

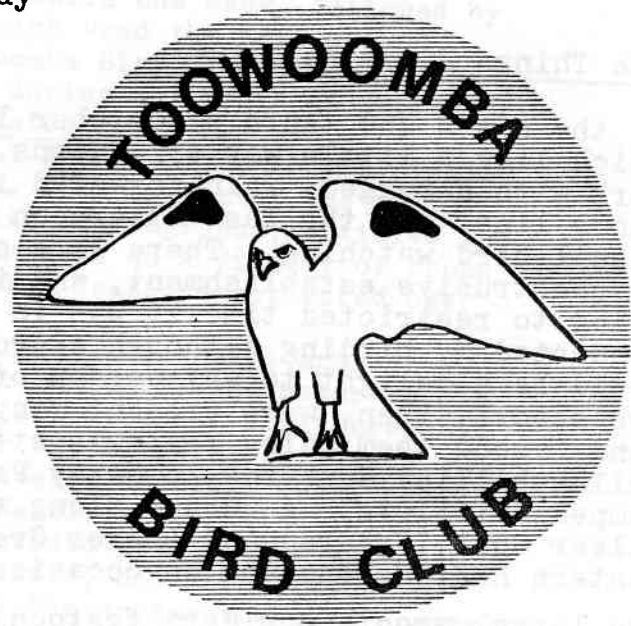
"To encourage the observation and study of birds of the Toowoomba area."

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NEWS-SHEET No. 72 - DECEMBER 1981

Our film evening was a great success. Everyone that came thoroughly enjoyed the film "Osprey". It was a unanimous comment that it is a particularly brilliant documentary, not only for its message about bird protection and conservation, but also for its magnificent photography. Thankyou to Marilyn Jacobs for initiating the whole idea and helping out with the organization. To everyone else who contributed to make the evening successful - our thanks also. These include John Walter for his item on the new book of Australian birds of prey, members who brought tapes, slides, feather collections and photographs, and not forgetting the members who supplied a plate!

It has been suggested, because of the interest shown in the evening, that we hold more. This is being considered for next year, with perhaps two or three meetings during the year where members may get together to hear tapes, show slides and photographs and other collections and generally talk birds.

In order that more members will join our field outings in 1982 a list of dates follows. This means you will be able to organize yourself so that you can meet some fellow members, make new friends and maybe see some new birds.

January 24th	July 25th
February 28th	August 22nd
March 28th	September 26th
April 25th (Anzac Day weekend)	October 16th (Annual General Meeting)
May 23rd	October 23rd-24th (Bird Count)
June 27th	November 28th

The Executive should like to wish all the Toowoomba Bird Club members and their families a very Merry Christmas and "Good Birding" in 1982.

Lesley Ball, Editor

## The Things Birds Eat!

On the ninth and tenth of October I was working on Fitzroy Island which lies a little way off Cairns. The island is primarily National Park with a rugged, rain-forested interior and predominantly rocky shore line. On the last afternoon I took the opportunity to do some casual bird watching. There is a new resort on the island, at present an unobtrusive establishment, and it is hoped that it shall remain so. Owing to restricted time it was in the vicinity of the resort that I conducted my birding although a protracted exploration of the island would be a delight to any person ornithological. In the surrounds of the resort, then, were present many species typical of north Queensland, among them being Yellow-spotted Honeyeaters, Dusky Honeyeaters, Yellow-bellied Sunbirds, a Noisy Pitta, Metallic Starlings and White-rumped Swiftlets. A wander along the littoral revealed the ubiquitous Silver Gull, Crested and Lesser Crested Terns, a lone Ruddy Turnstone, Eastern Reef Herons and an occasional, dainty Black-naped Tern.

The large, smooth boulders festooning the water line provide resting places, especially for the dominant species i.e. the Crested Terns and the herons. On several of these rocks I encountered many small "mounds", consisting entirely of fish scales and bones. These "mounds" measured approximately 35-38mm at basal circumference with an approximate 25mm height. I have since arrived at the conclusion that these objects have been regurgitated by the birds occupying these rocks, although I never witnessed the actual act. These "mounds" are not bound together in a typical pellet fashion and would disintegrate upon the dehydration of the body fluids holding them. Each mound was surrounded by a wet area of this substance. I deduce that these "mounds" are the property of the terns rather than the herons as they contained no crustacean exoskeleton remains. These would be in evidence in keeping with the herons' catholic diet. I was not aware that terns regurgitated indigestible matter but suppose such may be the case as with many other birds. (If herons are the culprit then, on Fitzroy Island leastways, their diet is entirely piscatorial). This is the only explanation I can offer regarding these "mystery mounds" however I can stand open for correction.

