

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

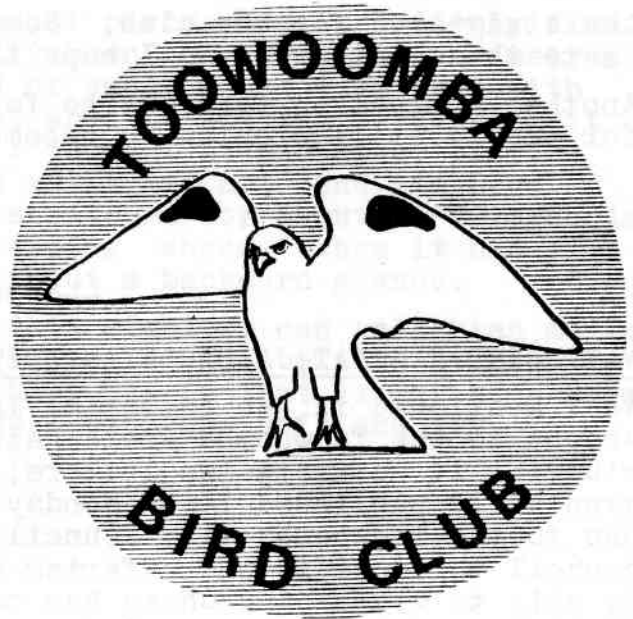
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NEWS-SHEET No. 82 - OCTOBER 1982

October is a busy month for our bird club. It always has the two most important events on our calendar. You all know what I'm referring to; the Annual General Meeting and the Annual Bird Census (or 'bird count' as it is fondly known). Both of these can only be successful with the support of our members.

The turnout at the last A.G.M., to put it bluntly, was abysmal. Perhaps the venue and the weather were a little daunting. We can't do anything about the weather, but we have decided to go back to our previous custom of having the A.G.M. in a member's home. The Atzeni family have kindly offered their home for the evening and I hope members show their appreciation by coming along. Sometimes people are a little shy of coming to a meeting where they know few or no people. Please try to swallow that lump in your throat and turn up to a evening that will not dwell too much on business, but more on entertainment. Ray Viljoen is going to show some of his excellent slides of South African birds. Anyone who has not seen Ray's photography is missing out on a treat, and his accompanying anecdotes are a delight in themselves. Ann has received nominations for all the executive positions which is really pleasing (more details later in this news-sheet). Please remember to bring a plate and, Ann, make sure it's gingerbread!

We haven't had much response for volunteers for the bird count. This is a real shame as these records are just so valuable. Even if you can manage only a short walk around your home area I believe it is better than no records of birds at all. We do not expect commitment from sunrise to sunset, an hour or so early in the morning or before dusk is better, as I eternally repeat, than nothing at all.

As a supplement to this month's news-sheet is a small 'mud-map' of

EDITORIAL CONT'D

the study area for the club. Some people may be slightly confused as to the exact area and I hope this may help.

Another nomination form may be found at the end of the news-sheet for people still wishing to become involved with the club.

Lesley Ball, Editor

--ooOoo--

WATERBIRD HABITAT, ALDERLEY STREET

As I mentioned in the editorial last month, the club executive had access to the Toowoomba Field Naturalists submission. After studying it we wrote two letters; one to The Chronicle which eventually published it on Monday, 27th September, and another one to the Toowoomba City Council supporting the scheme, urging council to adopt it and offering any help that we, as a club, may be able to give. Ann Shore has copies of the letters and of the Field Naturalists' proposal for any member to read.

Lesley Ball

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BACKYARD BIRDWATCHING 3

The articles about backyard birdwatching have been of great interest, pinpointing what a relaxed interest birdwatching is. I have a friend who states she has no hobbies as all hobbies are expensive and entail hard work. I must introduce her to B.Y.B-watching!

In my wandering life my 'backyards' are many and various. My present one again is in a National Park, and the view is over low-lying paddocks to an estuary. These paddocks are full of wild life, the noisiest and most predominant being Spur-winged Plovers.

In my 'frontyard' i.e., over the bonnet of our van, the Skep, are various trees, in one of which are nesting a pair of Nankeen Kestrels. Further away is a tree in which reside a pair of Swamp Harriers.

As these birds hover and soar over the paddocks a pair of plovers will fly up and attack them. Others join in and the predators turn and twist to avoid the fearless and aggressive plovers; soaring and falling - I have even seen one do a complete sideways roll to avoid an attacking plover.

I have yet to see one of the kestrels or harriers cross any paddock, let alone land in one, without being driven off - for the encounters always end in victory for the plovers.

I wonder how the predators manage to feed themselves and their young. They certainly have no luck in Plover Country.

