

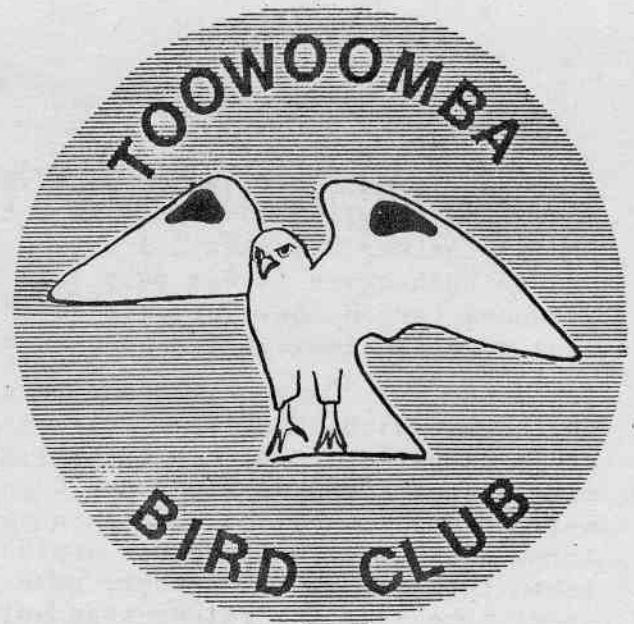
"To encourage the observation and study of the birds of the Toowoomba area."

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NEWS- SHEET No. 65 -MAY 1981.

We regret any inconvenience or confusion arising from the typist's error, in March and April issues, which showed the mailing address as the one used prior to January this year. In fact, the address for club correspondence is as shown on the masthead above.

The executive made a decision to write a letter to The Chronicle in support of the Field Naturalists plan for East Creek, as submitted to the City Council last year. It is felt that we, as a club with a common interest in birds and other things natural, ought to make our voice (albeit not very loud) heard in such matters. Enough small voices can sometimes be heard for quite a distance.

The annual Congress of the R.A.O.U. is to take place on the 24/25th August, 1981 at Katherine, Northern Territory. This will be followed by the campout near Top Springs from August 26th to September 5th. Those of you who are already members will doubtless be aware of this by now, but anyone who is contemplating membership of the R.A.O.U. would still have ample time to join the Union and plan for the trip.

This year is the final one in the Atlas of Australian Birds scheme. It is hoped to arrange Field Days outside our study area to add to knowledge of bird distribution. As you will recall, observations made within our club boundaries are channelled to the Atlas through our monthly check lists.

The recent Green Week conducted in Toowoomba awakened interest in people on the subject of plants. Many (probably most) people have some sort of awareness of their environment and events such as this help to focus that interest. Certainly in some people the awareness is fairly well hidden but activities like Green Week contribute greatly.

While on the subject of plants it might be appropriate to state here that contributions to this news-sheet need not deal solely with birds. One can hardly look at birds without seeing trees, rocks, streams etc., which are all part of the bird's environment (and ours).

By way of broadening our readers' interest we would welcome articles on aspects of environment, conservation or any natural history subject. After all, birds are not a form of life completely divorced from all other forms, although this idea seems to be held by many humans, about humans. All forms interwine and intermingle, dependent on each other.

If each member were to contribute even one article per year we would have a much fuller, more interesting news-sheet.

Ron Hopkinson Acting Editor.

GUNYAN.

Through the good offices of John Walter, an invitation was received to attend the long week-end campout of the Queensland Ornithological Society on May 2/3/4th. Rod Hobson and I were able to make the trip and we both agree it was very well worthwhile. About twenty people attended (would that our Club could muster a few campers) and a composite list of approximately 100 species was compiled.

