

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

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NEWS-SHEET No. 80 - AUGUST 1982

Last month, when my thoughts turned to this year's bird count, my mind continued to ramble and think of past bird counts. I've participated in a number of them now, even before I was a Bird Club member.

Over the past few years the same group, Marilyn Jacobs, Sandy Pottinger, Vera Simons and myself, have been covering the same area. I'm sure other groups get a similar enjoyment in their area as we, when we retrace last year's path eager to see familiar landmarks (birdmarks?). For example, are the Satin Bowerbirds still at the golf club and perhaps the old bower is in use again? Will we see the Crested Hawk near the club house as we have done on previous occasions? We always see a good collection of finches along this stretch, will they fail us this year? Those dratted Wedge-tailed Eagles went into hiding last year, will we see them soaring above the ranges this time? Then there's the 'parrot tree'. So called because it often gives us 4-5 species when we reach it about 3.30pm. Later on there's the lagoon where we sometimes pick up a Spoonbill or perhaps something more exotic.

We've never seen a 'new' species, we don't often see an uncommon one, but for me the thrill of seeing a species in the same place, at the same time, year in and year out is just as exciting.

Come and get some excitement, be 'in' on this year's bird count.

October is also the month for our Annual General Meeting. If you have anything you would like to go on the agenda, please let Ann Shore know before the end of September. We hope to have the agenda printed in News-sheet No. 82. Remember, if there is any way in which you want our club to expand or change you must be there at the meeting to give your opinion.

Well I've been keeping the best for last. Yes, Hood's has done it again with two new species to be added to our Club list this month.

EDITORIAL cont'd

Hood's Lagoon is certainly a marvellous venue for seeing a variety of birdlife. Different water birds, waders and raptors are commonly seen there. Toowoomba Bird Club members are welcomed by the owner, as long as gates are closed behind you, and a circuit of the lagoon takes no time at all. Give it a try one day, you won't be disappointed.

Our film evening was quite successful once again, with members numbers being swelled by visitors. It was lovely to be able to personally welcome some of our newer members. The films themselves were a delight. There was excellent photography and interesting subject matter. It was great to have some topical comments from Ray Viljoen about a South African film 'For The Love of an Eagle' which was quite controversial in that country when it was released. Thanks once again to Marilyn Jacobs who did most of the organizing.

Lesley Ball, Editor

--ooOoo--

NEW TOOWOOMBA BIRDS

229. Wandering Whistling-Duck (Dendrocygna arcuata). 29.7.82.
Hood's Lagoon. Michael Atzeni, Pat McConnell.

A single bird identified. On the water - very dark upperparts including back of neck and crown; rufous brown sides; pale face; dark bill; flank plumes white and shorter than the buff plumes of the Plumed Whistling-Duck. In flight observed the deep chestnut inner wing coverts.

230. Baillon's Crake (Porzana pusilla). 1.8.82. Hood's Lagoon.
Michael Atzeni, Graham Corbin, Pat McConnell. (More commonly known as Marsh Crake).

A single bird which was surprisingly co-operative, wandering into the open areas quite often.
Light grey breast and abdomen; vent and undertail white barred black; upperparts brown flecked with black.

--ooOoo--

WOMEN'S LIB IN BIRDS

You know, some birds have it made where Women's Lib is concerned. Birds of the feathered variety I mean.

Amongst these I do not include any cuckoos - these conscienceless birds, both male and female, desert their offspring at the drop of an egg.

No, I mean - well look at emus:- Momma lays the eggs and Poppa conscientiously starts incubating them even before she has laid the full clutch. Perhaps understandably, when you think of this interference in domestic affairs, Momma then wanders off and her mate sits on the eggs for eight weeks continuously, "leaving the nest rarely and eating little". This is a good slimming gimmick - he loses from 4-8 kg in these weeks. When the chicks hatch the male then leads them around in a search for food, snuggles them under his wings at night and leads a celibate life for 18 months while following his parental duties. An exemplary life! I wonder what mother has been up to? Has she also led such a chaste life?

