



NEWS-SHEET No. 90

JUNE 1983

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

# toowoomba bird club

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## Club Officers

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## Annual Subscription

Ordinary/Family membership ..... \$8.00  
Student membership ..... \$4.00

## Activities

Field Outing and Monthly Meeting - 4th Sunday of each month - usually leave from Pigott's Car Park at 7.30 am.

Camping trips, film and slide evenings.

## News-sheet

Published monthly, before the outing. Articles have a deadline of the last day of the month and should be mailed to the editor.

## EDITORIAL

The month of May was a disaster as far as my birding outings were concerned. Due to the inclement weather, it was almost impossible to visit my usual haunts, and I found myself getting very restless. I've always enjoyed my 'birding', whether with friends or by myself, but I hadn't realized what an integral part of my life it had become. I find that it is a real boon to get away from it all for a couple of hours. The peace of the bush settles upon me and I go home relaxed and refreshed.

I often wonder what the birds do in such dreary weather as we've just had. I could tell that the smaller birds of prey had a bad time of it. As I drive to and from work there is a stretch of road between the Wilsonton airport and Gowrie Mountain that I particularly enjoy. The Black-shouldered Kites and the Australian Kestrels seem to have their territories well defined. A Kestrel enjoys the area between the airport and Cotswold Hills, then a Kite has his/her patch over Charlton Pinch, down on the flat before Gowrie Mountain another Kestrel takes over. Throughout the seasons I've watched them cruising, hovering or perching at their favourite sites. We'd had four or five days of continuous rain, sometimes quite heavy, and then came two beautiful sunny days. Driving home the first fine afternoon I saw no less than seven Kestrels and Kites on that stretch of road. Obviously hunting had been very difficult during the rain and they were taking every opportunity for a feed. .... But it made me ponder. I had always thought I had seen the same birds on their territory, now I have to consider if I see several different birds.

The rain also cancelled our last Club field outing which was a shame yet to be expected. Hopefully this month's outing to Lion's Park and Stockyard Creek will be busy with birds due to the replenished water-holes.

Talking of waterholes I expect most of you heard on the radio or read in the paper about the Toowoomba City Council's project to build walking tracks and establish rock pools at the top end of Redwood Park. According to "The Chronicle" (Saturday, May 28th)

"... rainforest is regenerating naturally in the area, but unfortunately there is a scarcity of native fauna because there is no permanent water. One of the first priorities for the community service order workers will be to establish rock pools along water courses in the area ....."

If this is done with care and forethought then an area of Redwood which at present is difficult to gain access to will be open to the public. I only hope that present wildlife isn't disturbed in the process and that walking tracks mean just that - walking! Any misuse of the tracks such as riding any type of bike, could lead to soil erosion and the eventual destruction of Redwood as we know it. Let us hope sense prevails and that more wildlife is attracted to the area than the abundance of birds that we already know use Redwood to great advantage.

Lesley Ball, Editor

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## MORNING DIP

The Noisy Miners are there first, squeaking excitedly, flexing their little muscles as they eye the water. Then in, with a flutter of wings. Out again, sending sparkling drops everywhere. In again! Out again! Then up to the cotoneaster to preen themselves, talking it all over. They return for a joyous free-for-all, until the concrete is awash and the plants round the little pool are all adrip.

MORNING DIP CONT'D

Silence for a while, and I peep out through the window. Two rosellas, a symphony of yellow and blue, are drinking quietly, like lady and gentleman. On the grass, silently watching, are three Figbirds, casually picking at the earth as they wait.

A harsh squawk, and a flurry of black, and there are the rowdy element -- the currawongs. The other visitors have vanished -- the rosellas in swift, swooping flight and the Noisy Miners and their friends into the shadows of the big cotoneaster. The currawongs stand around the edge, heads going up and down as they drink. Then, plonk! Into the water they go, struggling for position, pushing one another over the side so that the scene is alive with beating wings. Five minutes of watery hurly-burly, and off they go. Good riddance to a pack of larrikins!

I look out a little later. The Figbirds are back, two at the edge, one calmly sitting in the remains of the water, his grey-green back shining and his tail spread out like a bronze fan. Then, as though remembering breakfast, they all take off like black streaks. There are still the magpies and the butcherbirds to come. I can hear their warble in the distance, and I get up and head for a bucket .... and the tap.

