

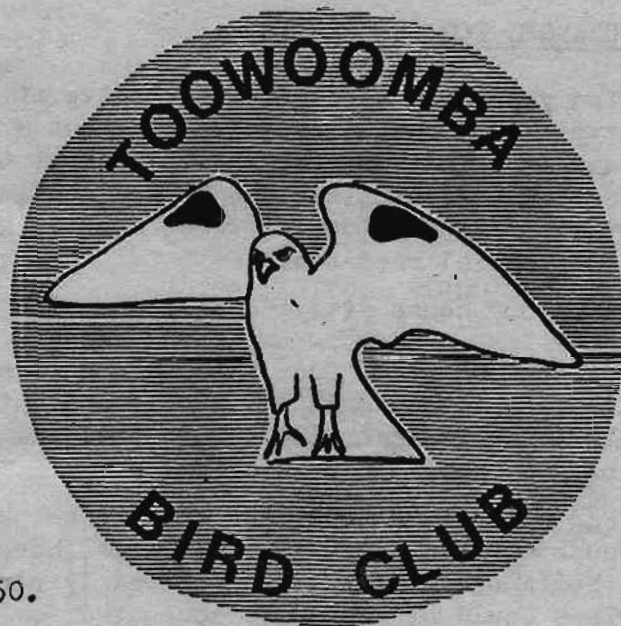
to encourage the observation and study
of the birds of the Toowoomba area."

President: Bill Jolly,
"Ringmere", Withcott, 4344.
Ph: 30.3206

Secretary/Treasurer: Mike Russell,
"Baringa", Wyreema Rd., 4352.
Ph: 30.1429

Editor/Records Officer: Ron Hopkinson,
50, Bass St., Toowoomba, 4350.
Ph: 35.4952

Please address all correspondence to:
The Secretary, Toowoomba Bird Club,
Post Office, Darling Heights, Toowoomba, 4350.



NEWS-SHEET No. 36 - DECEMBER, 1978.

With regret we must advise that Phillip Elmes has been transferred to Brisbane. This of course means that we have lost the services of Sue Elmes as Editor/Records Officer. Phillip and Sue have been very active members of the Club and will be missed, though fortunately geography will still permit some contact. The Executive and members take this opportunity to thank Sue for her efforts and wish her and Phillip "good birding".

As laid down in our constitution, the vacancy has been filled by an Executive appointment. My thanks to them for the invitation which I am happy to accept.

Another invitation given and accepted was to member Graham Corbin to assist with the organisation of the Club's growing library of exchange publications. Members desirous of borrowing copies should contact Graham at the monthly Field Day or at 10, Ocean Street, Toowoomba.

The Club now has the beginnings of a collection of skins. John Coman has agreed to prepare them so if you come across a specimen, collect it, freeze it and pass it to any Executive member. In this way we could build up an interesting and useful collection which will be of value to all members.

There are in the Club several members who for a variety of reasons (geography for one) do not submit a monthly checklist. But as this list also provides a section for Members' Bird Notes, we are deprived of knowing their sightings. To encourage them to share their birds with other members we are preparing a separate Members' Bird Notes pro forma, which will accompany the News-sheet to those members. In this way we hope to make simpler the sharing of bird sightings. The sightings need not be of rare or spectacular species but simply a bird which you enjoyed seeing. To maintain topicality it is important to transmit your lists as soon as possible after the end of the month.

Ron Hopkinson,
Editor.

NEW TOOWOOMBA BIRDS.

198. Hoary-headed Grebe (*Podiceps poliocephalus*). 8.12.78. "Ringmere", Withcott.
Bill Jolly, Eileen Jolly.

A summer-plumaged bird, distinctively different from our regular Little Grebes, with dark crown, seemingly longer, pale neck. Face had noticeable white streaks. He stayed on the dam for about 48 hours which gave us the opportunity to observe him really well.

CHANGES FOR THE BETTER.

Two years ago when we came to live at "Ringmere", in Withcott, the dam here was typical of most frequented by stock - devoid of vegetation and heavily down-trodden margins. In that comparatively short time however, being left very much to its own devices, with cattle and horses gone, it has replenished itself with water-lilies, various kinds of water-weed, aquatic grasses and most significant of all - a substantial reed-bed.

With our house situated only some 18m from the dam we find it serves equally well as a large and permanent hide and the activities on and around the dam are constantly before our eyes. Over this period it's been particularly interesting to note the different trends in the number and nature of the birdlife and the different species it attracts according to its fullness or otherwise and most importantly the effects of the increased vegetation.

For example we no longer seem to get as many of the probing and fishing-type birds such as ibis, egrets, spoonbills, herons and cormorants of which there was no shortage during 1977 and the early part of 1978. Snipe also comes under this category. This could of course be accounted for by seasonal dispersion of these birds but I rather feel its more a case of the conditions here not being quite to their liking now. About a year ago we found it necessary to provide an overflow for the dam which has had the effect of stabilising the volume of water, previously allowed to seep through the dam wall. Thus the muddy margins are now covered with water or growth. However, we have occasional visits from various interesting ducks such as Hardhead (White-eyed Duck), Grey Teal and Plumed Whistling Duck. The Australasian Grebe (Little Grebe) pops up regularly and at the time of writing we have a most exciting visitor - a Hoary-headed Grebe, which is also a new bird on the Club's Toowoomba list.