WOMEN'S LIB IN BIRDS cont'd

Not so the female Cassowary:- Having been most unapproachable, staring any would-be suitor out of countenance until she makes her choice. She then lives with him for a few weeks, lays her eggs and leaves him to cope with the domestic chores of incubating and rearing the chicks. She goes off to find herself another handsome male with his glossy black feathers, blue neck, red wattles and his helmet. But for all his good looks, this male suffers the same fate while she may find a third victim. But these males are not so ardent in their paternal feelings - nine months finds him chasing off his chicks to fend for themselves. Then after a short period of freedom the poor male falls again for the female charms and the domestic round starts once more.

My real admiration, however, is for the Little or Fairy Penguin (Eudyptla minor). After mating, the male and female take equal shifts in incubating the eggs laid by the female, and fishing. These shifts vary in length of time: but once the chick has hatched chores are on a strictly day to day basis. The male goes fishing at dawn and returns at dusk with a stomach full of fish which he regurgitates to feed his family. The next day he stands guard over the chick or chicks while the female does the fishing.

That the fishing is not considered by them to be a chore is obvious by the reluctance they show in leaving their play in the surf on their return to shore and the numerous times they line up on the beach to return to the rookery and then slither back into the water. Delightful to watch.

"They may rear two clutches per season" says the ranger in his talk on their life and habits "and no divorce is known".

Who needs divorce with such equality of the sexes?

Peggie Beaton

---ooOoo---

BACK DOOR BIRDWATCHING

The morning of the 24th July dawned drizzly and bleak. So much for my birding this morning I thought disconsolately. I sat by the open back door trying to catch as much warmth as possible from the weak sun. Eventually my dull brain became aware that there was an amazing amount of bird activity going on. The house is about one and a half metres off the ground at the back and we overlook the neighbour's long back garden. As I watched the Figbirds in a young gum in this yard, three female Satin Bowerbirds flew into view. Out with the binocs to verify as I hadn't seen them in this area before. No doubt about it, and the fourth bird that had flown in with them, according to Pizzey, was a fourth year immature. While I delighted in their scrambling about this tree after I don't know what (was it insects or water off the leaves?) my binocs passed over another green bird. Hey swing back to that one, it wasn't a Bowerbird. No, three Olive-backed Orioles had just flown in to make a similar display amongst the branches of the gum. Another bird that I hadn't seen in this area before.

Whether it was the rainy weather or the blustery wind, I don't know, but that tree was particularly popular that morning. At one time it had a Currawong, Mynahs, Figbirds, Olive-backed Orioles and Satin Bowerbirds clambering about in it. Although I've got a sneaking suspicion that the Currawong just wanted to know what was going on. Before or since that morning birds rarely visit that tree and if they

BACK DOOR BIRDWATCHING cont'd

do it is more of a staging post as they check out the route for their next 'hop'.

It must have been a morning for the congregation of birds, for about three-quarters of an hour later, during a bustling shower, I watched a Pale-headed Rosella, Mynahs, Figbirds, an Olive-backed Oriole and a Black-headed Cuckoo-shrike in another neighbour's Cherry-plum tree.

Who needs to go out to watch birds?

Lesley Ball

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FIELD DAY REPORT - LAKE BROADWATER. 25.7.82.