You're never alone when you have a bird-bath!

Bert Pottinger

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16 MILLION BIRDS PUZZLE (from the "Telegraph", Tuesday, 15th March 1983)

"More than 16 million birds have mysteriously vanished from the Pacific atoll of Christmas Island in the first recorded disappearance of an entire island adult bird population, a Californian scientist said today.

Ralph Schreiber, Curator of Ornithology at the National History Museum of Los Angeles County, said 14 million sooty terns, at least 1.5 million wedgetailed shearwaters and one million birds of 16 other species had left their island home in the second half of 1982.

In addition, thousands of the birds' nestlings had been left to die.

Schreiber said that since last April the area around Christmas Island had been experiencing unusual climatic changes which had caused a rise in sea-level of about seven inches and a rise in ocean temperatures of about four degrees celsius."

thanks to Graham Corbin

This item is especially interesting as we hope to have a film about both the Pacific and Indian Christmas Islands at our film evening in July. If Marilyn is able to get hold of it, it is enjoyable viewing.

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10% DISCOUNT

The Club has renewed its agreement with Cyril's Camera Centre and Owen Camera House on all binoculars and camera gear to have a 10% discount to Bird Club members. Any member wishing to use this club facility will need a letter, confirming membership, from the Secretary.

Approaches have been made to local bookstores for a similar arrangement, but this yet to be finalized.

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## THE BIRDS OF BURRINJUCK

This article is from a leaflet given out by the Burrinjuck State Recreation Area.

The bird life at Burrinjuck is typical of the Southern Highlands in general. Many species are near the Western limit of their ranges, such as the Lyrebirds, Satin Bowerbird and Wonga Pigeon. However, very few birds of the Western woodlands reach Burrinjuck which is densely forested and more like the ranges East of the Divide.

The dry sclerophyll forest of the Murrumbidgee gorge is marked by a high diversity of eucalypts and understory shrubs. Despite the high species diversity, there is low structural diversity and thus the whole of the forest area can be thought of as a single habitat. The camping area provides a woodland like enclose in the forest.

Lake Burrinjuck is an artificial dam. Because most of the dam edge is very steep and subject to marked fluctuations in water level, there are none of the reed-beds typical of natural swamps. Due to this lack of cover, the number of water birds is limited.

The checklist is not complete. It is based on information collected from December 1981 to July 1982 and birds seen only once in this period have been omitted.

Names follow those in "A Field Guide to the Birds of Australia", by G. Pizzey.

Australian Pelican	Grey Fantail
Little Pied Cormorant	Willie Wagtail
Black Cormorant	Spotted Quail-thrush
Little Black Cormorant	Superb Blue Wren
White-faced Heron	White-browed Scrubwren
Australian Wood Duck	White-throated Warbler
Whistling Kite	Brown Thornbill
White-breasted Sea-eagle	Buff-rumped Thornbill
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Yellow-rumped Thornbill
Little Eagle	Striated Thornbill
Peregrine Falcon	Varied Sitella
Silver Gull	White-throated Treecreeper
Common Bronzewing	Red-browed Treecreeper
Wonga Pigeon	Red Wattlebird
Gang Gang Cockatoo	Noisy Friarbird
White Cockatoo	Yellow-faced Honeyeater
King Parrot	White-eared Honeyeater
Crimson Rosella	White-plumed Honeyeater
Fantailed Cuckoo	White-naped Honeyeater
Boobook Owl	Crescent Honeyeater
Tawny Frogmouth	New Holland Honeyeater
Fork-tailed Swift	Eastern Spinebill
Laughing Kookaburra	Mistletoebird
Sacred Kingfisher	Spotted Pardalote
Rainbow Bee-eater	Striated Pardalote
Superb Lyrebird	Grey-breasted White-eye
Welcome Swallow	Red-browed Firetail
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Satin Bowerbird
Flame Robin	Magpie-lark
Scarlet Robin	White-winged Chough
Eastern Yellow Robin	Pied Currawong
Grey Thrush	Australian Magpie
	Australian Raven

Peggie Beaton who was there in Spring of '82 says that the dam was really emptying. It was so dry that in Winter the Lyrebirds came for water and a birdbath in early mornings.

