

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

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NEWS-SHEET No. 76 - APRIL 1982

What a tremendous month March was for our club! Yet another new bird to add to our list, three new members, an enjoyable film night and a really successful outing to round it all off.

Firstly, the film night: thanks once again to Marilyn Jacobs for obtaining the films and booking the room and equipment. Enthusiastic members such as Marilyn, really help to give our club a little extra sparkle to the regular birdwatching. Fifteen members turned up, and though this was a little disappointing, it was great to see a couple of new faces. The films themselves were very entertaining. There was a large selection of birds, some known, some unknown. The water birds and waders featured in the first film about the Coorong of South Australia. Then there was a short film from Finland that had a number of delightful cameos on bird behaviour, particularly one scene with three fluffy, young owls sitting on a branch. The third film concentrated on the more unusual birds of Australia, their calls, colour and behaviour. One item of interesting, but useless, trivia I picked up from this film is that the Brush Turkey is one of the few birds in the world with a vertical tail! See what you miss out on. Anyway, the members present enjoyed themselves and spent a pleasant and valuable time afterwards over light refreshments. It is always worthwhile making new, and renewing old acquaintances.

I must give my apologies to Michael Atzeni, our Records Officer, for omitting his name under his informative Annual Bird Summary. Michael's valuable work often is underestimated and, perhaps, passed unnoticed by the majority of our members. It isn't until you read an article, such as the one last month, that you realize how important his work is. After all, the aim of our club is "to encourage the observation and study of birds of the Toowoomba area." These records are the culmination of that aim, now, and more importantly, for the future. At the film evening and the field day people spoke to me about the article. They found it very interesting. Of course, Michael's job would be virtually impossible without member's bird notes. I should like to second his thanks to those people, especially those that keep monthly gold check-

EDITORIAL cont'd

lists. Anybody wanting to know more about our records or the gold checklists please get in touch with Michael.

Another item that was spoken about at our latest get-togethers was the index of the news-sheets. Most people have been impressed with the comprehensiveness of this mammoth task. For those members that may wish to read an article in an earlier issue, there are complete copies kept at both the Toowoomba City Council and the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education libraries. The club's set is kept by our Record's Officer and photocopies of back issues are available at a small charge.

March's field day was a real beauty. Seventeen members, new members and visitors had a marvellous time. I won't say any more, but leave it to you to read about in Ann Shore's report.

Lastly, two lucky members are going overseas in May. Ann and John Shore are taking a few weeks well-deserved break and setting out for the "Old Country". Where else? What a beautiful time of the year to be going. Have a lovely holiday, both of you, and try to get some birding in.

Meanwhile, all correspondence that would normally go to Ann as Secretary/Treasurer may be redirected to me (address at introduction of news-sheet) for the months of May and June.

Lesley Ball

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NEW TOOWOOMBA BIRD

228. Painted Button Quail (*Turnix varia*). 28.3.82.  
Seventeen Mile Road, four miles (6.5km) north of Helidon. Lesley Ball, Sister Patricia Comerford, Marilyn Jacobs, Sandra Pottinger, Vera Simon.

Pair of birds - fossicking in leaf litter under fallen branches at the side of the road. Black and white speckling on crown and around eye; red eye; prominent chestnut patch at side of neck and shoulder; grey breast with cream spots; bright yellow legs. They seemed to be a pair as one was smaller and less brightly coloured.

This was a brilliant opportunity to observe these birds as, after scratching in the undergrowth, they singly sauntered across the road approximately two metres in front of the car. They disappeared into the scrub on the other side after allowing us to watch them for about ten to fifteen minutes. A delight and surprise to us all.

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GOSSIP FROM "GAMARREN"

Out at "Gamarren", Cunnamulla, the home of Susan and Tony Patterson, there has been a Spotted Bowerbird's bower for a large number of years. It is always being attended to, cleaned up and added to. The decorations are mainly, of course, white things - neck bones in quantity, green and white glass, about 100 ring pulls, small green, wild cucumbers and tiny pine cones.

