

"To encourage the observation and study
of the birds of the Toowoomba area."

President: Bill Jolly,

"Ringmere", Withcott, 4344.

Ph: 30.3206

Secretary/Treasurer: Alison McCallum,

c/- Post Office, Darling Heights,
Toowoomba, 4350.

Editor/Librarian: Sue Elmes,

28A, Whittle St., Gatton. 4343.

Ph: 075.622914



NEWS-SHEET No. 29 - MAY, 1978.

Our second club campout at Mudjimba Beach was very successful with 15 members and their families and friends enjoying good birdwatching and plenty of fresh air and sunshine. It is hoped to make campouts a regular part of our club's activities with three to four camps a year. Members who know of interesting areas which would be suitable for camps are asked to let the club officers know so future plans can be made.

Following our article last month on the increased activities of birds of prey in this area, it would be appreciated if members could continue to keep their own records of bird of prey sightings up to date. Please include these, with places, dates and numbers of birds on your gold checklists so that a comprehensive record can be compiled.

When filling out gold checklists, I would ask members to keep a record of **NESTING ACTIVITY** and record it on their lists with the symbol "N". For these purposes, nesting activity can be taken as soft and downy young, birds regularly carrying food to nesting hollows, and nests which contain eggs or young. Nesting activity is an important part of the R.A.O.U. ATLAS scheme, the information for which is taken from members gold lists. Any information about nesting can be included in Members' Bird Notes or on a separate sheet.

Our next outing is to be to the Kipper Creek area on the 21st May, and this will be the first time anyone has been into this area to record bird species. The area has been newly opened up by the Education Department and it should be an exciting trip. Before travelling to Kipper Creek, a new member, David Hope, will show members an injured Black Falcon and Brown Goshawk which are in his keeping. This will give members an opportunity to view these beautiful birds of prey at extremely close quarters.

It has been suggested that a trip be made to the Queensland Museum, possibly on June 24th, to view their collection. Don Vernon would be able to show members the skin collection and answer any questions. Following the museum, a visit to the new Botanic Gardens, with its comprehensive bird and plant library could be made. Would members please indicate their interest in this trip when they return their May gold checklists. We are interested in providing members with the sort of outings that YOU want, so please let us know your preferences.

Sue Elmes,
Editor.

NEW TOOWOOMBA BIRDS.

195. Plum-headed Finch (*Aidemosyne modesta*). 15.4.78. "Ringmere", Withcott.
Eileen & Bill Jolly.

Just two birds noticed at first actively feeding on grasses around the dam, then concentrating on one tussock of water grass at the water's edge where nest-building was apparently taking place.

Male bird generally olive-brown above with light barring on white underparts. Deep velvety plum crown and chin. Tail feathers black and wing coverts and secondaries tipped and marked white. Female similar but lacking dark chin patch. To date we have a large, vociferous flock descending on the reeds each evening to roost.

(Members may be interested to hear that Ron & Viv Wilson noted Plum-headed Finches prior to 1972 adjacent to Railway Quarry, where they moved in the lantana and long grass).

MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES.

- Australian Cassowary. 21.2.78. Graham Gorge. RGH.
- 23.2.78. " " RGH.
- Australian Pelican. 25.4.78. 4 at Withcott. MJ. SP.
- Pied Heron. 5.3.78. Centenary Lakes, Cairns. RGH.
- Black Bittern. 5.3.78. Cairns. RGH.
- Black Kite. 2.4.78. Oakey Dump. JMC.
- 16.4.78. (2) Withcott. WJ. EJ.
- 16.4.78. (3) Wilsonton. REH.
- 18.4.78. Spring St. EJ.
- 21.4.78. (1) Gatton. SE.
- 23.4.78. (6) Plainland, Coominya Rd. SE. PE.
- 24.4.78. (4) Gatton. SE. PE.
- 24.4.78. (3) D.D.I.A.E. SE.
- 25.4.78. (4) Grantham. MJ. SP.
- 25.4.78. (25) Withcott. EJ. WJ.
- 26.4.78. (1) Cathro Park (East). REH.
- 26.4.78. (1) D.D.I.A.E. SE.
- 27.4.78. (1) Gatton. SE. PE.
- 28.4.78. (37) Range Highway. WJ.
- 28.4.78. (1) Gatton. PE.
- 29.4.78. (6) Gatton. Esk Rd. Club outing.
- (10plus) Kilcoy. " "
- 30.4.78. (12) Northern Dump. DN.
- 1.5.78. Toowoomba Abattoir. RW.
- 1.5.78. (11) 2 miles East Kilcoy. SE. PE.
- 2.5.78. (2) Gatton. SE. PE.
- Whistling Kite. 2.4.78. (2) Withcott. WJ. EJ. SE. PE.
- 6.4.78. Atkinsons Dam. DN.
- 16.4.78. Withcott. WJ. EJ.
- 23.4.78. (3) Plainland-Coominya Rd. SE. PE.
- 28.4.78. (1) Gatton. SE. PE.
- 1.5.78. (1) Kilcoy. SE. PE.
- Collared Sparrowhawk. 3.4.78. Cnr. Bridge/Boundary St. JMC.
- 4.4.78. Charlton. JMC.
- Wedge-tailed Eagle. 25.4.78. "Ringmere", Withcott. WJ. EJ.
- Little Eagle. 19.4.78. Ruthven St. EJ.
- Spotted Harrier. 29.4.78. Gatton-Esk Rd. Club outing.
- 1.5.78. " " SE. PE.
- 3.5.78. Gatton. SE. PE.
- Little Falcon. 20.4.78. Schloss St. EJ.
- 27.4.78. Kingsthorpe. MW.
- Eastern Rosella. 30.4.78. Boundary Rd. DN.
- Ground Cuckoo-shrike. (5) "Ringmere", Withcott. EJ. (17.4.78).
- White-cheeked Honeyeater. 1.5.78. (5) Currumundi Lakes, Caloundra. SE. PE.
- Eastern Spinebill. 30.4.78. Esther St. DN.

MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES (cont/d.)

JMC: John Coman. PE: Phillip Elmes. SE: Sue Elmes. RGH: Rod Hobson.
REH: Ron Hopkinson. MJ: Marilyn Jacobs. EJ: Eileen Jolly.
WJ: Bill Jolly. DN: David Newlands. SP: Sandra Pottinger.
RW: Ruth Walter. MW: Max Wood.

I was very interested to read Bill's article on the kites in the last newsletter. We too had an influx of Black Kites (*Milvus migrans*) around Easter. We had been getting the odd one beforehand and on the way out to the Q.O.S. Easter Camp beyond Millmerran we counted over 200 in the one area just east of Millmerran. One lone kite was seen during Atlassing on Easter Saturday and more odd ones on the way home. Other members at the camp saw them at the Toowoomba abattoirs also. On arrival home to Pittsworth we were astounded to see 100 plus around the local slaughter yards which we can see from our kitchen windows. In the 7 years we have lived here on the downs we have only had two previous sightings east of Roma - they were both in the Southbrook area.

John & Ruth Walter.

REGULAR BIRD SIGHTINGS IN TOWNSVILLE.

As time progresses I have come to realise that, my work apart, the only worthy feature of Townsville's existence is in the abundance of its bird life. This factor is contributed to by the permanent presence of salt pans, rice fields, tidal and freshwater swamps, creeks and rivers and low water-lying areas generally, all abounding in Townsville's vicinity. (Actually Townsville is built on these.)

Although I have been rewarded on many occasions by close views of Brolga (*Grus rubicunda*), Jabiru (*Xenorhynchus asiaticus*), Southern Stone-curlew (*Burhinus magnirostris*) and many of the wading birds, it is of the more common bird populations that I wish to write of here.

I was very pleased and interested to read of the influx during March of the birds of prey in our Toowoomba area. I was particularly interested in the appearance of the Black Kite (*Milvus migrans*) as he is the greatest frequenter of the northern skies of Townsville and can be observed all day, every day, scouting in parties or individually over playgrounds and city housing. I have observed Black Kite descend within a metre or two of children in the hope of scraps being left around at lunch-time.

On Saturday 1st April I was driving into Townsville on the Ayr Road when my attention was caught by a slowly rotating dark mass thermalling high into the sky. At least two hundred Black Kites dominated sky and land and that in between. A sighting such as this, I was soon to realise, was not to be an isolated phenomenon as during that following week other flocks of kites appeared in similar size and formation.

Each afternoon invariably finds me sitting on the banks of the Ross River with binoculars in hand from where can be observed flocks of Caspian Terns (*Hydroprogne caspia*), Crested Terns (*Sterna bergii*) and Silver Gulls (*Larus novaehollandiae*) of which in one half-hour alone approximately 500 passed by me. I became curious as to where these birds were heading as they seemed to follow the course of the river and on following the river myself late one afternoon, I came upon hundreds of sea-birds feeding on the shallows' plentiful fish supply afforded by the overflow waters of the Ross River Dam.

