

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. 43 - JULY, 1979.

Your editor was one of the small group who attended the Club camp-out at Mudjimba and I can say that it was a most rewarding week-end in terms of numbers of birds (if not members). On the list are such spectacular birds as Southern Emu-wren and Beach Thick-knee. One of the special sights, for me, was the two Australasian Gannets flying in perfect unison as they made their dawn patrol. Rising and diving together they could well have been attached to each other so neatly did they maintain the distance between them. And man thinks he can fly.

One of our newer members, Joe Deuble, was instrumental in adding bird number 203 to the Club list, as detailed below. Joe first saw the bird which was confirmed by David Newlands. The Club grapevine went to work and six members have now made the sighting.

The most important date on the Club calendar this year is Sunday, October 21st.---  
BIRD COUNT DAY. This is the big annual Club project so members might mark their diaries to set aside this day. This will follow the Annual General Meeting to be held on Saturday, October 13th. These two dates make October a most important month for our Club. Hope you can reserve these times.

Discussion among several members has supported the idea of having the Annual Meeting take the form of an afternoon barbecue. This is more in line with our Club's informal nature and it provides a better opportunity for member families to attend. The meeting proper would occupy an hour or so from 3pm to 4pm., with the barbecue to follow. The venue provides plenty of room for children to move around. More details nearer the time.

The Club's record copies of the News-sheet are soon to be bound in hard cover. This involves a very small outlay and it is possible that members might wish to have their copies bound also. If you are interested contact myself or Bill Jolly.

There has been some interesting feed-back as a result of the article on sorting out Wrens (News-sheet No. 42). This has come from outside as well as within the Club. Certainly we must all look more closely at Wrens and by interaction with each other add to our collective knowledge. This News-sheet forms the vehicle for such knowledge and through it we can add value to our observations.

Ron Hopkinson,  
Editor.

NEW TOOWOOMBA BIRDS.

203. Red-capped Robin (*Petroica goodenovii*). 5.6.79. Toowoomba Cemetery, Anzac Ave.  
Joe Deuble, David Newlands.

First observed by Joe Deuble on Sunday, 3.6.79. Both male and female confirmed by Joe and David Newlands on Tuesday, 5.6.79. The full plumaged male displayed a fiery red forehead and breast, providing a dramatic contrast with his black underparts. The much duller female showed a more russet forehead and brown underparts.

AN EXALTATION OF LARKS, OR THE VENERAL GAME - James Lipton.  
New York: Grossman Publishers, 1968.

English is a marvelous language, full of surprises for those who take the time to think about the meaning of the words they use. Consider the so-called 'nouns of assemblage' or 'group terms', used to refer to collectivities. We speak of a swarm of bees or a school of fish; a litter of puppies or a pride of lions, but seldom do we realize how apt these terms are: a 'litter' of puppies, indeed! At one time, there were a great many of these terms in common usage; in fact, a gentleman who did not use them, or used them improperly would have been considered a 'churl' and no gentleman at all. He certainly would not have been welcome at court.

For the most part, these terms referred to animals and the hunt, and were therefore known as 'terms of venery'. They were codified during Medieval times, and within a year of the introduction of printing into England, they appeared as a book, The Hors, Shepe, & the Ghoos, published in 1476. The most important collection of the lists was probably The Book of St. Albans, which appeared in 1486 and contained 164 terms.

There appear to be five main ways in which these terms were derived:

Cnometopoeia: A gaggle of geese.  
Characteristic: A walk of snipe; a skulk of foxes.  
Appearance: A bouquet of pheasants; a knot of toads.  
Habitat: A nest of rabbits; a shoal of bass.  
Comment (Pro or con): A richness of martens; a murder of crows.

Herewith are some of the terms of venery which the fifteenth century ornithologist and gentleman would have used:

A walk of snipe, a brood of hens, a peep of chickens, and a covey of partridges. Covey comes from the Latin cubare: to be lying down, which became covy in Middle English, and referred to nesting habits.

A murder of crows, a fall of woodcocks, a dissimulation of birds, a dule of doves (from French deuil: mourning), and a rafter of turkeys (from raft: a large and often motley collection of objects.)

A paddling of ducks (when on the water), a charm of finches, a skein of geese (but only in flight; a gaggle of geese when on the water), a cast of hawks, an ostentation of peacocks, a tidings of magpies, and a bouquet of pheasants.

A seige of herons (from the way the heron awaits its prey in the shallow water at its feet), an unkindness of ravens, a building of rooks (from their nesting habits), a richness of martens, a descent of woodpeckers, a mustering of storks, and a flight of swallows.