My son, Tony, purchased a box of new tank bolts, quite large really. They were over 2.5cm (1 inch) long and about .6cm ( $\frac{1}{4}$  inch) in diameter, with a solid head. He took the lid off the box, used a few and left the opened box on a bench in the large garage-workshop. They began to disappear and Tony thought the children had been taking them as he found a couple dropped outside the garage. Until, one day, while

NORTH QUEENSLAND MEMOIRS cont'd

GOSSIP FROM "GAMARREN" cont'd

working in there, a Spotted Bowerbird came in and took the last bolt out of the box. He tracked it to the bower and there, were seventy-two of the bolts. All the nuts had been left. It could not grip them, evidently.

Phyllis Christian

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NORTH QUEENSLAND MEMOIRS

On the 19th September, last year, Pat McConnell and I set off for a fortnight's 'birding' in the Cairns area.

We were stationed at Edmonton, between Gordonvale and Cairns, where we were given the red carpet treatment by Pat's uncle and aunty. To them we are most grateful and grossly indebted.

Not having our own car limited our travels to short day trips in the vicinity of Cairns and Edmonton, but we also had a very memorable and treasured three days as the guests of Hans and Judy Beste, by hiring a not-so-memorable Moke. The Bestes live near Julatten in the rainforest at the foot of Mt. Lewis and are well-known in the field of natural history.

With Han's guidance and experience our list of species burst into full bloom and included sightings of many of the species restricted to the north. Our brief stay did not curtail the implantation of many vivid memories. These include our dusk vigil at a shaded rainforest pool in the Julatten Caravan Park to see the secretive Red-necked Crake quietly emerge, skirt the pool once and then vanish into the rainforest again. Feasting our eyes on the Golden Bowerbird at its bower high on Mt. Lewis - the avian gem of the mountain rainforest - was perhaps our biggest highlight.

A walk along the then-dry Big Mitchell Creek to see its resident Prince Charming, the White-browed Robin, with its contrasting chocolate and white plumage; the sighting of Beach Stone-Curlews at Yule Point; our first sighting of Fig Parrots at Four Mile Beach, are just a few more of the exciting moments made possible by Hans. Even the night he unsuccessfully tried to 'call in' a Sooty Owl was one to remember. Our hopes were soaring knowing that Hans had managed to bring them in to land within a few metres on other occasions. We are very thankful to Hans and his family and will always associate this trip with them.

We spent a day on the reef where the highlight was, undoubtedly, snorkelling over the reef, revelling in its splendour. We visited Michaelmas Cay where we picked up several new species including Great Frigatebirds.

The Cairns Esplanade provided excellent wader-watching and should not be missed by any north-bound 'birdos'.

Pat and I had not done any serious bird-watching in the north before so we both reaped a harvest of about sixty new species apiece in a total of about 230 species, for the two week holiday. A birding bonanza - yes, but the North still holds much more for us and we will return.

Below is a list of species that were new to both Pat and I or to either one of us.

Michael Atzeni

NORTH QUEENSLAND MEMOIRS cont'd

Species list:

Great Frigatebird	Yellow-breasted Boatbill
Wandering Whistling-Duck	White-eared Monarch
Green Pygmy-Goose	Pied Monarch
Red-necked Crake	Shining Flycatcher
White-browed Crake	Northern Fantail
Bush Thick-knee	Chowchilla
Beach Thick-knee	Variiegated (Lovely) Fairy-wren
Grey Plover	Australian Fernwren
Mongolian Plover	Atherton Scrubwren
Large Sand Plover	Large-billed Gerygone
Common Sandpiper	Fairy Gerygone
Greenshank	Mountain Thornbill
Terek Sandpiper	Little Treecreeper
Great Knot	Helmeted Friarbird
Black-naped Tern	Macleay's Honeyeater
Sooty Tern	Yellow-spotted Honeyeater
Bridled Tern	Graceful Honeyeater
Lesser Crested Tern	Bridled Honeyeater
Common Noddy	Varied Honeyeater
Torresian Imperial-Pigeon	Yellow Honeyeater
Squatter Pigeon	Black-chinned Honeyeater
Red-tailed Black Cockatoo	Brown-backed Honeyeater
Double-eyed Fig Parrot	Dusky Honeyeater
Gould's Bronze-Cuckoo	Yellow-billed Sunbird
Barn Owl	Black-throated Finch
Large-tailed Nightjar	Nutmeg Mannikin
White-rumped Swiftlet	Metallic Starling
Little Kingfisher	Yellow Oriole
Yellow-eyed Cuckoo-shrike	Golden Bowerbird
Lemon-bellied Flycatcher	Spotted Bowerbird
White-browed Robin	Great Bowerbird
Grey-headed Robin	Tooth-billed Catbird
Grey Whistler	Spotted Catbird
Bower's Shrike-thrush	Victoria's Riflebird
	Black Butcherbird