Peggie Beaton

--ooOoo--

KESTREL BEHAVIOUR

I wonder if anybody can help me with fathoming this snippet of behaviour I chanced to see one day. I am a teacher at a small school just outside of Toowoomba and an Australian Kestrel (Nankeen Kestrel) normally roosts on our classroom roof or on the bend of the downpipe.

KESTREL BEHAVIOUR CONT'D

A couple of weeks ago it was on its usual perch when it suddenly flew down to some topsoil which had recently been spread about four metres away. Expecting it to catch a lizard or small mouse I watched with interest. You can imagine my surprise when it started scratching at the soil with its talons. Initially I thought it was after prey, however it gave no indication of this as it did not bend its head down to investigate at any time. It scratched for about 60-90 seconds with its body quite erect seemingly staring ahead. When it had finished it flew back to its roost without a backward glance.

Has another member any experience of this sight or can enlighten me in any way to what the bird was doing? I just do not believe it was after food and the only other idea I have had is that it may have been sharpening its talons though the topsoil was very soft and dry.

Lesley Ball

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RETIRING PRESIDENT

Our long-standing and long-suffering president, Ron Hopkinson is definitely going to resign this year. Lack of a nomination and the urging of members pressured Ron into accepting the position for one more year at the last election of officers. Ron has done sterling service for this club in the time he has been a member. Joining in July 1976 Ron was soon found on the club executive, October 1976 to be precise. He held the positions of Editor, Records Officer and Librarian, sometimes all at once, from that October to January 1980 with eight months off due to illness. March 1980 saw Ron back in harness as our President an office he has held to this time. Now he wants to sit back and be an 'ordinary' member for a change. It is with gratitude and some sadness that we see Ron relinquish his chair of office. THANK YOU FROM EVERYONE, RON!

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EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS

Nomination for president: Nominator - Sandy Pottinger
 Nominee - Marilyn Jacobs

Marilyn is a founding member of the club and has always had an active interest in its activities. She has participated in every bird count, kept checklists, and provided films for our social evenings. A worthwhile candidate.

Nomination for secretary/treasure: Nominator - John Ball
 Nominee - Ann Shore

Ann is renominating for this position and her past endeavours speak for themselves.

Nomination for records officer: Nominator - Ann Shore
 Nominee - Michael Atzeni

Michael is also willing to renominate for this position and his hard work in the past needs no embellishment, just read past news-sheet articles and members's bird notes.

Nomination for editor: Nominators - Roy and Peggie Beaton
 Nominee - Lesley Ball

I, too, wish to renominate and I hope all my readers are there to vote for me.

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FIELD DAY REPORT - GOOMBURRA STATE FOREST 26.9.82.

Goomburra? Yes, a miracle, we had really made it at last! Frustrated by rain and swollen creeks on each of the previously planned occasions but this time a splendid field day trip, enjoyed by young and old when several of the party chalked up firsts. 'First' visits to Goomburra State Forest which more than lived up to expectations, and 'first' sightings of birds for a number of people.

Driving in from the New England Highway the scene changes; the rolling downs with their rich farmland and straight roads giving way to poorer country with hills rising on either side and then closing in while the road becomes windy, crossing small creeks and old watercourses; change again to open savannah and that to denser forest with magnificent tall gums trailing vines and the creeper-covered undergrowth that provides ideal cover for the many birds whose voices fill the air.

A pleasant walk from the main camping site along either side of the creek yield various honeyeaters, flycatchers and thornbills, while above us the unmistakable calls of the bellbirds as they fed on the blossoms and the melodious songs of the whistlers were plain to be heard. Highlights were Crimson Rosellas flashing by; a Topknot Pigeon high against the sky; a cock Satin Bowerbird, his plumage gleaming and iridescent as it was caught by the sun and later a party of hen Satin Bowerbirds hopping through the grass and low bushes. A pair of Eastern Spinebills were easy to observe as they flitted here and there close-by and a White-naped Honeyeater and Rufous Fantail were obviously enjoying the benefits of fresh running water in the creek. What a beautiful place! Peace, and a feast for eyes and ears under that tall canopy. While picnicking we watched a Red Wattlebird, saw three Glossy Black Cockatoos fly over and spotted a Sulphur-crested Cockatoo sitting quietly in a hole in a huge gum beyond the creek.

Later we climbed, by car I must admit, on up the ridge to Sylvester's Lookout but were disappointed to find that most of the breathtaking view from the crest of the range was obscured by smoke from numerous bushfires. Compensations were hearing a Green Catbird miaowing nearby and a Noisy Pitta (seen by some people who also heard a Lyrebird) and the deep impression left by the great palms, tree-ferns and magnificent trees of the true rain forest, many bearing orchids and huge ferns high overhead.