Back to my vantage point on the river and large flocks numbering, not infrequently, to the hundred, can be observed flying over in formations to the west. Such flocks appear regularly during the hours of dusk each day; the three ibis appear with smaller groups of Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*), Royal and Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Black Duck, White-eyed Duck, Pied Cormorant, Plumed and Large Egrets, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos and Red-tailed Black Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus magnificus*)

REGULAR BIRD SIGHTINGS IN TOWNSVILLE (cont/d.)

who reveal their presence long before they are seen. Although most of these birds are seen regularly in our area, I have yet to experience little surprise each time I am presented with the huge numbers of these populations.

My attention was drawn one morning to the sound of hard pecking on tin coming from outside my back door and moved stealthily to observe from behind my refrigerator door, a White Ibis (*Threskiornis molucca*) pecking at food in my cat's enamel food dish and in view behind it, staring in disbelief was my cat. It has become quite a regular occurrence to observe the three ibis feeding equably together among the paw-paw trees in my back yard, while early morning finds Straw-necked Ibis (*Threskiornis spinicollis*) sitting sentinel on a neighbouring roof-top.

For the bird observer, Townsville does offer prolific bird life and whenever you look up to see what shadow that was that just passed overhead a Black Kite will invariably be twisting its tail at you and probably your eye will be caught by another, and then another bird passing over - it's just that sort of place!

Chris Bianchi.

SOME NOTES TAKEN FROM THE LATEST R.A.O.U.
ATLAS PRINT-OUT (HISTORICAL).

Painted Button-quail - 1918.
Bustard - (Tumaville) - 1917.
Square-tailed Kite - 1919.
Musk Lorikeet - 1919.
Budgerygah - (Oakey) - 1932.
Hooded Robin - 1919.
White-fronted Chat - (Oakey) - 1932.
Southern Whiteface - (Oakey) - 1932.
Painted Honeyeater - (Kaimkillenbun) - 1931.
House Sparrow - (Toowoomba) - 1903.
Common Myna - (Oakey) - 1932.
Common Starling - (Oakey) - 1932.

The above sightings are all within the grid block 27° 30'S 151° 30'E which includes the T.B.C. uprange grid. The town in brackets refers to the 10' grid within the one degree block. I find the sparrow sighting the most interesting. Of course this is only the first historical print-out and is only as good as what has gone into it. If anyone has access to any old lists please send them in or send them to me and I will see they are included in future print-outs.

The count for the grid is 219 which compares very favourably with other areas where there are more observers e.g. Melbourne 225, or areas where there are more birds e.g. Cairns 253.

John C. Walter.

A REGULAR LOOK AT REDWOOD.

It has been suggested before now in this news-sheet that the club ought to be looking more closely, more often, at Redwood Park. Following appeals in the Editorial for members to join in a Redwood watch, possibly on a roster basis, a number of members indicated their interest and I am now proposing a simple and informal system which should remedy the extent of our neglect of Redwood Park.

For any readers who are not familiar with this substantial pocket of vine-scrub on the edge of the Range to the North of the Warrego Highway, consider this short list of some of the species that have been recorded there, birds such as Wonga Pigeon, Emerald Dove, Powerful Owl, Noisy Pitta, Cicadabird and Crested Shrike-tit.

A REGULAR LOOK AT REDWOOD (Cont/d.)

You cannot expect to encounter these particular birds on every visit, but go into Redwood regularly and sooner or later a Redwood special will appear.

Meanwhile we need to look at Redwood Park at least once a month in order to confirm the presence of the more usual, but still interesting, forest birds for our monthly lists. These are birds such as Cuckoos, Trillers, Flycatchers, Warblers, Honeyeaters and Bowerbirds.

The system, as I have said, is simple. Those who are interested, and free of other commitments, will meet at the entrance to Redwood Park at 7 a.m. on the first Sunday of each month. This will not be a club outing and the number of participants will doubtless vary from maybe 1 or 2 up to 6 or 7, but if you would like to take a look at Redwood for a couple of hours on the first Sunday of any month, just turn up and there will almost certainly be someone else there.

The point at which people could most easily meet would be the entrance to the park about halfway down the Range Highway on the left-hand side, immediately alongside the sign which points across to Yukana Vale Camp, and exactly on the signposted boundary between Toowoomba City and Gatton Shire.

Redwood Park is something of an oasis in many respects. It is important that we look at it regularly and in so doing members cannot help but encounter some exciting birds from time to time, while also increasing their familiarity with the more common species.

Our first informal sortie will take place on Sunday, 4th June at 7.00 a.m. Please come along if you can.

Bill Jolly.

MUDJIMBA BEACH CAMPOUT 29.4.78.-1.5.78.