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Michael has also supplied a full list of the birds they saw, divided into the different areas they visited. Lack of space denies it being included in this issue, however, I'll be sure to publish it in an issue before all our Toowoomba Birdos migrate north for the winter. Ed.

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FIELD DAY REPORT - HOOD'S LAGOON 28.2.82

I'm not even going to mention Goomburra (what a washout of a place) as our outing to Hood's lagoon turned out to be rather a special one and everybody enjoyed themselves. The day, after starting out as overcast, turned sunny and warm as eight members ventured forth.

We took the Postmans Ridge turning and followed the Old Toowoomba Road to Helidon Spa, in order to see a variety of bush birds, and did not go unrewarded. One stop afforded us a view of a large babble of Grey-crowned Babblers carrying on just as you expect, also a flock of White-throated Needletail swirling high overhead, plus a pair of Pheasant Coucals calling in a very uncharacteristic manner.

Hood's Lagoon did not disappoint us, especially as the first bird seen as we got out of our cars was the Swamp (Marsh) Harrier, one of last months new Toowoomba birds. We watched it for quite a while as it swept

FIELD DAY REPORT cont'd

low over the lagoon searching for prey. A circuit of the lagoon was called for, and as we approached the water two Magpie Geese rose up from the weed where they had been hidden. It was an ecstatic moment as Michael had already told us that he, Pat McConnell and Terry Reis had made this first sighting for Toowoomba earlier in the month and he doubted if they would still be there. They circled overhead and then flew off in a south-easterly direction. The Whiskered Tern, Comb-crested Jacana and Latham's Snipe were highlights of the variety of birds seen there.

Morning tea was held at the Helidon weir and from there we continued to the Gatton Lagoon on the Old Toowoomba Road. Here another large amount of water birds were seen including the Australasian Shoveller, Pink-eared Duck and Red-kneed Dotterel.

At this point the group split up, some to return home while others went on their own birding jaunts, agreeing on the great morning we'd had.

Those present were Michael Atzeni, Lesley Ball, Shane Brady, Ron Colpus, Marilyn Jacobs, Sandy Pottinger, Ann and John Shore.

Lesley Ball

Species list:

Hoary-headed Grebe, Australasian Grebe, Darter, Little Pied Cormorant, Pacific Heron, White-faced Heron, Cattle Egret, Great Egret, Intermediate Egret, Sacred Ibis, Straw-necked Ibis, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Magpie Goose, Plumed Whistling-Duck, Black Swan, Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal, Australasian Shoveller, Pink-eared Duck, Hardhead, Maned Duck, Black-shouldered Kite, Whistling Kite, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Australian Kestrel, Marsh Harrier, Dusky Moorhen, Purple Swamphen, Eurasian Coot, Comb-crested Jacana, Masked Lapwing, Red-kneed Dotterel, Black-winged Stilt, Latham's Snipe, Whiskered Tern, Feral Pigeon, Peaceful Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, Crested Pigeon, Galah, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Little Lorikeet, Cockateil, Pale-headed Rosella, Pheasant Coucal, White-throated Needletail, Kookaburra, Sacred Kingfisher, Rainbow-Bee-eater, Dollarbird, Welcome Swallow, Fairy Martin, Richard's Pipit, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Cicadabird, Willie Wagtail, Eastern Whipbird, Grey-crowned Babbler, Golden-headed Cisticola, Superb Fairy-wren, Red-backed Fairy-wren, Noisy Friarbird, Little Friarbird, Noisy Miner, Striated Pardalote, Silvereye, House Sparrow, Chestnut-breasted Mannikin, Starling, Mynah, Olive-backed Oriole, Magpie-lark, Grey Butcherbird, Pied Butcherbird, Magpie, Crow. 77 species

