

Toowoomba

Bird
Club

NEWS-SHEET No. 4 - JANUARY, 1976.

Firstly, thanks are due to Betty Temple Watts and Colin Kent respectively for the Black-shouldered kite and the accompanying lettering above. Members will surely agree that they have together produced a fine letterheading of which the club may be proud.

Several new birds have shown themselves in the Withcott area since Alan & Sylvia Graham moved down the range, and a few also from Flagstone Creek Road where Rod & Kerrie Hobson have been doing some watching recently. As a result of activity in these vicinities our Toowoomba list now stands at 146 species. These are both areas where we are arranging future club outings.

Alan & Sylvia are at present in North Queensland and reports have been reaching us of sunbirds and cassowaries. Perhaps we can look forward to an interesting item from them for our next news-sheet.

Thankyou to members for consideration of the crow/raven question. Paul Green has kindly picked up a few feathers which have been passed on to Rod Hobson. Others have their eyes on a possible stronghold for local ravens and are hoping to come up with a tape-recording for our mutual consideration. The matter is also being taken up with the Brisbane Museum and we hope to be able to report on their understanding of local distribution of these birds.

Incidentally the new R.A.O.U. Checklists have now been published and we find that the bird we have been referring to as Australian crow is now to be considered the Torresian crow. These new publications must be regarded as superceding the C.S.I.R.O. Index which the club had hitherto taken as the model for nomenclature both scientific and vernacular, but at least we may now be fairly certain that we have a work of reference upon which we may depend for at least the next twenty years (hopefully).

* If members would care to bring their field guides to the February 9th club meeting we shall be able to jointly notate the numerous changes made, including the lumping together of several species which while showing geographical separation and now considered not to have separate standing (e.g. the sittellas).

Our secretary has written to the R.A.O.U. offering them our records and our services in connection with their proposed atlas of Australian birds. More details at the Feb. meeting.

Acting Editor.

(Our Editor has been temporarily indisposed but expects to be with us again by next month).

NEW TOOWOOMBA BIRDS.

- 139 Brush turkey (*Alectura lathami*). 7.12.75. Nr. Spring Bluff. Chris Bianchi & Bill Jolly. One good looking almost black bird with bright red and yellow neck, strolling around close to the Murphys Creek Road grunting gently to himself.
- 140 White-throated nightjar. (*Eurostopodus mystacalis*). 13.12.75. Flagstone Creek. Rod & Kerrie Hobson. Hawking at dusk this falcon-like nightjar showed only small spots on the primaries, separating it from the spotted and white-tailed nightjars.

NEW TOOWOOMBA BIRDS (cont/d).

- 141 Azuro kingfisher (*Alyona azurea*). 13.12.75. Flagstone Creek. Rod & Kerrie Hobson. Unmistakeable small kingfisher identified by his deep blue upperparts and his rich rufous underparts.
- 142 Brush cuckoo (*Cacomantis variolosus*). 26.12.75. Withcott. Alan & Sylvia Graham. Small brownish cuckoo, unbarred and uniform below, no yellow around the eye.
- 143 Rufous songlark (*Cincloramphus mathewsi*). 1.1.76. Withcott. Eileen & Bill Jolly. Paler than the brown songlark, with a distinctive rufous rump and a less harsh more liquid song.
- 144 Crested hawk (*Aviceda subcristata*). 4.1.76. Flagstone Creek. Rod & Kerrie Hobson. Mature bird showing crest and conspicuous barring beneath, being harassed by noisy miners.
- 145 Restless flycatcher (*Myiagra inquieta*). 10.1.76. Withcott. Rod Hobson & Bill Jolly. All white underparts, no white eyestripe, glossy black head. Distinctive harsh grinding call.
- 146 Striped honeyeater (*Plectorhyncha lanceolata*). 14.1.76. Withcott. Eileen & Bill Jolly. Showing boldly streaked black and white head.

MEMBERS! BIRD NOTES.

