out and about and putting some thought into areas they will monitor. This is an Australia-wide project, so no excuses for not having the opportunity to contribute, even if it's just for the birds in your immediate surrounds. There will be much, much more about the Atlas in the coming months.

Outing Report – Bowenville, 25 April 1998

When 14 vehicles containing 20 members and 3 visitors arrived punctually at the Bowenville turn-off and parked under the pleasant group of gums planted on the roadside reserve, I began to wonder if I could produce one species per person or even per car! However, at the end of a fine, sunny though windy day, about 60 species were seen or heard.

The first stop at the Bowenville Reserve on Oakey Creek, where incidentally, the first Bowenville Township was gazetted by gentleman in Queen Street, oblivious to the fact of it being under 30 feet of water in an average flood! After splitting

into two groups, the highlights included a Spotted Harrier gliding silently over the long grass in the old gravel pits, an extended sighting of a White-faced Heron at close range, allowing us all to appreciate what a beautiful bird it is, the two local friarbirds, a Yellow-throated Miner, new to some, and a good chance to discuss the gape and neck length of a Great Egret. A Restless Flycatcher also put on a good display, seen by most.

After a 'recce' to ensure that the dirt road was passable, we drove past the Wainui Feedlot, with some comments on the delectable odours emanating therefrom. We noted the Straw-necked Ibis foraging on the green grass among the irrigated trees planted as a buffer zone, and on the stockpiled manure for grubs.

Smoko was taken on the roadside at the top of the Coddington Hill, with an extensive view of the plain and the crops towards Dalby. Then we drove on to the property, Carn Brea, owned by John and Jill Armstrong. We walked the creek to the homestead, then cut across the bend in the creek and followed it back to the house.

Though the forecast Nankeen Night Herons did not appear (one was seen on the Bowenville Reserve), the walk along the creek was very pleasant (despite the dieback), the highlight being a Red-capped Robin. Then after lunch on the verandah, we went to a large ring tank on the Aucmah watercourse, owned by the Walton family. With most of the contents having been used for irrigating cotton, the water had dropped to the original ground level, exposing useful mud banks on the unexcavated centre of the tank, where, and in the surrounding water, there were several hundred ducks, notable being a pair of Pink-eared Duck.

After this, the party broke up, the last official recording being a Mistletoebird heard at our meeting place. Our grateful thanks to the Armstrongs and Waltons for allowing us to enjoy the birdlife on their properties.

Michael Hirst

Species List:

Australian Wood Duck, Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal, Pink-eared Duck, Australasian Grebe, Little Black Cormorant, Great Cormorant, Australian Pelican, White-faced Heron, Nankeen Night Heron, Australian White Ibis, Straw-necked Ibis, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Whistling Kite, Spotted Harrier, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Nankeen Kestrel, Dusky Moorhen, Black-winged Stilt, Masked Lapwing, Rock Dove, Crested Pigeon, Galah, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Cockatiel, Pale-headed Rosella, Red-rumped Parrot, Laughing Kookaburra, Sacred Kingfisher, Superb Fairy-wren, Striated Pardalote, Western Gerygone, White-throated Gerygone, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Yellow Thornbill, Striped Honeyeater, Noisy Friarbird, Little Friarbird, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Noisy Miner, White-rumped Miner, Red-capped Robin, Rufous Whistler, Restless Flycatcher, Magpie-lark, Grey Fantail, Willie Wagtail, Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike, Grey Butcherbird, Pied Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Torresian Crow, Double-barred Finch, Welcome Swallow, Tree Martin, Silveryeye, Common Myna.

An Osprey's Prerogative

We all saw it happen. Our immediate reaction was one of disbelief until we confirmed that we had all seen the same thing. It was mid-afternoon on the Monday of the May Day long weekend. I was part of a group of Toowoomba Field Naturalists enjoying ice-creams and birds along the shoreline as we waited for the barge to cross back to the mainland from North Stradbroke Island.

As we watched one of the resident Ospreys flew towards the pier with a smallish fish clamped in its talons. Quite suddenly, it swooped even lower and dropped the fish into the water. That in itself, was surprising as Ospreys usually have a good grip on their prey. Even more surprising was that the Osprey continued its descent, not to recapture its prey, but to rise with a much larger fish in its talons.

