

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

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First off, a reminder that there will be no Club Field Day this month. Also remember that from January, Field Days will commence at 7-30 a.m.

November saw at least one significant ornithological event for the Toowoomba area. Noisy Pittas were seen in Redwood Park for the first time since 1975. Observers were Michael Atzeni, Jane, Jim and Graham Corbin. Graham also managed to obtain a recording of the Pitta's call.

All that remains to be said is-Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all.

John Gregor

Editor

CLUB CHECKLIST OF THE BIRDS OF TOOWOOMBA.

As advised in the November News-sheet the Club checklist has been revised to include birds which were sighted (and confirmed) in what is now the Club's local study area, but which at the time fell outside the original area of study and which were simply recorded in the News-sheet as Member's Bird Notes or included in a Field Day Report. Inasmuch as the birds were seen since the time of the Club's inception and the only variable has been the perimeter of our study area it was felt to be reasonable to add them to the list. This reduces the slight gap between earlier boundaries which pertained between October 1975 and December 1977. In fact only two birds are involved and the details are as follows:

MALLARD. (Anas Platyrhynchos). A fine drake seen at I.W.S. Flagstone Creek by Rod and Kerrie Hobson. 5.12.75. (Subsequently viewed by this writer and RGH.)

BUFF-Banded Rail. (Rallus Philippensis.) A road killed specimen found by this writer near the Helidon rest area, on his way to a Club Field Day and subsequently viewed by members on that day.

Ron Hopkinson.

New Toowoomba Bird.

215. Red-kneed Dotterel (Erythrogonys Cinctus.) 20.11.80 at Helidon Spa. Graham Corbin and Michael Atzeni. Four adult birds identified by black cap and black breast band; a white line between the band and the brown wings; rufous flanks; red "knees".

AIRCRAFT AND BIRD STRIKE.

A very real problem in aviation is the possibility of a bird strike, in which a bird in flight can come into contact with an aircraft and cause serious damage, if not actual disaster. One occurred recently when an Australian Pelican actually penetrated the canopy of an F111 and caused the aircraft to crash, killing the 2 man crew. Falcons have been used to frighten gulls away from near coastal airports.

A bird strike with a happy difference occurred recently following the air show conducted by the Army at their Oakey base. An R.A.A.F. Caribou had been involved in dropping parachutists for the display. The side doors of the aircraft had been removed to facilitate the drop. The next day, after becoming airborne on the return flight to Richmond air base, the bird (Probably a Welcome Swallow) was frantically flying around INSIDE the aircraft, presumably having gained entry through the open doors the day previously.

The bird was colliding with various parts of the fuselage and it took some time before one of the crewmen could safely capture it. By this time the aircraft was well on its way southwards and could hardly turn about, so a descent was made to a low level and the crewman released the bird from the aircraft in flight. Hopefully there is now a Welcome Swallow trying to convince his friends of the truth of his story. I can vouch for the truth of it because the crewman is my son. Nice one, David.

Ron Hopkinson.

A Honeveater Drinking.

On Saturday, August ninth, I was filling my canteen from Porphyry Creek; a small watercourse between Gunvale and Charters Towers. This creek consists of strings of pools of clear, clean water upon a bed of coarse sand and gravel. Altogether an engaging place at which to dally, especially if one is supposed to be working at the time.

I was absentmindedly watching a group of small passerines drinking and abluting themselves closeby. The complement consisted chiefly of Double barred Finch and Melithreptus honeveaters, which, I believe in retrospect to have been either M. Albogularis or M. Gularis.

My attention was attracted to the mode of drinking adopted by the honeveaters. Instead of taking water directly from the pool, these birds proceeded to plunge their beaks into the damp sand surrounding the water. I believe they then partook of water in the same method as they extract nectar from blossoms. That swallowing was taking place was indicated by small fluctuations of their throats.

A Honeveater Drinking c/td.

I found this method of drinking somewhat intriguing and am still wondering if the physiology of the Naped Honeveaters dictates that they should drink as such or do they have the alternative of drinking like "normal" birds ?

R.G.Hobson.

White Backed Magpie.

Re the Australian Magpie (White backed race.) seen at Flinders St. and reported by Ron Hopkinson in June Newsletter.

This bird is still in the Flinders St. area and has mated with a black backed magpie and is currently rearing two offspring which are about 2/3 grown.

The adult birds are quite tame and when food is thrown to them can be approached to within a few feet. However, even at these close quarters it is difficult to pick the male. The black back is the female with the familiar grey nape and white back, the male however is not a true white back as the nape and back are flecked with small grey feathers.