A host of sparrows (from Latin hostis: enemy, eventually coming to mean an army. The same term applies to angels, in which a host of angels referred to the warriors of God), a watch of nightingales, a murmuration of starlings, a spring of teal, a parliament of owls, an exaltation of larks, and, of course, a clutch of eggs.

What a contribution Australia could have made to the inventors of the terms of venery with our Emus, Kookaburras, Bell Birds, and Galahs!

## THE VIRTUOSO OF THE GREEN MOUNTAINS.

On Saturday, June 9th, myself and a friend dared the torturous road which winds, like a palsied snake, from Canungra to O'Reillys guest house in the Lamington National Park. The guest house is situated on the margin of beautiful rainforest and in its surrounds old acquaintances can be readily renewed. Spinebills follow a hectic existence being constantly routed by pompous Lewins; Bush Turkeys grunt about filching food scraps and Crimson Rosellas burst like griflammes from the tall timber but this area has one extra-special resident - the Albert Lyrebird, *Menura alberti*.

The lady in the little shop told us that lyrebirds were to be seen fairly frequently on the walking track leading down to the orchid gardens and Stenson memorial to the "City of Brisbane" air disaster. Unfortunately, for us, early morning is the best time to observe these extremely shy birds as bushwalkers scare them from the track area as the day lengthens. Nevertheless, as the prescribed walk is only of a lazy ten minutes duration and also in view of the fact that there were few visitors there this day, we decided to make the effort despite the fact that the sun was past its zenith.

Having reached the gardens, which consist of a fenced and fascinating array in the middle of the rainforest, we stopped to take stock of our surroundings and read the notice board at the entrance. It was while we were so engaged that a cacophony of bird song "exploded" from the rainforest off to our left. A Kookaburra in rainforest? - surely not, and what of that Whipbird cracking close on its heels? A pause to ponder this enigma and "the penny dropped" - the Albert Lyrebird which, along with its cousin, the Superb Lyrebird, is the finest mimic in the Australian bush. Over to our left, amid a tangle of vines and forest floor growths a lyrebird was giving vent to an amazing display of bird song. The kookaburra "laugh" was paramount but, interspersed amid the liquid cadences of the lyrebirds own song, were uncanny mimes of Satin Bowerbirds, Crimson Rosella and Whipbird. We listened in silent appreciation for about fifteen minutes to our unsuspecting virtuoso.

This was fine but how to see the musician? Julie was not keen on braving the undergrowth and the possible predatory leech so, admitting that a lone person would be more likely to accomplish a successful reconnaissance, I left her to enjoy the orchids. The scrub seemed impenetrable, at least without considerable din. However, whilst proceeding along the garden fence line I came upon a polythene water pipe and by following the narrow track which had been cleared for it, I was able to head towards the general area of the still calling bird. Some forty metres along the pipe way I **C**ung right and, after some stealthy going, I came up fast behind a fair sized tree trunk. By various contortions, unorthodox binocular juggling and by squinting "through" intervening vines etc., there, about ten metres off, on a moss shrouded log, mincing self-consciously, was a male Albert Lyrebird. A warm brownish body with shimmering tail feathers spread in the dappled forest light issuing a non-stop medley of infinite variation.

It is impossible to convey the full impact of such a sight so, needless to say, that after several minutes, the spell was broken when I tried for a closer look and more comfortable position. With a few small hops and three or four alarm calls resembling a resonant "Christ", the bird took to wing - a peculiar glide on stubby wings - and disappeared completely, swallowed up by the rainforest. Until I disturbed him he had been calling continuously for approximately half an hour. Content, I returned, via the gardens, to the guest house. Somewhere down to the right of the gardens, way down in the fern-choked gullies a second Albert raised his call.

For myself, I have many memorable bird moments - Red-necked Avocets in the flooded Darling near Bourke; Wandering Albatross off Hell's Gates; Great Frigatebirds, surrealistic over Torres Strait and the Powerful Owl in Redwood, but they'll have to move down a rung. Their position has been usurped by a pheasant sized bird with the shimmering tail and his exuberant soliloquy in the Green Mountains.

Rod Hobson.

"A BIRDWATCHING EXPERIENCE FOR THE 'BUSY' PERSON".

This is written specifically for those who, like myself, find it difficult to devote an entire day to an outing of birdwatching. Mind you, I wish I had the time to spend a relaxing day with bird club or Q.C.S. members as they visit particular areas of interest, but this does not often seem to be the case, unfortunately.