The heavier fish caused the Osprey to struggle a little as it worked to regain altitude and it was harassed by a hopeful Whistling Kite, but it successfully negotiated both obstacles and flew to a nearby tower to eat the fish.

Obviously not a case of a fish in the claw is worth two in the sea.

Nicci Thompson

Raptor Frustrations – One more for the Road

One of the ultimate frustrations for a keen bird observer must surely be seeing an interesting bird whilst driving on a highway.

Like my birthday the other day, approximately 5 km from Cooyar on the road to Yarraman: car in front, car behind, oncoming vehicle, double lines, on a curve, going up a mountain and no where to pull off, even if I could safely do so, and spotting this huge bird less than 5 metres from my car, posing on an old fence post!

The tail, the size, the beak, the colour - it had to be a Wedge-tailed Eagle. Apparently, not an uncommon sight in this section of the road, I found out later. Perhaps it was hoping for breakfast off some highway casualty or just waiting for the thermals to go for a late morning soar? [Or perhaps it was seeing how many accidents it could cause? Ed]

Rosalie Rudduck

Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Workshop

An open invitation is extended to anyone who has a genuine interest in the rescue and rehabilitation of native birds. Because of the difficulty in working with injured animals under such conditions, the information will be mainly theoretical and supported by plenty of audio-visual material.

Date: Saturday and Sunday May 16 & 17
10am-4.30pm Sat / 10am- 2pm Sun.

Venue: DPI Building, Tor St, Northern End

Cost: 1 Day: \$25/person
Cost: 2 Days: \$35/person
Includes morning tea, light lunch, afternoon tea

Guest Speakers

Peter Frater:	Raptor Specialist
Bob Doneley:	Toowoomba Vet, special interest in birds
Ian Bryant:	Dept of Environment, Wildlife Section
Len Beckoff, Cecile Lyons & Michelle McAulay:	Bird carers, BIRO, Brisbane

For more information, programme details and registration, please contact:

Lorraine McPhee:	07 4632 5032
Clare Gover:	07 4638 2180
Judy Cummings:	07 4696 6133

Registration is to cover the costs of the workshop and will be accepted up to this Friday. Anyone interested in coming along for an hour or so on either day is welcome as well, but will be expected to pay the registration fee if they elect to remain for most of the day.

Day1 (Saturday): Will be of special interest to people who are considering becoming wildlife carers; covering basic information about bird rescue, care, rehabilitation, and stress associated with being a carer. Peter Frater will give the opening address.

Day 2 (Sunday): Will be directed towards more experienced bird carers with a special emphasis on raptors, release programs, and complicated problems.

Everyone is welcome to attend both days.

COMING EVENTS

May Outing

Location: Peach Trees State Forest Park (near Jimna)
Date: Saturday, 30 May
Leader: Wes & Norma Sturdee 07 4632 6328
Time: 8.30 am

Info: This is a Saturday outing but camping facilities are available if you wish to stay overnight. Contact Wes & Norma for camping information. Travel to Kilcoy and then head to Jimna. From Jimna, take the Murgon road and look for the Peach Trees Rd on the right about 1.5 km past Jimna. Meet at the Peach Trees camping grounds. BYO everything.

World Environment Day

Location: Lake Annand, Toowoomba
Date: Sunday, 31 May (10 am – 3.30 pm)
Club Rep: Olive Booth 07 4633 0553
Theme: Water for Life

Info: Olive will be overseeing our display. Please contact Olive if you'd like to help out for part of the day.

June Outing

Location: Helidon/Grantham
Date: Saturday, 27 June
Contact: Michael Atzeni 07 4639 2761

Info: Meet at the Helidon Picnic Area. Expect a good assortment of waterbirds and bushbirds.

July Outing

Location: Upper Flagstone Ck/Preston
Date: Saturday, 25 July
Leader: Keith Kerr 07 4635 6978

August Outing

Location: Sundown National Park
Date: Saturday, 29 August
Leader: Peter Haselgrove 02 6737 5235

Info: Peter is the Ranger stationed at the park and is very conversant with the wildlife of the region.

Reminder: *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
 Toowoomba Bird Observers Inc
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**SURFACE
 MAIL**



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