- 7.15am Mercedes in our front garden/
'We're going in the Mercedes?'
'Yes...'Happy Holden' has the stutters.'
- 7.30am Depart from Pigott's car park.
Fog lying in hollows on the Downs, giving the appearance of small lakes. Dense fog from Mt. Gowrie to Bowenville.
'Never seen fog out this far'/
- 8.30am Turn onto Cecil Plains road.
'Isn't that a Letter-wing Kite?'
'Wish it was. Look ... there's the nest/ right beside the road/ There's five of them. Three immature Black-shouldered Kites and parents.'
'Look at the fox streaking across the wheatfield. How can the ducks know he's heading their way from that distance?'
- 9.00am Turn onto Lake Broadwater road.
'Stop the car....I think I saw a frogmouth.' (Saw a frogmouth from a Mercedes?)
'OH..aren't they cute. Look at that decorated fringe over their eyes. One is looking at us for sure. Such disdainful looks..so superior'/
- 9.30am Lake Broadwater..great masses of teal..swallows..(Which are Fairy Martins?). Nine Pelicans flying in .. (Aren't they something!)..never seen so many stilts or dotterels. (Is that a Black-fronted? Those two are different from the rest.)
Look at those two teal... they're shovelling. Crazy mixed up pair.
- 10.30am Walk around Lake. Meet Ranger.
'Watch out for pig traps from this corner on. Yes... they're prevalent around here...cause a lot of damage...great tuskers. Have you seen the brolgas?'
'Brolgas out here?'
'Yes..they raised one young here last year....they've just arrived back.'
Two brolgas...yes..they're within their range.
'We raised 30 cygnets here last year. Have you seen the sea-eagles?'
And sure enough there they were...when we were told where to look. (later in the day they soared majestically overhead.)
- 12.30pm Lunch....twelve Apostlebirds drinking and bathing with much ado in nearby puddle...harrassed by a Blue-faced Honeyeater.
- 1.30pm Tour recommended by Ranger over land behind Lake. Cypress pine country..and honeyeaters. Spiny-cheeked, Striped, Blue-faced, Yellow-faced, Brown....'What's that one? It has white down from its ear'/ A quick look into Slaters and Pizzey.

FIELD DAY REPORT cont'd

'A White-plumed Honeyeater'/.a first for all of us/
'Stop the car...look...a Red-capped Robin...two of the...and
there's their mates/ Look at that brilliant red'/
On homeward trip...five Blue-faced Honeyeaters drinking from
puddle.

5.30pm Home. Wonderful day..weather fantastic..good company...75
species..one new sighting...and in a Mercedes/ What more
could one ask?

The good company was Lesley Ball, Marilyn Jacobs, Sandy Pottinger,
Ann Shore, Vera Simon, Audrey and Ray Viljoen.

Vera Simon

Species list:

Australasian Grebe, Australian Pelican, Little Black Cormorant,
Pacific Heron, White-faced Heron, Great Egret, Sacred Ibis, Straw-
necked Ibis, Black Swan, Grey Teal, Pink-eared Duck, Hardhead, Black-
shouldered Kite, Whistling Kite, Marsh Harrier, Australian Kestrel,
Masked Lapwing, Red-kneed Dotterel, Black-fronted Plover, Black-
winged Stilt, Silver Gull, Feral Pigeon, Peaceful Dove, Crested
Pigeon, Galah, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet,
Little Lorikeet, Cockateil, Pale-headed Rosella, Red-rumped Parrot,
Pheasant Coucal, Tawny Frogmouth, Kookaburra, Welcome Swallow, Tree
Martin, Fairy Martin, Richard's Pipit, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike,
Red-capped Robin, Grey Shrike-thrush, Grey Fantail, Willie Wagtail,
Grey-crowned Babbler, Golden-headed Cisticola, Brown Thornbill,
Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Striped Honeyeater,
Noisy Friarbird, Little Friarbird, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Noisy Miner,
Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, Mistletoebird, Spotted
Pardalote, Striated Pardalote, Silvereye, Sparrow, Double-barred
Finch, Common Starling, Common Mynah, Magpie-lark, White-breasted
Woodswallow, Grey Butcherbird, Pied Butcherbird, Magpie, Currawong,
Raven, Crow, Apostlebird, Brolga, White-breasted Sea-eagle, White-
plumed Honeyeater.