Whilst on the subject of avian diets, at Julia Creek, late September, I watched a pair of kestrels feeding their brood - four in number. Their prey consisted mainly of large insects, especially locusts; reptiles - among them being a Burton's Legless Lizard, and a small mammal - type unknown, probably a mouse. I was surprised, however, to see a bird return with a Diamond Dove, something which I have never seen before.

As my work is of a peripatetic kind, I am limited by space as to the number of reference books I can tote about - Slater's two field guides to be exact. Therefore there is probably a host of literature corroborating these observations but, nevertheless, I found them interesting and hope readers may find them the same.

R.G. Hobson

## AN INTRODUCTION TO BIRD-WATCHING FOR D.D.I.A.E. EDUCATION STUDENTS

In September, I had the opportunity to present a practical session on Australian birds to level III Education students at the Darling Downs Institute as a part of their unit in Environmental Education. My aim was to interest these prospective primary teachers in the bird life they might see around their schools so that they in turn, might en-

encourage their students to observe birds. The presentation took the form of a slide lecture with taped bird calls one week, followed by a field trip to Lyon's Park on the Warwick Road the next week. Students were given a copy of the Toowoomba Bird Club Checklist to record which birds they could identify during the month of September, as well as the attached sheet on Bird-Watching. The slide lecture was presented to small groups of approximately 16 students each in the Science Laboratory. To complement the audio-visual, a bulletin board display including photographs, articles and bird illustrations had been arranged, as well as a display of books on Australian birds and two albums of bird feathers collected over the years.

The outings at Lyon's Park were particularly successful and were held on four mornings from 8:00 - 9:00 am. Many students had never seen a bird through binoculars before, and the ever present Scaly-breasted Lorikeets provided endless enjoyment for the bird-watchers each morning. As well, the friarbirds and Pale-headed Rosellas were easily seen. The calls of the White-throated Warblers, Striated (Black-headed) Pardalotes and Reed Warblers provided yet another aspect of bird-watching for the students to experience, and the sighting of some type of water bird each morning and the appearance of a Kestrel on three mornings added another dimension to the outings. In addition, we watched a pair of Magpie-larks building their mud nest in a nearby tree. Reasons for selecting Lyon's Park as the venue for the field trip included proximity to the Institute, ease of parking and the opportunity for seeing and hearing a variety of birds. The results of the four outings are listed below:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Number of Species</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Weather</u>
Monday, Sept. 14	26	10	fine
Tuesday, Sept. 15	27	9	cold and windy
Wednesday, Sept. 16	23	34	warm and fine
Friday, Sept. 18	23	27	windy, fine

It is interesting to note that more birds were observed on Monday and Tuesday when the attendance was lower. The number of species recorded during the four day period was 35 by a total of 80 bird-watchers. Five species I had observed in the two weeks prior to the field trips were not sighted during the four mornings: Dusky Moorhen, Restless Fly-catcher, Grey Fantail, Olive-backed Oriole and Figbird.

Bird List, Lyon's Park. September 14-18 (8:00 - 9:00 am only)

	<u>M</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>F</u>		<u>M</u>	<u>T</u>	<u>W</u>	<u>F</u>
Little Pied Cormorant		✓		✓	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	✓			
White Faced Heron	✓				Rufous Whistler		✓		
Black Duck		✓	✓		Willy Wagtail			✓	✓
Wood Duck	✓				Reed Warbler	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kestrel	✓		✓	✓	White-throated Warbler	✓	✓	✓	✓
Feral Pigeon	✓	✓	✓	✓	Noisy Friarbird		✓	✓	✓
Crested Pigeon		✓			Little Friarbird	✓	✓	✓	✓
Galah	✓	✓	✓	✓	Blue-faced Honeyeater	✓	✓		✓
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	✓				Striated Pardalote	✓	✓	✓	✓
Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	✓	✓	✓	✓	Sparrow	✓	✓	✓	✓
Little Lorikeet	✓	✓		✓	Double-barred Finch		✓	✓	
Cockatiel	✓	✓	✓	✓	Starling	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pale-headed Rosella	✓	✓	✓	✓	Common Mynah	✓	✓	✓	✓
Red-rumped Parrot	✓	✓	✓	✓	Magpie-lark	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kookaburra	✓	✓	✓	✓	Magpie	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sacred Kingfisher	✓				Pied Currawong	✓	✓		
Tree Martin	✓	✓			Crow	✓	✓	✓	
Fairy Martin			✓						

BIRD-WATCHING

A. EQUIPMENT:

1. Binoculars - Select a small, light weight efficient pair of 7X or 8X magnification as they are much easier to hold steady than a more powerful 16X or 20X pair. The first number is the magnification and the second is the diameter of the lens in millimetres (how much light gets into lens). If you wear glasses, use soft eye piece directly on glasses.