The venue was "Gunyan", the property of John and Connie Boden, situated on the N.S.W. bank of the Dumaresq River, near Texas. The campsite was a camper's dream; a pleasant, grassed river flat carrying a magnificent stand of River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*). Not many metres away flowed the the clean waters of the Dumaresq River which forms the border between New South Wales and Queensland. The canoes taken there by Q.O.S. members were put to good use although one party spent some time in, rather than on, the water.

As if all this wasn't enough, the homestead and outbuildings provided even more delight. The house was built last century and has some walls of hand hewn slab construction and others of pit sawn planks. Roofing construction employs whole cypress pine logs as rafters and these are covered with shingles attached with hand made nails. Some of the interior was made more modern by a previous owner and the whole home is a lovely mixture of solid Australian history and modern comforts. It is beautifully maintained by John and Connie.

John showed us over the blacksmith's shed, which dates back to a similar period. It too catches the breath of anyone with an eye for Australiana. The original forge, complete with leather bellows is still there, and though not used today, is still workable. The solid log construction reflects the building methods of the time (and the price of timber then).

No doubt the welded steel constructions of today are strong and practical but only time will tell if they have any aesthetic value a century from now. All in all a most pleasant birding week-end for which Rod and I thank the Q.O.S. and especially John and Connie Boden, Gunyan.

Ron Hopkinson.

A list of the species recorded by REH and RGH appears elsewhere in this issue. (Editor).

THE CONDOR-BULL FIESTA.

To most birders the sight of an Andean Condor (*Vultur gryphus*) with its ten foot wingspan soaring overhead would have us spellbound but in remote areas of Peru such is not always the case with the native population. They have a couple of charming activities involving condors which make a bird lover shudder.

In northern Peru at certain festivals a condor is suspended from a kind of gallows and horsemen ride at it and strike it with their fists until it expires. It is then lowered to the ground and one of the riders bites the birds tongue out, often before life is extinguished. This darling little ceremony is called "ranque del condor" or "condor-rachi".

In southern Peru a more polished performance involves the use of a bull. A condor is tied to the bull by means of a rope which passes through holes made in the bull's hide. The condor-bull is released into the bull-ring and the watching crowd goes wild with excitement as the condor tears at the frantic bull's ears. Later the bird is released --if it survives the bull crashing into the fences.

Ron Hopkinson.

GUNYAN BIRD LIST.

Species list of personal observations by RGH and REH 2/3/4th May 1981. "L" denotes Leyburn area en route, "C" Coolmunda dam and "G", Gunyan.

Australian Pelican (C)	Eastern Rosella (L)
Darter (C, G)	Pale-headed Rosella (G)
Great Cormorant (C)	Red-rumped Parrot (L.G)
Pied Cormorant (C)	Southern Boobook (G)
Little Black Cormorant (C,G)	Laughing Kookaburra (G)
Little Pied Cormorant (C,G)	White-backed Swallow (G)
Pacific Heron (G)	Welcome Swallow (G)
White-faced Heron (G)	Tree Martin (G)
Straw-necked Ibis (G)	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike (G)
Yellow-billed Spoonbill (C)	Jacky Winter (G)
Black Swan (G)	Rufous Whistler (G)
Pacific Black Duck (G)	Restless Flycatcher (G)
Hardhead (C)	Grey Fantail (G)
Maned Duck (G)	Willie Wagtail (G)
Musk Duck (C)	Superb Fairy-wren (G)
Black-shouldered Kite (G)	Western Gerygone (G)
Whistling Kite (G)	White-throated Gerygone (G)
Brown Goshawk (G)	Yellow-rumped Thornbill (G)
White-bellied Sea-Eagle (G)	Brown Treecreeper (G)
Brown Falcon (G)	Noisy Friarbird (G)
Australian Kestrel (G)	Little Friarbird (G)
Dusky Moorhen (G)	Noisy Miner (G)
Eurasian Coot (C.G)	White-plumed Honeyeater (G)
Masked Lapwing (C.G)	Striated Pardalote (G)
Black-fronted Plover (C)	Double-barred Finch (G)
Silver Gull (C)	Plum-headed Finch (G)
Peaceful Dove (G)	Common Starling (G)
Common Bronzewing (L)	Olive-backed Oriole (G)
Crested Pigeon (L.G)	White-winged Chough (L.G)
Squatter Pigeon (L)	Apostlebird (L)
Galah (L.G)	Australian Magpie-lark (G)
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (L.G)	Grey Butcherbird (G)
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet (G)	Pied Butcherbird (G)
Little Lorikeet (G)	Australian Magpie (G)
Australian King-Parrot (G)	Pied Currawong (G)
Red-winged Parrot (G)	Torresian Crow (G)
Cockatiel (C.G)	