Because we miss most outings and because we still enjoy birdwatching, Sandy and I have come up with a plan that seems to suit our time schedule .... and it is, in part, due to the presence of the monthly gold checklist. We fill a thermos with coffee, pack a few biscuits and head for Lion's Park on the Warwick Road for a few hours of occasional Sunday morning birdwatching.

On May, 20th we were rewarded with sightings of at least 25-30 Chestnut-breasted Finches, many immature, which seems to indicate they may be breeding somewhere close by - indeed at the park itself as we've always seen a small number at each visit. The Restless Flycatcher was back after a reasonable absence, and the ever present Reed Warblers, Sacred Kingfishers, Dusky Moorhens, Black Ducks, Red-rumped Parrots, Cockatiels, Scaly-breasted Lorikeets, Galahs and a lone White-faced Heron rounded out our morning.

This is a fair variety for a short visit, and the park is reasonably quiet and peaceful before 11.00am. I can recommend this venue for the 'busy' birdwatcher, particularly those living in the Southern area of Toowoomba.

Marilyn Jacobs.

A MUDJIMBA HAPPENING.

I know that our June camping trip will be adequately covered by the leader's report but may I be allowed space to comment on one of the many memorable moments of that week-end.

Ron Hopkinson and myself had decided to take a short amble through the heathland which separated the beach from our camp site. This was about 10am. on the Sunday just prior to an intended trip by members to Maroochydore to look for waders. Our actual objective was the beach, but half-way across the heavy ground cover we were distracted by a group of wrens. A cursory glance identified a male Red-backed Fairy-wren, so therefore the "brown" birds in attendance were assumed to be females and immatures. One "brown" wren separated from the group to land low in a stunted she-oak atop a sand dune. Casual glances led to more intent gazing when we realised that this bird had an inordinately long tail for a fairy-wren. It was then that Ron and I realised that we had a ring-in, in the guise of the Southern Emu-wren.

Upon regaining our equilibrium, we checked for distinguishing field marks, the most apparent being the long and filamentous tail and the heavily streaked upperparts. The tail was held cocked in typical wren fashion. We watched the bird, a female, for some ten minutes. During this time we observed that she was an extremely shy bird only reluctantly flying very short distances whilst keeping close to the ground and seeking the very dense cover she apparently favoured. The bird eventually attained a large clump of closer vegetation from which she refused to be flushed.

Eileen and Bill Jolly returned with us shortly after. This time we succeeded in "putting up" the wren and all members were afforded a look at this little female which had been to blame for the excitement of the four bodies, observed by the casual passer-by (much to his wonderment), clomping frantically about the Mudjimba heath.

Rod Hobson.



A familiar view to club-members attending our June campout - Old Woman Island just off-shore from the Mudjimba campsite.

FIELD TRIP REPORT - MUDJIMBA CAMPOUT - 15TH-18TH JUNE.

Old Woman Island as seen from the sandhills close by our camp was never without its attendant throng of seabirds - small parties of gulls wheeling around its perimeter, cormorants lined along its rocky ledges and, throughout the weekend, gannets sweeping their way between the island and the shore.

Our weekend's birdwatching was as casual as was our camping. A sort of routine developed during our stay at Mudjimba - a pre-breakfast walk along the shore, a morning's exploration of some mutually agreed upon locality, a slowish lunch followed by a period of no more than slight activity, an afternoon look at the beach, a somewhat drawn-out dinner and a subsequent settling around the camp-fire for an evening of reflection upon the experiences of the day.

White-cheeked Honeyeaters, Scarlet Honeyeaters, Little Wattlebirds and many others were in daily attendance around the camp itself, while one had only to cross to the shore to meet the splendid Brahminy Kite as well as Pied Oystercatchers, Red-capped Dotterels and Reef Herons. Each day had also its special rewards to offer, examples being a Brown Booby speeding Northwards on Saturday, a pair (at least) of Southern Emu-wrens which led us a merry chase through thick undergrowth on Sunday, and on Monday the bird which represented for me the high spot of the weekend, a Beach Thick-knee. The attention of a small early-morning party of members was diverted from a sandbank filled to overflowing with Crested Terns when this last bird made his appearance by dropping onto the strand of an estuarine island and freezing save for the occasional bob. His dark and light face markings, large bill, uniformly brown back and yellow legs were sufficiently displayed to allow us to establish his identity and to confirm the sighting of a bird which was new to me and to most members present.

We met with Chestnut-breasted Teal, Hardheads and a good variety of water birds at the Maroochy Sewerage Treatment Works, with Mangrove Warblers nearby, while a visit to Maroochydore itself, a particularly favourite spot of mine, was in fact much less rewarding than I have known it to be. None-the-less we were able to find a Mangrove Heron scuttling about the mud as well as gaining more distant views of Bar-tailed Godwits and Eastern Curlews.