Ann Shore

Species list:

To and from Goomburra S.F. - Pied Cormorant, Pacific Heron, White-faced Heron, Straw-necked Ibis, Royal Spoonbill, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Maned Duck, Black-shouldered Kite, Australian Kestrel, Common Bronzewing, Crested Pigeon, Galah, Crimson Rosella, Eastern Rosella, Pale-headed Rosella, Kookaburra, White-backed Swallow, Welcome Swallow, Richard's Pipit, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Willie Wagtail, Noisy Friarbird, Little Friarbird, Striated Pardalote, Starling, Magpie-lark, Black-faced Woodswallow, Grey Butcherbird, Magpie, Crow.

Goomburra S.F. - Topknot Pigeon, Brown Cuckoo-dove, Glossy Black Cockatoo, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Australian King Parrot, Fantailed Cuckoo, Azure Kingfisher, Kookaburra, Noisy Pitta, Rose Robin, Eastern Yellow Robin, Crested Shrike-tit, Golden Whistler, Rufous Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Black-faced Monarch, Leaden Flycatcher, Rufous Fantail, Grey Fantail, Eastern Whipbird, Superb Fairy-wren, White-browed Scrubwren, Brown Gerygone, White-throated Gerygone, Brown Thornbill, Striated Thornbill, Red Wattlebird, Red-browed Tree-creeper, Noisy Friarbird, Lewin's Honeyeater, Yellow-faced Honeyeater,

FIELD DAY REPORT CONT'D

White-naped Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill, Spotted Pardalote, Silvereye, Red-browed Firetail, Satin Bowerbird, Pied Butcherbird, Magpie, Currawong, Crow, Bell Miner, Green Catbird, Lyrebird.

Members and friends present were Michael Atzeni, Lesley Ball, Ron Colpus, Maggie Drabsch, Bill Jones, Lydia Lyndon, Pat McConnell, Tricia Roberts and baby twins Dominique and Isaac, Barbara Rohnfelder, Tony Venaglia and Ray Viljoen

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MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES

Magpie Goose. 26.9.82. Hood's Lagoon. MA.
Spotted Harrier. 8.9.82. Drayton/Wellcamp Road. LB.
Brown Goshawk. 14.9.82. Charlton State School. LB.
Brown Quail.(6). 6/8.9.82. Drayton/Wellcamp Road. LB.
Whiskered Tern. 26.9.82. Hood's Lagoon. MA.
Brown Cuckoo-dove (6). 16.9.82. party of six feeding on wild tobacco berries, Murphy's Creek. AHS, JAS.
Topknot Pigeon. 26.9.82. Goomburra S.F. AHS.
Glossy Black Cockatoo. 26.9.82. Goomburra S.F. AHS.
Satin Flycatcher.(M). 28.9.82. 2 Memory St. MA.
Rufous Songlark. 25.9.82. Long grass at 15 Dunmore St, T'mba. LB.
29.9.82. 2 Memory St, T'mba. MA.
"Bell Miner". 26.9.82. Goomburra S.F. AHS.
Red Wattlebird. 26.9.82. Goomburra S.F. AHS.
Satin Bowerbird. 26.9.82. Goomburra S.F. AHS.
White-throated Nightjar. 10.9.82. Echo Valley. MA, PM.

MA: Michael Atzeni, LB: Lesley Ball, PM: Pat McConnell, AHS: Ann Shore, JAS: John Shore.

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FIELD DAY FOR OCTOBER

This month we replace the field day with our annual Bird Census. We are still looking for volunteers who may be able to help in any way for the weekend of the 23rd and 24th October. Don't feel that you can only help if you are an experienced birdwatcher. Members who can help by keeping tallies or driving cars are most welcome.

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PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

There are some interesting articles in our recent publications that the club holds. One that particularly caught my attention was CSIRO's report on fossil birds in their ECOS journal.

- BIRDS. Summer 1982. (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds)
- The Bird Observer. May, July, September 1982. (newsletter of the Bird Observers' Club)
- The Darling Downs Naturalist. September 1982. (Journal of the Toowoomba Field Naturalist Club)
- ECOS. Spring 1982. (scientific journal of CSIRO)
- Queensland Ornithological Society Newsletter. September 1982.
- Urimbirra. August, September 1982. (newsletter of the Chinchilla Field Naturalists' Club)

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DEADLINE

Articles for the T.B.C. news-sheet have a deadline of the fourth Sunday of the month. This coincides with the field day and may be handed to any member of the executive or mailed to the editor.

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- PLACE: 2 Memory St., Toowoomba.
- DATE: Tuesday, 19th October, 1982.
- TIME: 7.30 p.m.