All the time that we've lived here we've had certain ambitions regarding the kinds of birds we hoped might one day drop in. Some of these ambitions we've realised and some like the Plum-headed Finches were a delightful and unexpected bonus, especially when they appeared to take up residence and huge flocks roosted regularly in our reeds from last April for about six months. The arrival of this species accentuated for us the changing habitat and marked the beginning of a series of new visitors to what is rapidly becoming a haven for a wider variety of birds.

Then in October last a spectacular Purple Swamphen arrived and stayed for about a month in which time he systematically uprooted grasses and reeds bordering the dam and became sufficiently bold at times as to venture close to the house enjoying the seeds on our very long, unmown grass. He was joined after a week or so by a Dusky Moorhen and these two very similar rails appeared to be rather companionable. Shortly after this was when our first Plumed Whistling Duck arrived and the very next day a strong, melodious song attracted us to the reeds where we observed a long hoped for and very welcome Clamorous Reed-Warbler!

Our species list for this comparatively small property now stands at 119 and is growing steadily, and the way things are going one could reasonably expect to get such birds as Black-winged Stilts, Eurasian Coot, at least one of the dotterels, certain waders and maybe one day a Black Swan. Something else which has helped to boost this list is the maturing of the many native trees and shrubs which have managed to survive in this poor soil of ours and we are at long last beginning to attract the small passerines into the garden especially honeyeaters which were sadly lacking when we first arrived.

Taken as a whole we feel that in just two short years from what was a bare, tree-less paddock and a muddy waterhole this little patch in Withcott has, more or less of its own volition, become an ecological success story.

Eileen Jolly.

FIELD DAYS FOR 1979.

For your diary, here is a list of provisional dates for next year. If you have a good birding area in mind and would like to share it with other members please let the Executive know. If you would be willing to lead a Field Day there, so much the better.

(cont/d.)

FIELD DAYS FOR 1979 (cont/d.)

Draw a heavy ring around the October date in your diary. October, 21st. 1979 is BIRD COUNT DAY.

21.1.79.	27.5.79.	23. 9.79.
18.2.79.	24.6.79.	21.10.79. BIRD COUNT DAY.
18.5.79.	22.7.79.	18.11.79.
22.4.79.	26.8.79.	16.12.79.

Ron Hopkinson.

IMPRINTING.

One of the men who works with me breeds King Quail and he has related some interesting observations to me. Females do the incubating but just before the young hatch, the male sits on the nest with the female. Both male and female find food for the young who follow both birds around. This continual food finding takes its toll on the adults who lose a lot of weight.

My explanation of this is that in response to some stimulus, possibly the cheeping of the chicks prior to hatching, the male sits on the eggs. On hatching the chicks then imprint on both male and female and so follow either. Since food finding for the young is such a strain on the adults, this behaviour has an obvious adaptive value. Both birds would then be able to help in raising the brood and ensure a higher survival rate of the chicks.

Has anyone any other suggestions or observations which would throw further light on this?

John Coman.

MEMBERSHIP LIST.

It is satisfying to see Club membership on the increase. Amongst other things this reflects the growing interest in birds in particular and Nature in general. For the records here is a current list of members:

Chris Bianchi	Ron and Viv Wilson	Alwyn Powell
D. & K. Blackburn	Rheta Wright	John and Anne Shore.
L.A. Boyce	Alison McCallum	
Susan Bright	Rob Robertson	
John Coman	Peter Bostock	
Maurie and Mary Coman	Peter Malar	
Graham Corbin	Dan Webster	
Jim and Jane Corbin	Max and Sylvia Wood	
Mick and Coranne Dolley	Paul and Betty Gredig	
John Duff	Ron and Lorna Skilton	
Phillip and Sue Elmes	David Hope	
Paul and Hazel Green	Mike and Elizabeth Russell	
Rod Hobson	Jim Syme	
Ron Hopkinson	Mark Stewart	
Marilyn Jacobs	Louise Rumsey	
Bill and Eileen Jolly	Margaret and Brough Warren	
Barry Kenway	Brian and Kath Fowler	
Bill McKenzie	Keith and Alison Herbertson	
David Newlands	Neil and Helen McKilligan	
Sandra Pottinger	Betty Carlisle	
Robert Shaw	Gordon King	
Vera Simon	Pat Patten	
John and Ruth Walter	Margo Bartlett	
Bob Weis	Graham Weldon	

Editor.

BIRD BOOK.

A text for use in schools is in the process of publication. Certain photographs are required for inclusion. Bill Jolly has a list of what is required so if you have photographs of birds or bird behaviour contact Bill. Perhaps your picture could be suitable for inclusion.

Editor.

FIELD DAY REPORT - 19.11.78. - Oakey.