THE VISION SPLENDID.

One of my favourite Australian poems is "Clancy of the Overflow" by A.B. (Banjo) Paterson. One line in particular stays with me---"And he sees the vision splendid of the sunlit plains extended".

To birders there are many visions splendid--- scenes or passing glimpses which because of conditions pertaining at the time stay in one's memory. I would like to hear about some of yours but in the meantime here are a few I've enjoyed.

I retain many happy memories of days in North Queensland years ago--- particularly the sight of a flock of Brolgas winging overhead at dusk with that lovely, far-carrying trumpeting call of their species--- being camped on the dry bed of the Burdekin River, not far from its mouth and at night hearing the melancholy yet beautifully haunting wail of the Bush Stone-curlew, away in the distance. Maybe not strictly a "vision splendid" but certainly an "aural vision splendid".

THE VISION SPENDID c/td.

More recently, I recall the Club campout at Mudjimba---being on the beach at dawn--and the sight of two Australian Gannets flying a dawn patrol along the beach. The two were flying in such perfect formation--- as the leader dived so did the partner---as the leader banked so did the partner---as the leader climbed so did the partner. A perfect unison of two beautiful creatures. Obviously, they were bent on the mundane necessity of finding food but to this watching birder their technique was one of undeniable beauty and precision .

I have spent a number of week-ends over the last ten years establishing a native garden. Now I can sometimes have a Brown Honeyeater or an Eastern Spinebill not more than a few feet from me in the shrubs. Lately, the morning chorus of Pied Currawongs is a thing of joy.

Just recently, Rod Hobson and I spent a week-end on the banks of the Dumaresq River. One of our walks took place at dusk along the edge of the stream. The sky was suffused with the delightful colours of an autumnal sky---pinks and blues of many shades--- and overhead passed a flight of Black Swans. Three lovely black and white birds in perfect vee formation against a background of sky and cloud. A fleeting look but a look to stay with one.

Ron Hopkinson.

FIELD DAY REPORT-FLAGSTONE CREEK-26/4/81.

The April outing was smiled upon by a brilliant day after the unexpected downpour of the day before, but unfortunately missed out in the way of attendance.

However, our small three car convoy wound its way down the Flagstone Creek road and stopped at the first creek crossing . Excellent views of Striated Pardalotes were obtained as they flitted about vegetation on the creek cutting rather than in the foliage of trees. A Superb Fairy-wren's nest containing two young was also located. Moving on we came to an area where a group of White-backed Swallows continually flew low to a bank where presumably there were burrows hidden from our view.

Next stop was initiated by the sighting of Dusky Woodswallows overhead. Here we also saw a White-throated Honeyeater, one of the less common honeyeaters in our area, Grey Fantails, Lewin's Honeyeater and White-throated Gerygone.

Turning off to Helidon we proceeded slowly and halted to view Zebra Finches on the wires. A single Striped Honeyeater gladdened its observers--this was the first sighting of this one for 1981 as was the case with the White-throated Honeyeater.

Just before Helidon, at another creek crossing a Yellow-billed Spoonbill and Sacred Ibis were added to the list.