- Mallard. 5.12.75. Flagstone Creek. Rod & Kerrie Hobson. A fine drake keeping company with several black duck.
- White-winged triller. 5.12.75. Withcott. Eileen & Bill Jolly. Several recent local birds.
- Pallid cuckoo. 7.12.75. Murphy's Creek. Chris Bianchi & Bill Jolly.
- Cattle egret. 7.12.75. Lake Clarendon. Numerous members saw numerous cattle egrets in breeding plumage.
- White-headed pigeon. 10.12.75. East Street, T'mba. Alan Graham.
- Little Wattlebird. 13.12.75. Flagstone Creek. Rod Hobson.
- Australian wratincole. 20.12.75. Jimbour. Rod & Kerrie Hobson, Eileen & Bill Jolly. (Refer to item below by Rod Hobson).
- Tawny grassbird. 28.12.75. Flagstone Creek. Rod & Kerrie Hobson. (Only just outside our 10km area).
- Horsfield Bronze cuckoo. 31.12.75. Withcott. Bill Jolly.
- Little falcon. End December 1975. Pittsworth. John & Ruth Walter. (Sitting on the back fence and then battling with a pair of pied butcherbirds).
- Black bittern. 4.1.76. Flagstone Creek. Rod & Kerrie Hobson.
- Paradise riflebird. 4.1.76. Ravensbourne. Marilyn Jacobs and Dianne Hayden.
- Noisy pitta. 4.1.76. Ravensbourne. Marilyn Jacobs.
- Superb blue wren. 11.1.76. Oakey. Steve Temple Watts. At least four wrens in an area on Steve's property where they had not been seen before and where there is only low grass, no other cover whatsoever.
- Sacred kingfisher. 16.1.76. Cecil Street, T'mba. Kath & David Blackburn. Very much an Inner-City record for this bird.
- Little thornbill. 16.1.76. Oakey. Steve Temple Watts. Again a first for Steve's property giving cause for optimism as to what might eventually turn up.
- White pygmy goose. 18.1.76. Dyers Lagoon. Rod & Kerrie Hobson. A female bird with six accompanying ducklings. (Does this evidence of breeding by an uncommon bird strengthen the case for protection of this area from intrusion by boats and water-skiers? Rod Hobson).
- Squatter pigeon. 19.1.76. Withcott. Bill Jolly.

N.B. More birds have been seen by individual members this month which require to be verified before being admitted to our list. They are Horsfield bronze cuckoo and squatter pigeon to which we may add the previous month's unconfirmed sightings of harking owl and collared sparrowhawk.

CROWS AND/OR RAVENS.

I asked members at our November meeting if they would consider the question "In our area do we have only Australian crows (*corvus corax*), only Australian ravens (*corvus coronoides*), or both?" We briefly discussed some of the aspects of identification which I am now setting out for members' further consideration. To the best of my knowledge the extent of the Australian raven's distribution in our area has not been placed on record and I should like again to ask each and every member to gather any evidence which comes his or her way and to pass it on to Rod Hobson who as our Records Officer will be consolidating whatever information we are able to accumulate.

(cont/d).

CROWS AND/OR RAVENS (cont/d).

Difference between the two species may be identified in the following areas:

	<u>Corvus orru</u> (Australian crow)		<u>Corvus coronoides</u> (Aust. raven)
Base of feathers...	grey	...	white
Throat hackles....	short (21-32mm), unspcialised.	...	conspicuous, long (41-59mm), lanceolate.
(Refer pp 82/83 of Slater's Passerine Field Guide)			
Call.....	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"> RAVEN'S CALL aah,aah,aah, aaaaaahh, (with a terminal long drawn-out gargle). </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"> CROW'S CALL Nasal, high-pitched, staccato, oh-oh-oh-oh-oh. </div>

The following distribution map of the Australian raven was produced by Ian Rowley and published in The Emu, Vol. 69, Part 3, October, 1969.