- Election of officers.
- General Business.
- Slides of birds of South Africa
presented by Ray Viljoen.

TOOWOOMBA BIRD CLUB
NOMINATION FOR OFFICE

I nominate for the office of
in the Toowoomba Bird Club for the year 198 /8 .

Signed
Nominator

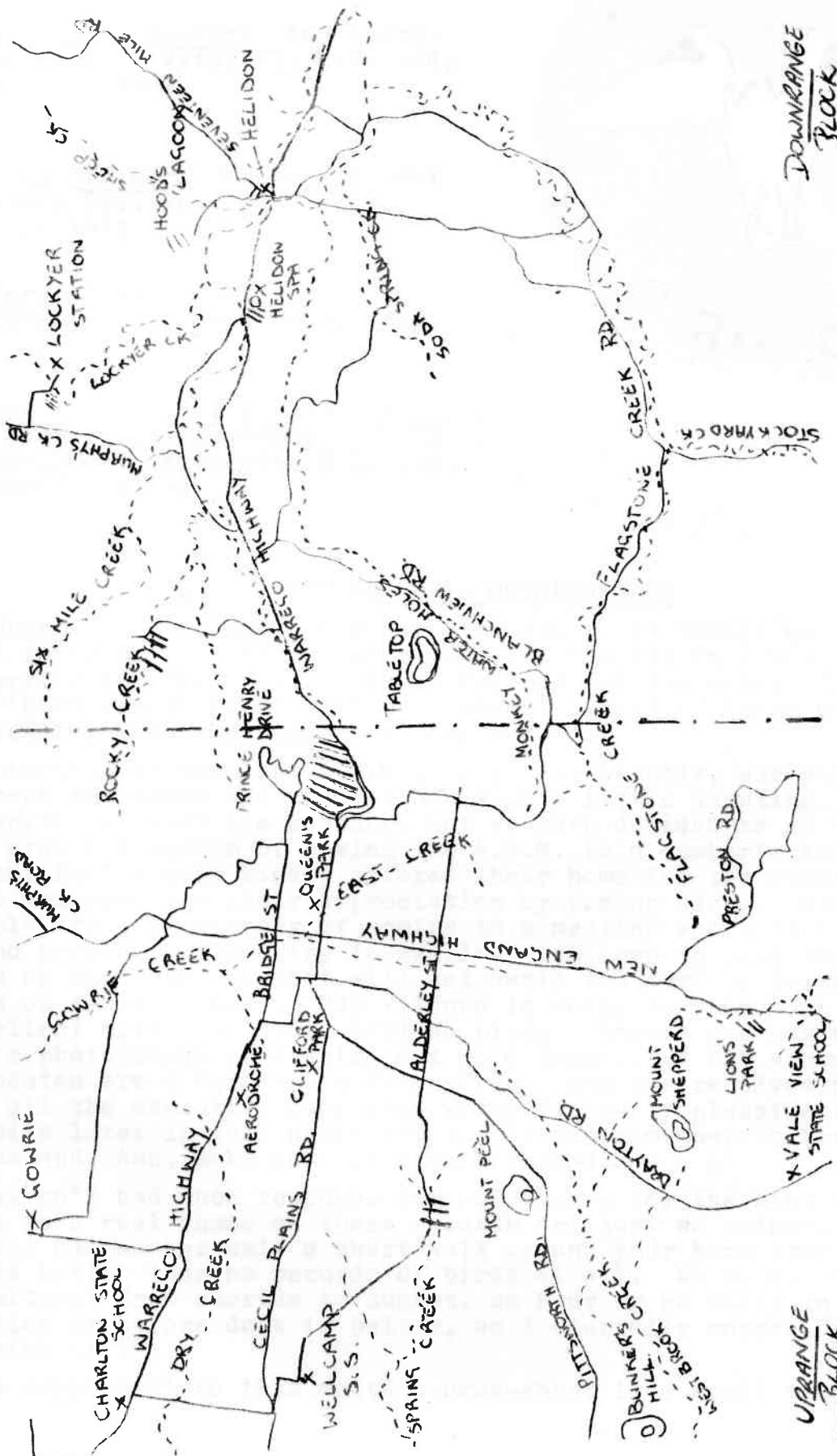
Date

I accept nomination for the office of
in the Toowoomba Bird Club for the year 1982/83.

Signed
Nominee

Date

MAP OF THE STUDY AREA OF THE TOOWOOMBA BIRD CLUB



DOWNRANGE
BLOCK

Downrange

Uprange

X Landmarks

//// Good birding areas

— Roads

--- Creeks

UPRANGE
BLOCK