Lunch was enjoyed at Helidon Picnic area, a pleasant spot to end our outing. In fact, it has been found quite favourable to spend only the morning birdwatching, then dispersing after a bite to eat, rather than spending the the time after lunch as well.

Michael Atzeni.

FIELD DAY REPORT c/td.

Species list for 26/4/81.

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Australasian Grebe | Superb Fairy-wren |
| Little Pied Cormorant | Red-backed Fairy-wren |
| White-faced Heron | White-throated Gerygone |
| Sacred Ibis | Striped Honeyeater |
| Straw-necked Ibis | Little Friarbird |
| Yellow-billed Spoonbill | Noisy Miner |
| Black-shouldered Kite | Lewin's Honeyeater |
| Wedge-tailed Eagle | White-throated Honeyeater |
| Australian Kestrel | Brown Honeyeater |
| Dusky Moorhen | Spotted Pardalote |
| Feral Pigeon | Striated Pardalote |
| Bar-shouldered Dove | Silvereye |
| Crested Pigeon | House Sparrow |
| Galah | Red-browed Firetail |
| Cockatiel | Zebra Finch |
| Pale-headed Rosella | Double-barred Finch |
| Pheasant Coucal | Common Starling |
| Laughing Kookaburra | Common Mynah |
| White-backed Swallow | Australian Magpie-lark |
| Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike | Dusky Woodswallow |
| Golden Whistler | Grey Butcherbird |
| Grey Fantail | Pied Butcherbird |
| Willie Wagtail | Australian Magpie |
| Eastern Whipbird | Pied Currawong |
| Golden-headed Cisticola | Torresian Crow |

SOME NEW ZEALAND BIRDS

Observed by R.G.Hobson.

- Southern Black-backed Gull (*Larus dominicanus*) 6.1.81. Napier
- Red-billed Gull (*Larus scopulinus*) 3.1.81. Wairoa
- Black-billed Gull (*Larus bulleri*) 11.1.81. Picton
- Black-fronted Tern (*Chlidonias albostrata*) 14.1.81. Queenstown
- White-fronted Tern (*Sterna striata*) 13.2.81. Auckland
- New Zealand Pigeon (*Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*) 12.1.81. Nelson
- Kaka (*Nestor meridionalis*) 17.1.81. Stewart Island
- Red-crowned Parakeet (*Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae*) 17.1.81. Stewart Is.
- Rifleman (*Acanthisitta chloris*) 9.2.81. Stratford

MEMBERS BIRD NOTES.

- Glossy Ibis. 18.4.81 Hood's lagoon. MA. SA. LA.
- Red-kneed Dotterel. 5.4.81. Helidon Spa. MA. DD.
- Emerald Dove. 18.4.81. Redwood Park. MA.
- Glossy Black Cockatoo (pair feeding) 17.4.81. Echo Valley. MA. LA.
- Eastern Rosella. 28.4.81. West St. (on power lines) MJ. SP.
- Fan-tailed Cuckoo. 5.4.81. Redwood Park. MA. DD.
- Rose Robin. 19.4.81. Mackenzie St. MA.
- 26.4.81 Helidon. MJ.
- Scarlet Robin. 17.4.81. Thulimbah. SB.
- Hooded Robin. 20.4.81. Thulimbah. SB.
- Brown Treecreeper. 20.4.81. Thulimbah. SB.
- White-thrtd. Honeyeater. 26.4.81. Flagstone Creek. AHS.
- Diamond Firetail. 17.4.81. Thulimbah. SB.
- MA: Michael Atzeni. SA: Simon Atzeni. LA: Laurie Atzeni. SB: Shane Brady
- DD: Dave Dowling. MJ: Marilyn Jacobs. SP: Sandy Pottinger. AHS: Ann Shore.

FIELD DAY FOR MAY

Date: Sunday May 24, 1981.

Place: Clarendon, Dyers, Apex Lake, Water bird day.

Time: 7.15am for departure at 7.30am sharp.

Assembly point: Pigott's car park.