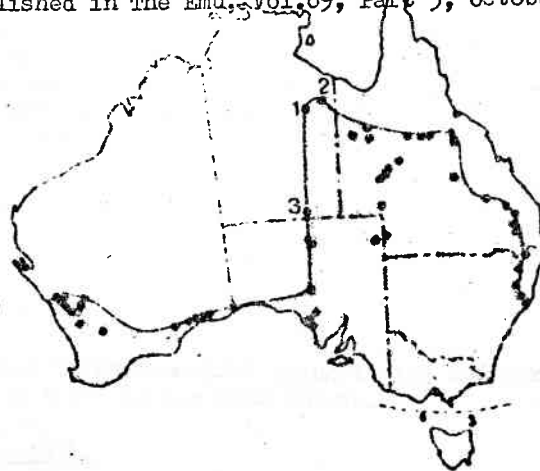


Fig. 1.-Distribution of the Australian Raven, *Corvus coronoides*. The numbers refer to localities where the species has been collected in the Northern Territory:-

- 1. = Brunette Downs
- 2. = Nicholson River
- 3. = Andado Station.

References.

MACDONALD J.D. Birds of Australia. 1973. A.H. & A.W. Reed. Sydney.
 ROWLEY I.C.R. A fourth species of Australian corvid. Emu. 66 pp 191-210.
 ROWLEY I.C.R. First record of the Australian raven in the N.T. Emu. 69 pp 183-4.
 SLATER P.J. A Field Guide to Australian Birds: Passerines. 1974. Rigby. Adelaide.
 VERNON D.P. Birds of Brisbane & Environs. 1968. Queensland Museum. Brisbane.

Bill Jolly.

THE AUSTRALIAN PRATINCOLE (COURSEER) AT JIMBOUR.

The morning of 20th December 1975 arrived, heralded in by heavy, widespread rains such as had been the case for several days previous. Around Jimbour they had received heavy rain the day before and there appeared no indication of it abating on the 20th December, this being the day Bill Jolly and myself, families also consenting, had set aside to travel in search of the Australian Pratincole, *Stiltia isabella*. Steve Temple Watts had heard of their presence in that area, so we decided, despite the appalling weather conditions, to set out in search of these birds.

Fortunately we did so, for having reached the prescribed area without mishap we were lucky enough to encounter our quarry. Along a black soil track three birds were observed standing in a rain filled depression in the road. On focusing binoculars they were observed to everyone's delight to be Australian Pratincoles. Our goal had been achieved. Later in the day we were again fortunate enough to discover another four specimens, one being a perfect bird with ideal body colourations.

(cont/d).

THE AUSTRALIAN PRATINCOLE (COURSER) AT JIMBOUR (cont/d).

The Australian Pratincole belongs to the family Glareolidae and along with the Oriental Pratincole, *Glareola pratincola*, a non-breeding visitor, constitutes the sum total of this family's representatives in Australia. There are seven species of pratincole ranging widely over the Old World and all have long pointed wings and a deeply forked tail. All that is, except the bird in question. Although it has the long pointed wings, it lacks the deeply forked tail. In fact the Australian Pratincole has a short, square tail.

The family Glareolidae is separated into two well defined sub-families, Pratincoles and Coursers, except for *Stiltia isabella* which has features common to both sub-families. For present purposes it has been left with the pratincoles and placed in a separate genus, *Stiltia*.

Without delving too deeply into descriptions (they are well described by Macdonald & Slater) the more conspicuous features noted by us were the long pointed wings, which when folded extended well beyond the tail tip. The upperparts were nankeen and we were struck by the near resemblance in colour dorsally, to the Nankeen Kestrel, *Falco cenchroides*. Indeed one could be forgiven for confusing the two birds in flight were it not for the Australian Pratincole's bold white rump. The reddish, black tipped bill was also predominant.

The Australian Pratincole breeds from October to January, lining a depression in the ground with sticks and small pebbles. Two eggs are usually laid, being pinkish-brown mottled with grey and darker brown. The birds in question were believed to have been nesting in the area where they were sighted.