The group which assembled at the Bernborough statue, Oakey, even though the skies were overcast, were rewarded with some good sightings and some new birds for some members.

A walk along Oakey Creek with its fringe of River Red Gums and bottlebrushes turned up several Little Friarbirds and a pair of Striped Honeyeaters. While watching the birds so that the calls of the two could be sorted out, Vera Simon located the Striped Honeyeater's nest - almost perfectly camouflaged in a pendulous branchlet of a wild apple tree.

A Willie Wagtail was seen feeding its young in a bottlebrush tree which overhung the creek while a nesting Crow eyed the proceedings from its nest high in a River Red Gum.

At Schultz's lagoon large numbers of water birds were seen at fairly close range including Grey Teal, Black Duck, Black-winged Stilts and several Pink-eared Duck which was a new bird for some members. A small sandpiper was observed with interest and after discussion was identified as a Marsh Sandpiper. Main identifying features were the long straight bill, white rump and lower back and no wing stripe. These features were clearly observed by all members as the sandpipers were chased from one section of bank to another by protective Black-winged Stilt mothers. Lunch was taken at Brookvale Park.

The record for lateness in turning up for excursions (formerly held by a certain member of the Executive) has now been surpassed by the Club member who arrived at 9 a.m. sharp --- one week late.

John Coman.

Species list - Oakey, Schultz's Lagoon, Brookvale Park - 19.11.78.

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Hoary-headed Grebe | Welcome Swallow |
| Australasian Grebe | Black-f. Cuckoo-shrike |
| Little Blk. Cormorant | Willie Wagtail |
| White-faced Heron | Golden-headed Cisticola |
| Cattle Egret | White-throated Gerygone |
| Sacred Ibis | Yellow-rumped Thornbill |
| Straw-necked Ibis | Striped Honeyeater |
| Plumed Whistling Duck | Little Friarbird |
| Pacific Black Duck | Noisy Miner |
| Grey Teal | Brown Honeyeater |
| Pink-eared Duck | Mistletoebird |
| Maned Duck | Striated Pardalote |
| Australian Kestrel | House Sparrow |
| Dusky Moorhen | Zebra Finch |
| Eurasian Coot | Double-barred Finch |
| Masked Lapwing | Common Starling |
| Black-winged Stilt | Common Wynah |
| Marsh Sandpiper | Olive-backed Oriole |
| Feral Pigeon | Australian Magpie-lark |
| Crested Pigeon | Black-faced Woodswallow |
| Galah | Pied Butcherbird |
| Scaly-br. Lorikeet | Australian Magpie |
| Pale-headed Rosella | Torresian Crow. |
| Red-rumped Parrot | |

MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES.

Black-necked Stork. 17.8.78. Mudgereebah. JMC.
4.11.78. Lake Clarendon. MGW.
Plumed Whistling-Duck. 11.11.78. "Ringmere", Withcott. EJ. WJ.
Brahminy Kite. 16.8.78. Currumbin. JMC.
Spotted Harrier. 12.11.78. Eagle Farm. REH.
Common Koel. 10.11.78. "Ravenswood", Southbrook. BF. KF.
18.11.78. Townson. MR. ER.
Channel-billed Cuckoo. 18.11.78. Townson. ER. MR.
Pheasant Coucal. 26.11.78. Lion's Park. VS.
Powerful Owl. 5.11.78. Redwood Park. WJ. MR. BW. MW.
Singing Bushlark. 3.11.78. "Shorelands", Withcott. AHS.
Cicadabird. 9.11.78. Eymard St. MGW.
Clamorous Reed-Warbler. 12.11.78. "Ringmere", Withcott. EJ. WJ.
Spangled Drongo. 23.11.78. "Ravenswood", Southbrook. BF. KF.

JMC: John Coman. BF: Brian Fowler. KF: Kath Fowler. REH: Ron Hopkinson.
EJ: Eileen Jolly. WJ: Bill Jolly. ER: Elizabeth Russell. MR: Mike Russell.
AHS: Anne Shore. VS: Vera Simon. BW: Brough Warren. MW: Margaret Warren.

FIELD DAY FOR DECEMBER.

Date: Sunday, 17th December, 1978. Place: Redwood Park.
Leader: Bill Jolly. Assembly Point: Pigott's Car Park. Time: 8.30 a.m.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

Birds, Vol. 7, No. 3.
Urimbirra, Vol. 12, No. 10.
The Bird Observer, November, 1978.
Ecos, August, 1978. November, 1978.
Darling Downs Naturalist, Vol. 1, No. 3, December, 1978.
Q.O.S. Newsletter, Vol. 9, No. 11, November, 1978.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1979.

Any members who have not yet remitted their subscription for 1979 are requested to complete the slip below and forward it with their subscription to the Secretary/Treasurer at the earliest opportunity.

To: The Secretary,
Toowoomba Bird Club,
P.O. Darling Heights,
TOOWOOMBA, 4350.

I am enclosing herewith the sum of \$4 (\$3 for students) being my membership subscription to the Toowoomba Bird Club for the calendar year 1979.

Signed _____