7 X 35

7 X 50

8 X 40

2. Bird Identification Books -

Slater, Peter, A Field Guide to Australian Birds, Volume 1, Non-Passerines, Rigby, Adelaide, 1970.

Slater, Peter, A Field Guide to Australian Birds, Volume 2, Passerines, Rigby, Adelaide, 1974.

Pizzey, Graham, A Field Guide to the Birds of Australia, Collins, Sydney, 1980.

B. DETAILS:

1. Where to go.

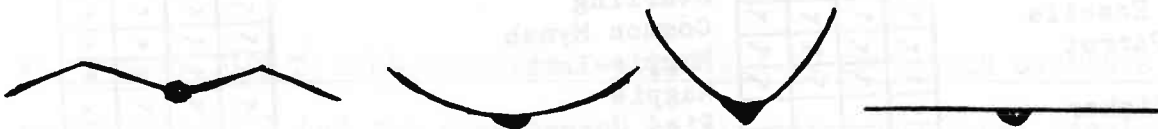
Areas near water - creeks, ponds, mudflats, beaches, swamps  
Forested areas - rainforest, eucalypt forests, parks, scrub

2. When to go.

Early morning is the best time to see birds, late afternoon is a reasonable time and midday is the worst time.

3. What to look for.

- a. Size and shape (compare bird with familiar object)  
b. Flight (hovering, soaring - wing position for birds of prey\*  
pattern or direction of flight)  
c. Call or song  
d. Habitat  
e. Food (insects, seeds, fruit, algae, fish, worms)  
f. Behavior (does bird exhibit any unusual habits; ie. bowerbird)  
g. Coloring and other features:  
1) Beak - color and shape  
2) Feet - type  
3) Eye details  
4) Tail - length and shape  
5) Unusual patterns in wings, tail, body  
6) Color of: head . breast . back . rump . legs



\* Note wing position for soaring birds of prey (kites, falcons, large raptors)

PEREGRINE FALCON - The Good News and the Bad News.

Greg Czechura, Queensland Representative of the Australian Raptor Association, is preparing a survey of the status of Peregrine Falcon in southeastern Queensland. The initial stages of this survey requires information from observers who have knowledge of breeding sites, areas where Peregrines are regularly encountered, and prey species. Information on sites which have been used for breeding but which are no longer in use are also of value.

When providing information on breeding sites, it would be appreciated if information could be provided on type of nest site (cliff ledge, tree hollow, disused nest, etc.) and general surrounding e.g. in heavily timbered area, in freshwater swamp, etc. Prey species need only be listed. If declines are suspected to have occurred in particular areas, please note these accordingly.

Location of specific sites will not be published.

The survey will follow-up reports where possible to obtain more detailed information on numbers of birds and particular nest site conditions. It is hoped that the survey will ultimately provide a basis on which the SE.Q. Peregrine population can be monitored. Immediate information will allow estimations on density, optimality of habitats and feeding ecology to be made. Some of this data will be published, sources of information will be acknowledged accordingly.

Anyone wishing to provide information or participate on surveys should contact Mr Czechura at the following addresses:-

c/- Department of Herpetology,  
Queensland Museum,  
Gregory Terrace,  
FORTITUDE VALLEY. Q. 4006.

or

39 Mitchell Street,  
CABOOLTURE. Q. 4510.

The following item was contributed by the staff of the Department of Education's Amaroo Environmental School at Kleinton.

In about the second week of August the two teachers went to Perseverance Dam to check on the pair of Peregrine Falcon nesting there. When they arrived they found one adult shot.

Later visits have found that a pair of Peregrines are still in residence but are unknown if they are an adult and juvenile or not. The birds are very wary now and difficult to observe. The report is that they may be seen in the trees at the back of the dam.

EGRET HERONRY - Nest Count

Neil McKilligan of the Toowoomba Field Naturalists Club is looking for volunteers to help tag Egret nests at the Gatton Egret Heronry.

It is to be held this Sunday, December 20th. Any interested people should meet at the Apex Lake, Gatton at 2.00 p.m. The count is expected to finish at 4.30 p.m. to be followed by a bar-b-q at Lake Clarendon (B.Y.O. everything). Neil, a lecturer in Biology at the D.D.I.A.E., will talk about Egret biology and his research at the heronry.