Stiltia isabella often keeps company with the Oriental Pratincole and the Australian Dotterel, *Peltohyas australis*, but despite our diligent search for these other species neither were sighted. The only other bird we observed utilising the same habitat type was the beautiful Banded Plover, *Vanellus tricolor*.

Rod Hobson.

DECEMBER OUTING.

Our outing to Oakey had to be cancelled owing to the weather, but Steve Temple Watts is planning to take us there in the near future.

MEETING FOR FEBRUARY, 1976.

Monday, 9th February, 1976. 7.30 p.m. at 22, Isabel Street, Toowoomba. (Vera Simon's home). Marilyn Jacobs will be showing some of her first-class bird slides and the new R.A.O.U. Checklists will be available for members' perusal.

OUTING FOR FEBRUARY, 1976.

Sunday, 15th February, 1976. Flagstone Creek.

Meet at 9.00 a.m. at the corner of Stenner and Mackenzie Streets, Toowoomba.

(Expect channel-billed cuckoos, several species of finch, multifarious small birds, plus one or two exciting possibilities we'd better not promise).

NEW MEMBERS.

The club is pleased to welcome the following new members:-

Ray Trevett, 41, Leyspring Road, LONDON, E.11.

A SUMMARY OF MEMBERS' SIGHTINGS IN TOOWOOMBA DURING

DECEMBER 1975 IS ATTACHED.

CLUB OFFICERS:-

President - Bill Jolly, (Temporary address: c/o Alan Graham, as below)..

Secretary/Treasurer - Alan Graham, "Naliandrah", Stanley Park, Withcott, M.S. 224, Helidon, 4344. (30.3138)

Editor - Steve Temple Watts, M.S. 918, Toowoomba. (91.1616)

Records Officer/Librarian - Rod Hobson, 8, Sir Street, Toowoomba.

TOOWOOMBA-BASED CHECKLIST.

Date... DEC. 1975
 Location: A)
 B)
 C)

	A	B	C
Aust. pelican			
Darter			
Black cormorant			
Little bl. cormorant	✓		
Pied cormorant			
Little p. cormorant	✓		
Little grebe			
Hoary-headed grebe			
Great crested grebe			
White-necked heron	✓		
White-faced heron	✓		
Cattle egret			
White egret			
Little egret			
Plumed egret			
Nankeen night heron			
Little bittern			
Jabiru			
White ibis	✓		
Straw-necked ibis	✓		
Glossy ibis			
Royal spoonbill	✓		
Yellow-billed sp'bill			
Grass whist. duck			
Black swan			
Black duck	✓		
Grey teal			
Chestnut teal			
Pink-eared duck			
White-eyed duck			
Wood duck	✓		
Black-sh. kite	✓		
Crested hawk			
Whistling eagle			
Grey goshawk			
Aust. goshawk			
Coll. sparrow-hawk			
Wedge-tailed eagle	✓		
White-br. sea-eagle			
Spotted harrier			
Swamp harrier			
Osprey			
Black falcon			
Peregrine falcon			
Little falcon			
Nankeen kestrel	✓		
Brown hawk			
Brush turkey	✓		
Stubble quail			
Brown quail			
King quail			
Painted quail			
little quail			
Wolga			
Banded landrail			
Dusky moorhen			
Swamphen	✓		
Coot			