I have a friend in this area who is rearing a young magpie found hurt and abandoned on the roadside. It is approximately the same size as the wild young ones. As an experiment this bird was placed on the lawn and the adult birds, after a close look offered it food but the "Pet" crouched down with its' bill on the ground and refused food. However, as the adult birds remained in the area the "Pet" gained confidence and after about 5 minutes when food was again offered the "Pet" accepted it from both adults.

Later, when the adults two young approached the female seemed to recognise the "Pet" as an intruder and attacked it. We then shoed the offending female from the area but the white backed male continued to feed the "Pet" as long as the birds remained in the area.

My friend is feeding her "Pet" scraps of meat from a flat piece of pine shaped to the approximate size of a magpie's bill and is using a small dropper to supply liquids. The "Pet" appears completely recovered and is thriving.

JOE DEUBLE.

Field Trip Report- 23.11.80 to Heifer Creek.

The November field trip was the first to commence at the new time of 7-30 a.m. Members had a fair drive before reaching the Heifer Ck. area, and I think that the number of species observed proved the value of adopting the earlier starting time. Perhaps the rain which had fallen the previous evening also helped.

Of the 58 species seen the more interesting sightings of the day were Black Falcon, Satin Bowerbird, Leaden Flycatchers nesting and a pair of Australian King Parrots.



Species List-Heifer Creek-23.11.80

Pacific Heron.  
 White-faced Heron.  
 Black-shouldered Kite.  
 Black Falcon.  
 Australian Kestrel.  
 Masked Lapwing.  
 Feral Pigeon.  
 Peaceful Dove.  
 Bar-shouldered Dove.  
 Crested Pigeon.  
 Galah.  
 Rainbow Lorikeet.  
 Australian King Parrot.  
 Scaly-breasted Lorikeet.  
 Eastern Rosella.  
 Pale-Headed Rosella.  
 Red-rumped Parrot.  
 Pheasant Coucal.  
 Laughing Kookaburra.  
 Sacred Kingfisher.  
 Rainbow Bee-eater.  
 Dollar Bird.  
 Tree Martin.  
 Fairy Martin.  
 Richard's Pipit.  
 BFCs.  
 White-winged Triller.  
 Eastern Yellow Robin.  
 Jacky Winter.

Rufous Whistler.  
 Leaden Flycatcher.  
 Willie Wagtail.  
 Eastern Whipbird.  
 Superb Fairy-wren.  
 White-browed Scrubwren.  
 White-throated Gerygone.  
 Brown Thornbill.  
 White-throated Treecreeper.  
 Noisy Friarbird.  
 Little Friarbird.  
 Noisy Miner.  
 Lewin's Honeyeater.  
 Striated Pardalote.  
 Silvereye.  
 Red-browed Firetail.  
 Double-barred Finch.  
 Common Starling.  
 Common Mynah.  
 Olive-backed Oriole.  
 Figbird.  
 Satin Bowerbird.  
 Australian Magpie-lark.  
 Dusky Woodswallow.  
 Grey Butcherbird.  
 Australian Magpie.  
 Pied Currawong.  
 Torresian Crow.  
 Pied Butcherbird.

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Members' Bird Notes.

Australian Pelican (4 flying high.) 15.10.80. Withcott. AHS.JAS.  
 Rufous Night Heron 20.10.80 Spring Creek. SB.MA.  
 Royal Spoonbill. (2) 30.10.80 Ocean St. GC.  
 Pacific Baza. 3.10.80 Ocean St. GC. JCC. JEC.  
 Pallid Cuckoo. 18.10.80 Echo Valley MA.  
 Fan-tailed Cuckoo. 7.10.80 445 West St. MJ.SP.  
 Channel billed Cuckoo. 23.10.80 Withcott. AHS.  
 Pheasant Coucal. 16.10.80. Withcott. AHS.  
 White-throated Needletail. 24.10.80. T'mba Grammar School SB.  
 White-winged Triller. 16-27.10.80. DDIAE, West St. MJ.SP.  
 " " " 20.10.80 Spring Creek SB.MA.  
 Varied Triller. Ocean St. 19.10.80. GC. JEC.  
 Leaden Flycatcher. 20.10.80 Spring Ck. SB.MA.  
 Satin Flycatcher. 12.10.80. Memory St. SB.MA.  
 Scarlet Honeyeater. 5.10.80. Ocean St. GC. JCC. JEC.  
 MA: Michael Atzeni. SB Shane Brady. GC: Graham Corbin.  
 JCC: Jane Corbin. JEC: Jim Corbin. MJ: Marilyn Jacobs.  
 SP: Sandy Pottinger. AHS: Ann Shore. JAS: John Shore.

New Members.

The Club is pleased to welcome the following new members:-  
 Mr. Ken James c/o DDIAE.  
 Mr. Lachlan MasDonald Merino St.  
 Miss Sandy Pottinger c/o DDIAE.

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