Four days of living simply and enjoying your environment, the place you are at and the people you are with represents a rich experience. If one can see birds as well, that experience gains yet another valuable dimension. Such was the success of our second Mudjimba Campout.

Bill Jolly.

Species List - Mudjimba Campout - 15th/18th June.

Australasian Grebe	Laughing Kookaburra
Australian Pelican	Sacred Kingfisher
Australasian Gannet	Collared Kingfisher
Brown Booby	Rainbow Bee-eater
Pied Cormorant	Welcome Swallow
Little Bl. Cormorant	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Little P. Cormorant	Rufous Whistler
Pacific Heron	Grey Shrike-thrush
White-faced Heron	Grey Fantail
Great Egret	Willie Wagtail
Eastern Reef Egret	Golden-headed Cisticola
Striated Heron	Sup. Fairy-wren
Black-necked Stork	Red-b. Fairy-wren
Sacred Ibis	Southern Emu-wren
Royal Spoonbill	White-browed Scrubwren
Black Swan	Mangrove Gerygone
Pacific Black Duck	Y.-rumped Thornbill
Grey Teal	Striated Thornbill
Hardhead	Little Wattlebird
Maned Duck	Noisy Friarbird
Pacific Baza	Little Friarbird
Brahminy Kite	Noisy Miner
Whistling Kite	Lewin's Honeyeater
Australian Kestrel	Brown Honeyeater
Beach Thick-knee	Wh.-cheeked Honeyeater
Pied Oystercatcher	Eastern Spinebill
Masked Lapwing	Scarlet Honeyeater
Black-fronted Plover	Mistletoebird
Red-capped Plover	Silvereye
Black-winged Stilt	House Sparrow
Eastern Curlew	Red-browed Firetail
Bar-tailed Godwit	Double-barred Finch
Silver Gull	Common Starling
Gull-billed Tern	Olive-backed Oriole
Crested Tern	Figbird
Topknot Pigeon	Spangled Drongo
Spotted Turtle-Dove	Aust. Magpie-lark
Bar-shouldered Dove	Grey Butcherbird
Rainbow Lorikeet	Pied Butcherbird
Scaly-br. Lorikeet	Australian Magpie
	Torresian Crow.

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SPRING SCHOOL IN NEW ENGLAND.

We have received details of a residential course to be held at Armidale, September 1st-8th, 1979.

This Spring school offers a nice balance of courses about the high country of New England, social activity and excursions to places of interest in Armidale and District.

For fuller details contact any member of the Executive.

MEMBERS BIRD NOTES.

Pied Cormorant. 17.6.79. Turnbull St. RW.  
Wandering Whistling-duck. 9.6.79. Oxenford. RGH.  
Brown Goshawk. 28.6.79. T'mba. Railway Yards. REH.  
Wedge-tailed Eagle. 11.6.79. James St. (East). RW.  
Spotted Harrier. 24.6.79. Helidon. RGH.  
Australian Hobby. 24.6.79. Bedford St. Tip. DN.  
Brown Falcon. 25.6.79. Ringmere, Withcott. EJ.  
Emerald Dove. 24.6.79. Upper Flagstone Ck. Rd. RGH.  
Red-winged Parrot. 24.6.79. Tara. MR. ER.  
Scarlet Robin. 30.6.79. Mango Vale, Withcott. AHS.  
Red-capped Robin. 23.6.79. Toowoomba Cemetary. JD. DN.  
Little Shrike-thrush. 15.6.79. Kondalilla. RGH.  
Speckled Warbler. 20.6.79. Geham. MR.  
Striped Honeyeater. 21.6.79. Ringmere, Withcott. EJ. WJ.

JD: Joe Deuble. RGH: Rod Hobson. REH: Ron Hopkinson. EJ: Eileen Jolly.  
WJ: Bill Jolly. DN: David Newlands. MR: Mike Russell. ER: Elizabeth Russell.  
AHS: Ann Shore. RW: Ron Wilson.

FIELD DAY FOR JULY.

Date: Sunday, 22nd July, 1979.

Place: Jubilee Park.

Leader: Ron Hopkinson.

Assembly Point: Pigott's Car Park.

Time: 8.15 a.m. - departure 8.30 a.m. sharp.

NEW MEMBERS.

The Club is pleased to welcome the following new members:

Julie Howard, 14, Sirrah Street, Geebung, 4034.

John & Shirley Gregor, 2, Loch Street, Toowoomba.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

The Bird Observer - June, 1979.

Q.O.S. Newsletter - May, 1979.

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