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FIELD DAY REPORT - RAVENSBOURNE NATIONAL PARK 28.03.82

Visits to the National Park at Ravensbourne are always both interesting and enjoyable: notably so on this occasion. Not only was the weather perfect and a splendid number of members and visitors turned out but they were treated to a feast of bird-watching both there and on the outward and return journeys.

An assortment of birds were seen en route to the park. In the cool, moist rainforest itself much 'chatteration' was heard from high above in the canopy where lorikeets, honeyeaters and others were busily flitting about or feeding among some of the flowering gums while the air was filled with the constant humming of bees. Ground cover birds were at first mostly conspicuous by their absence but Brown Cuckoo-doves and a White-headed Pigeon were seen at close quarters, while a

FIELD DAY REPORT cont'd

flock of Top-Knot Pigeons obligingly settled just above us, the three species making 'first sightings' for some members of the group. A Green Catbird allowed good viewing as it sat quietly just above the path. Later, in a different area, special highlights were a Shining Bronze-cuckoo, (possibly a juvenile), a Crested Shrike-tit and another White-headed Pigeon while at the same time being treated to a rich concert of song from a Golden Whistler just above our heads.

After a picnic lunch members split up, some turning homeward and others to return to the rainforest where they were rewarded by seeing several Black-breasted Button-Quail and Noisy Pittas. As though this were not enough for a day of excellent bird-watching, some members then rounded off the trip by sighting White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes, a pair of Painted Button-Quail and a family of Fuscous Honeyeaters on their way home via the gravel road to Helidon. These three were within the Toowoomba Bird Club's own area and the Painted Button-Quail yet another new name to add to the club's still-growing list.

Those present were Laurie Atzeni, Michael Atzeni, Lesley Ball, Ron Colpus, Patricia Comerford, Graham Corbin, Jane Corbin, Maggie Drabsch, Ron Hopkinson, Marilyn Jacobs, Lydia Lyndon, Dorothy Makin, Sandy Pottinger, Ann and John Shore, Vera Simon. A welcome visitor was Joe Palfi.

Ann Shore

Species list:

Little Pied Cormorant, Pacific Black Duck, Maned Duck, Brown Goshawk, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Australian Kestrel, Australian Brush-Turkey, Black-breasted Button-Quail, Painted Button-Quail, Masked Lapwing, Top-knot Pigeon, White-headed Pigeon, Feral Pigeon, Brown Cuckoo-dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, Common Bronzewing, Crested Pigeon, Galah, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Little Lorikeet, Australian King Parrot, Crimson Rosella, Pale-headed Rosella, Red-rumped Parrot, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Horsfield's Bronze-cuckoo, Shining Bronze-cuckoo, Kookaburra, Rainbow-Bee-eater, Noisy Pitta, Welcome Swallow, Fairy Martin, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike, Cicadabird, White's Thrush, Eastern Yellow Robin, Jacky Winter, Crested Shrike-tit, Golden Whistler, Rufous Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Black-faced Monarch, Rufous Fantail, Grey Fantail, Willie Wagtail, Eastern Whipbird, Golden-headed Cisticola, Superb Fairy-wren, White-browed Scrubwren, Brown Gerygone (Warbler), White-throated Gerygone (Warbler), Brown Thornbill, Yellow-rumped Thornbill, White-throated Treecreeper, Noisy Friarbird, Noisy Miner, Lewin's Honeyeater, Fuscous Honeyeater, Scarlet Honeyeater, Mistletoebird, Spotted Pardalote, Striated Pardalote, Double-barred Finch, Chestnut-breasted Mannikin, Starling, Mynah, Paradise Riflebird, Spangled Drongo, Green Catbird, Magpie-lark, Grey Butcherbird, Pied Butcherbird, Magpie, Pied Currawong, Crow. 75 species

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MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES

Last month I received a phone call from one of our travelling members in Tasmania, saying .."How do I get my birds into the members' bird notes?". It is very simple, there are two ways: a) you may write to me direct, titling your item 'Members' bird notes' or b) if you are in the Toowoomba area and keep a gold checklist any notes written in at the end of the list are passed on to me by Michael. Please remember we like to hear any members report. It does not have to be an unusual sighting, just a new bird for you or a bird you've never seen in your garden before. We're always interested in what people are seeing.

MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES cont'd

Rufous Night-heron. 23.2.82. 'Bouligar' near Hebel. DN.  
 Magpie Goose. 28.2.82. Hood's Lagoon. AHS.  
 Pink-eared Duck (8). 6.2.82. Old Toowoomba Rd. Lagoon. LB., MB.  
 Plumed Whistling-duck (50+). 23.2.82. 'Bouligar' near Hebel. DN.  
 Collared Sparrowhawk. 25.3.82. Echo Valley. LA., MA., SA.  
 Marsh Harrier. 28.2.82. Hood's Lagoon. AHS., JAS.  
 Painted Button-Quail. 28.3.82. Helidon Hills. LB., PC., MJ., SP., VS.

Latham's Snipe. 28.2.82. Hood's Lagoon. AHS.  
 Whiskered Tern. 28.2.82. Hood's Lagoon. AHS.  
 White-headed Pigeon. 28.3.82. Ravensbourne N.P. AHS.  
 Top-knot Pigeon. 28.3.82. Ravensbourne N.P. AHS., JAS.  
 Australian King Parrot. 28.3.82. Ravensbourne N.P. AHS.  
 Turquoise Parrot. 20.3.82. Nr. Wallangarra. MA., PM., TR.  
 Hooded Robin. 20.3.82. Wallangarra. MA., TR.  
 Restless Flycatcher. 10.2.82. "Shorelands", Withcott. AHS.  
 " " 16.3.82. Charleville. DN.  
 White-browed Babbler. 20.3.82. Nr. Wallangarra. MA., PM., TR.  
 Chestnut-rumped Hylacda. 20.3.82. Girraween N.P. MA., PM., TR.  
 Southern Whiteface. 20.3.82. Wallangarra. MA., TR.  
 Dusky Woodswallow. 25.2.82. Jones Rd., Withcott. AHS.  
 " " 22.3.82. "Shorelands", Withcott. AHS.

LA: Laurie Atzeni. MA: Michael Atzeni. SA: Simon Atzeni. LB:  
 Lesley Ball. MB: Marie Bou. PC: Sister Patricia Comerford. MJ:  
 Marilyn Jacobs. PM: Pat McConnell. DN: David Newlands. SP: Sandy  
 Pottinger. TR: Terry Reis. VS: Vera Simon. AHS: Ann Shore. JAS:  
 John Shore.

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FIELD DAY FOR APRIL

Date: Sunday, 24th April, 1982. Place: Blanchview Road  
 Assembly Point: Pigott's Car Park. Time: 7.15 a.m. for departure  
 at 7.30 a.m. sharp

Some good birding has been done in this area recently and so should be worth a visit. We'll be going via Flagstone Creek Road. When we reach the Warrego Highway we'll cross it and return to Toowoomba by Murphy's Creek Road. Remember it's not a strenuous day so come and enjoy yourself.

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NEW MEMBERS

We'd like to welcome three new members this month.  
 Sister Patricia Comerford, Good Samaritan Convent, 28 Campbell St., T'mba.  
 Lydia Lyndon, 24 Mabel St., Toowoomba.  
 Dorothy Makin, 34 Marian St., Miles, Q. 4415.

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PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Articles in our newly received publications include more about "that Pool at Julatten" and "Birdwatching in Botswana". Get in touch with Michael Atzeni who'll only be too glad to loan any newsletter or magazine.

Darling Downs Naturalist. March 1982. (Journal of the Toowoomba Field Naturalist Club.)  
 Ecos. Autumn 1982. (CSIRO Environmental Research)  
 Q.O.S. Newsletter. March 1982. (Queensland Ornithological Society)