The weekend campout began well with sightings of Black and Whistling Kites as we moved out of Gatton and onto the road to Esk, and it continued to provide not only good birdwatching but a weekend of fun and relaxation in the sun. The Gatton-Esk Road also afforded some club members with an excellent view of a Spotted Harrier (*Circus assimilis*), flying low over an open field.

A total of 78 species for the weekend was recorded from a variety of habitats. Our campsite, situated beside swampy coastal heathland gave us some chances to look at Spangled Drongos, Little Wattlebirds, White-throated Honeyeaters and Scarlet Honeyeaters to name a few. Several trips to the estuary of the Maroochy River took place at different times of the day, and many species of tern and some waders were recorded. The most spectacular display of the weekend was provided by an Osprey and a White-breasted Sea-eagle, engaged in aerial combat over a fish, not far from where members stood.

The Corbins led us to the Maroochy Shire Sewage Works where they have had some birdwatching success in the past. Members visited the site on two occasions and recorded several species of ducks as well as Black-fronted Dotterels, Chestnut-breasted Mannikins and Spotted Turtledoves.

As a means of increasing our knowledge of birds common to habitats not found in our local study area, this campout was extremely valuable. For some members this was the first time they had viewed a Mangrove Warbler, Mangrove Honeyeater or Mangrove Heron. White-winged Black Terns were also spectacular in full breeding plumage. It also gave members the chance to combine birdwatching with other fun activities like swimming, walking and singing around the campfire.

Sue Elmes.

Gull-billed Terns and an Osprey were both seen by members at our Mudjimba campout.



Photo: M.D. England.



Photo: Pamela Harrison.

Species List - Mudjimba Beach - 29.4.78-1.5.78.

Little Grebe
 Australian Pelican
 Darter
 Pied Cormorant
 Little Pied Cormorant
 Little Black Cormorant
 White-necked Heron
 White-faced Heron
 Large Egret
 Mangrove Heron
 White Ibis
 Royal Spoonbill
 Yellow-billed Spoonbill
 Black Duck
 Grey Teal
 White-eyed Duck
 Osprey
 Black-shouldered Kite
 Crested Hawk
 Brahminy Kite
 Whistling Kite
 Brown Goshawk
 White-breasted Sea-eagle
 Nankeen Kestrel
 Swamphe
 Pied Oystercatcher
 Masked Plover
 Red-capped Dotterel
 Black-fronted Dotterel
 Pied Stilt
 Eastern Curlew
 Tattler Species
 Bar-tailed Godwit
 Silver Gull
 White-winged Black Tern
 Gull-billed Tern
 Common Tern
 Little Tern
 Crested Tern

Spotted Dove
 Peaceful Dove
 Bar-shouldered Dove
 Rainbow Lorikeet
 Scaly-breasted Lorikeet
 Azure Kingfisher
 Kookaburra
 Forest Kingfisher
 Sacred Kingfisher
 Rainbow Bee-eater
 Dollar Bird
 Welcome Swallow
 Tree Martin
 Richard's Pipit
 Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
 Grey Fantail
 Willie Wagtail
 Golden-headed Cisticola
 Red-backed Wren
 Mangrove Warbler
 Little Wattlebird
 Noisy Friarbird
 Blue-faced Honeyeater
 Lewin's Honeyeater
 Mangrove Honeyeater
 White-throated Honeyeater
 Brown Honeyeater
 Scarlet Honeyeater
 Mistletoebird
 House Sparrow
 Double-barred Finch
 Chestnut-breasted Mannikin
 Common Starling
 Green Pigbird
 Spangled Drongo
 Australian Magpie-lark
 Pied Butcher-bird
 Australian Magpie
 Torresian Crow.

FIELD TRIP FOR MAY.

Date: Sunday, 21st May.

Locality: Kipper Creek, near Ravensbourne.

Leader: Trevor Instrell.

Meeting arrangements: Pigott's Car Park, 8.30 a.m. Sunday, 21st. May.

Kipper Creek lies in an area of rain-forest which is not open to the public and which has not yet been well explored by birdwatchers or ornithologists. A walking track has been cut through the rain-forest and a short walk of about two miles is envisaged. After our look at the forest area we shall be driving past the site of the new Cressbrook Dam to a location close to Perseverance Dam where a pair of Peregrine Falcons is currently in residence.

N.B.

Before we set off for Kipper Creek we shall be visiting the home of David Hope where he will be showing us an injured Black Falcon for which he is caring, along with a young Australian Goshawk.

NEW MEMBERS.

The Club is pleased to welcome the following new members:

David Hope, 12 Allenby St., Toowoomba.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

Urimburra, Vol.12 No. 4, April, 1978.

Q.O.S. Newsletter, Vol.9 No. 4, April, 1978.

Darling Downs Naturalist, May, 1978.