75 species

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MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES

Australian Bittern. 6.7.82. Hook Is. Whitsunday Coast. LB.
Black-necked Stork. 18.7.82. Karrasch's Lagoon. MA, GC, PM.
Glossy Ibis (2). 29.7.82. Hood's Lagoon. MA, PM.
Wandering Whistling-Duck. 1.8.82. Hood's Lagoon. MA, GC, PM.
Marsh Harrier. 18.7.82. Hood's Lagoon. MA, GC, PM.
Brown Quail. 16.7.82. Cooby Dam. MA, GC, JCC.
Painted Button-Quail. 16.7.82. Geham. MA, GC, JCC.
Buff-banded Rail. 16.7.82. Highfields. MA, GC, JCC.
Red-necked Avocet (3). 18.7.82. Dyer's Lagoon. MA, GC, PM.
Whimbrel. 3.7.82. Wilsons Beach, Whitsunday Coast. JB, LB.
Red-necked Avocet. 5.7.82. Mornington Island. RH.
Greenshank. 3.7.82. Wilsons Beach, Whitsunday Coast. JB, LB.
Brolga. 25.7.82. Lake Broadwater. AHS.
Bush Stone-Curlew. 7.7.82. Airlie Beach, Whitsunday Coast. JB, LB.
Silver Gull. 21.7.82. Lake Annand. GC, JCC.
Red-crowned Pigeon. 4.7.82. Dingo Beach, Whitsunday Coast. JB, LB.
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo. 29.7.82. Hood's Lagoon. MA, PM.

Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo (2). 4.8.82. Hood's Lagoon. MA, GC, JCC,
BF, PM.

MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES cont'd

Boobook Owl (dead). 12.7.82. Cnr Gowrie Junction Rd and Warrego Highway. LB.
Sooty Owl. 14.7.82. Yungaburra. RH.
White-throated Nightjar (2). 4.8.82. 4km N.E. of Helidon. MA, GC, JCC, BF, PM.
Rose Robin. 30.7.82. Leslie St. (near Stenner). MJ.
Red-capped Robin. 25.7.82. Lake Broadwater. AHS.
Restless Flycatcher. 18.7.82. Lion's Park. JD.
Large-billed Gerygone. 4.6.82. Dingo Beach. RH.
Varied Honeyeater. 3.7.82. Wilsons Beach, Whitsunday Coast. JB, LB
White-plumed Honeyeater. 25.7.82. Lake Broadwater. AHS.
Yellow White-eye. 29.6.82. Mornington Island. RH.
Black-backed Butcherbird. 25.6.82. Coen. RH.
Painted Firetail. 5.5.82. Mt. Isa. RH.
Tooth-billed Catbird. 8.5.82. Paluma. RH.
MA: Michael Atzeni, JB: John Ball, LB: Lesley Ball, GC: Graham Corbin, JCC: Jane Corbin, JD: Joe Deuble, BF: Brian Foulis, RH: Rod Hobson, MJ: Marilyn Jacobs, PM: Pat McConnell, AHS: Ann Shore.

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FIELD DAY FOR AUGUST

Date: Sunday 22nd August, 1982. Place: Prince Henry Drive
Assembly Point: Pigott's Car Park.
Time: 7.15 a.m. for departure at 7.30 a.m. sharp

In the club area for a change, and a section we haven't been in for a while. Depending how energetic you feel it may be a stroll around or a drive with many stops. Those wishing to continue may want to go on to Redwood Park and into some of the back roads of Withcott.

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PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

B.O.C. July 1982. (Bird Observers' Club)
Q.O.S. June, July, August 1982. (Queensland Ornithological Society)
Sunbird Volume 12, Number 1. (Q.O.S.)
Urimbirra. June, July 1982. (Chinchilla Field Naturalists' Club)

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T.B.C. Publication Deadline

Articles for the Toowoomba Bird Club news-sheet have a deadline of the fourth Sunday of the month. This coincides with the Field Day and may be handed to any of the Executive or mailed to the Editor.

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