Lotus bird			
Spur-w. plover	✓		
Banded plover	✓		
Red-kneed dotterel			
Red-capped dotterel			
Bl. fr. dotterel			
White-headed stilt			
Wompoo pigeon			
Topknot pigeon			
White-headed pigeon	✓		
Domestic pigeon	✓		
Brown pigeon	✓		
Spotted turtle-dove			
Par-sh. dove	✓		
Peaceful dove	✓		
Green-winged pigeon			
Common bronzewing			
Crested pigeon	✓		
Rainbow lorikeet			
Scaly-br. lorikeet	✓		
Musk lorikeet			
Little lorikeet	✓		
Y.-t. black cockatoo			
Glossy bl. cockatoo			
R.-t. black cockatoo			
Sulph.cr. cockatoo			
Galah	✓		
Cockatiel	✓		
King parrot	✓		
Crimson rosella	✓		
Eastern rosella			
Pale-h. rosella	✓		
Red-r. parrot	✓		
Oriental cuckoo			
Pallid cuckoo			
Brush cuckoo	✓		
Fan-tailed cuckoo			
Hors. bronze cuckoo	✓		
Gold. bronze cuckoo			
Koal	✓		
Ch. billed cuckoo	✓		
Pheasant coucal	✓		
Powerful owl			
Barking owl			
Boobook owl	✓		
Barn owl			
Tawny frogmouth	✓		
Owllet nightjar			
Wh. throat. nightjar	✓		
Sp.-tailed swift	✓		
Fork-tailed swift			
Azure kingfisher	✓		
L. kookaburra	✓		
Forest kingfisher			
Sacred kingfisher	✓		
Rainbow bee-eater	✓		
Dollar bird	✓		

Noisy pitta			
Singing bushlark			
Wh.-backed swallow	✓		
Welcome swallow	✓		
Tree martin			
Fairy martin	✓		
Aust. pipit	✓		
Gr. cuckoo-shrike	✓		
Bl.-f. cuckoo-sh.	✓		
Lit. cuckoo-shrike			
Cicada bird			
Wh.-winged triller	✓		
Varied triller	✓		
Aust. ground thrush			
Grey-cr. babbler	✓		
G.-h. fan. warbler	✓		
Tawny grassbird			
Reed warbler			
Brown songlark	✓		
Rufous songlark			
Superb blue wren	✓		
Variegated wren			
Red-backed wren	✓		
Wh. thr. warbler			
Brown warbler			
Weebill			
Striated thornbill	✓		
Little thornbill			
Brown thornbill	✓		
Buff-r. thornbill			
Yellow-r. thornbill	✓		
Wh.-br. scrub-wren	✓		
Yellow-th. scrub-wren			
Large-b. scrub-wren			
Speckled warbler	✓		
Jacky winter	✓		
Rose robin			
S. yellow robin	✓		
Grey fantail			
Rufous fantail			
Willie wagtail	✓		
Leaden flycatcher			
Satin flycatcher			
Restless flycatcher			
Bl.-faced flycatcher			
Spec. flycatcher			
Golden whistler			
Rufous whistler			
Grey shrike-thrush			
Shrike-tit			
Eastern whipbird	✓		

Wh.-headed sittella	✓		
Brown tree-creeper			
Wh.-thr. tree-creeper			
Red-br. tree-creeper			
Mistletoe bird	✓		
Spotted pardalote	✓		
Black-h. pardalote	✓		
Gr.-br. silvereye	✓		
Brown honeyeater			
Scarlet honeyeater			
Lewin honeyeater	✓		
Y.-faced honeyeater			
Wh.-eared honeyeater			
Y.-tufted honeyeater			
Wh.-naped honeyeater			
Blue-f. honeyeater			
Little friarbird	✓		
Noisy friarbird	✓		
Striped honeyeater			
Eastern spinebill			
Noisy miner	✓		
Spiny-ch. honeyeater			
Little wattle-bird	✓		
Red wattle-bird			
Red-browed finch			
Banded finch	✓		
Zebra finch	✓		
Plum-headed finch	✓		
Chestnut-br. finch	✓		
House sparrow	✓		
Starling	✓		
Indian mynah	✓		
Olive-backed oriole	✓		
Southern figbird			
Spangled drongo			
Magpie lark	✓		
Wh.-breasted wood-sw.			
Masked wood-swallow			
White-browed wood-sw.			
Black-faced wood-sw.			
Dusky wood-swallow	✓		
Pied currawong	✓		
Pied butcher-bird	✓		
Grey butcher-bird	✓		
Black-backed magpie	✓		
Regent bower-bird			
Satin bower-bird			
Australian raven			
Australian crow	✓		