FIELD DAY REPORT

PRESTON RD./STOCKYARD CREEK RD. 22/11/81.

Members participating: Lesley Ball, Ron Colpus, Graham and Jane Corbin, Maggie Drabsch, John and Ann Shore.

It was a beautiful day after heavy rain. As usual members participating were few, but the rewards great.

After leaving Piggots the first stop was on Preston Rd. itself. We followed the road along the rim of the Great Dividing Range and turned off onto Stockyard Creek Road. A large number of birds was seen, some not so common.

Species List:

Australasian Grebe, White-faced Heron, Sacred Ibis, Pacific Black Duck  
Black-shouldered Kite, Australian Kestrel, Bar-shouldered Dove,  
Crested Pigeon, Galah, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Little Lorikeet,  
Cockateil, Pale-headed Rosella, Common Koel, Channel-billed Cuckoo,  
Pheasant Coucal, Tawny Frogmouth (nesting), Kookaburra, Rainbow Bee-  
eater, Dollarbird, White-backed Swallow (nesting), Fairy Martin,  
Richard's Pipit, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Rufous Whistler, Grey  
Shrike-thrush, Satin Flycatcher, Willie Wagtail, Eastern Whipbird,  
Golden-headed Cisticola, Superb Fairy-wren, Variegated Fairy-wren,  
Red-backed Fairy-wren, White-throated Gerygone, Striated Thornbill,  
Noisy Friarbird, Little Friarbird, Noisy Miner, Lewin's Honeyeater,  
Brown Honeyeater, Striated Pardalote(nesting), Silvereye, Sparrow, Red-  
browed Firetail, Zebra Finch, Double-barred Finch, Chestnut-breasted  
Mannikin, Starling, Common Mynah, Figbird, Spangled Drongo, Magpie-  
lark, Dusky Woodswallow, Grey and Pied Butcherbirds, Magpie, Pied  
Currawong, Crow.

MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES

Great Crested Grebe. 18.10.81. Kinkleigh Pt., Somerset Dam. MJ. SP.  
Rufous Night Heron. 24.10.81. Jones Rd., Withcott Nth. AHS., JAS.  
Black-necked Stork. 11.10.81. Gatton Cattle Egret Heronry. MJ., LB.  
SP., VS.  
Pink-eared Duck (4). 11.10.81. Grantham Waterhole. MJ., SP., LB., VS.  
Wedge-tailed Eagle. 9.10.81. Ocean St., JEC., JCC.  
Peregrine Falcon. 11.10.81. Grantham Waterhole. MJ., SP., LB., VS.  
Caspian Tern. 18.10.81. Kinkleigh Pt., Somerset Dam. MJ., SP.  
Bridled Tern. 3.11.81. Bamaga. RGH.  
Common Noddy. 23.11.81. Thursday Is. RGH.  
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo (3). 10.10.81. Over Dunmore St. LB, JB.  
Australian King Parrot. 24.10.81. Symesthorpe. JEC., JCC.  
Large-tailed Nightjar. 13.11.81. Prince of Wales Is. RGH.  
Uniform Swiftlet. 4.11.81. Bamaga. RGH.  
Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfisher. 25.10.81. Cairns. RGH.  
Noisy Pitta. 24.10.81. Redwood Park. MA., PM.  
Cicadabird. 24.10.81. Prince Henry Drive. GC.  
Pied Monarch Flycatcher. 25.10.81. Cairns. RGH.  
Mangrove Golden Whistler. 3.11.81. Bamaga. RGH.  
Crested Shrike-tit. 24.10.81. Redwood Park. MA., PM.  
Clamorous Reed-warbler. 25.10.81. Shorelands Drive, Withcott. AHS.  
Scarlet Honeyeater. Dunmore St., Toowoomba. LB.  
Black-faced Woodswallow. 31.10.81. Hodgson Vale. MJ., SP., LB.  
Victoria's Riflebird. 3.10.81. Paluma. RGH.  
Trumpet Manucode. 4.11.81. Bamaga. RGH.

MA: Michael Atzeni. JB: John Ball. LB: Lesley Ball. GC: Graham  
Corbin. JEC: Jim Corbin. JCC: Jane Corbin. RGH: Rod Hobson. MJ:  
Marilyn Jacobs. PM: Pat McConnell. SP: Sandy Pottinger. VS: Vera  
Simon. AHS: Ann Shore. JAS: John Shore.

NEW MEMBER

Terry Reis. 20 Roma St., Toowoomba. Welcome, Terry.