## TOWN VISITORS

If you can cast your minds back to Easter, you will remember it was showery and overcast. On the afternoon of Easter Saturday there had been a short, sharp storm. At four o'clock it was clearing but still quite dark and miserable. John and I took the opportunity to dash out to post some letters at the Margaret Street Post Office. Coming down the steps of the P.O. I glanced up at the rooftops across the road, and there, on the 'Strand' t.v. aerial, I saw a Peregrine Falcon. Quickly we got our binoculars out of the car and looked at this very damp, bedraggled bird. Its grey back, black head, yellow legs and cere were clearly seen, but its breast was muddy brown but became cleaner and paler as it dried.

Suddenly it dropped from the aerial and disappeared behind the roof-line. As it did, another Falcon appeared from nowhere and landed on the aerial. This happened two or three times with the birds changing place or changing aerials - sometimes the Crown Hotel aerial, another time the Graingrowers' - sending all the Galahs and pigeons to flight. One time a currawong chased a Falcon from the aerial and kept possession for a while. Only when it flew did the Falcon return. Once or twice the Falcons perched together, but not for long. When a Falcon left its perch it would be away for two to three minutes before returning or alighting elsewhere.

As we left after about fifteen minutes of watching, the Falcons were still there. What a brilliant flash of the unexpected in an, otherwise, bleak day.

Lesley Ball

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## MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES

White-eyed Duck (Hardhead). 11.4.83. East Creek Park, Marg. St. MJ.  
Black Kite. 10.4.83. Withcott. REH.  
" " 4.4.83. Drayton. JB, LB.  
Peregrine Falcon (2). 3.4.83. Strand Theatre aerial, T'mba. JB, LB.  
" " 3.6.83. Jubilee Park. MA, PM.  
Rose-crowned Fruit-dove. 6.6.83. Redwood Park. PM.  
Scarlet Robin. 24.4.83. Storm King Dam. DG.  
Rufous Whistler. 8 & 15.5.83. 15 Dunmore St, T'mba. LB.  
White-browed Babbler. 24.4.83. Wallangarra. DG.  
Slaty-backed Thornbill. 3.4.83. 30km east of Adavale. MA, PM, TR.  
Brown-headed Honeyeater. 14.4.83. Helidon Hills. DC, DG.

MA: Michael Atzeni, JB: John Ball, LB: Lesley Ball, DC: Dean Collins,  
DG: Don Gaydon, REH: Ron Hopkinson, MJ: Marilyn Jacobs, PM: Pat  
McConnell, TR: Terry Reis.

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## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

There are some interesting articles this month. We have a wide selection of journals and newsletters which members may borrow. Michael holds our modest collection if any of you wish to do some light reading. The Bird Observer has a detailed article on the Sacred Ibis, whereas the Q.O.S. newsletter has a couple of anecdotes on Pied Butcher-bird behaviour. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds' beautiful publication Birds writes about the destruction of rainforest throughout the world as well as some exceptional photography in their

RECENT PUBLICATIONS CONT'D

"Reserves Report". The Bird Observers Club has published its first Victorian Bird Report. Although it is for 1981, it has just been released and is very easy reading. Reports on the Easter campout at "Hillgrove" in the Auburn district occupy most of last month's Urumbirra with one being an amusing look at nature lovers in the field.

The Bird Observer. May 1983. (The Bird Observers' Club)  
Birds. Spring 1983. (The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds)  
The Darling Downs Naturalist. May & June 1983. (The Toowoomba Field Naturalist Club)  
Q.O.S. Newsletter. June 1983. (Queensland Ornithological Society)  
Victorian Bird Report. 1981. (The Bird Observers' Club)  
Urumbirra. May 1983. (The Chinchilla Field Naturalists' Club)

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FILM EVENING

When: Friday, 22nd July 1983

Where: Toowoomba Education Centre, Baker St, T'mba

What: 3 films mainly featuring seabirds. It will also be a time for a pleasant chat, meet some friends and have a cuppa.

Members, please bring a plate for a light supper.

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FIELD OUTING FOR JUNE

Date: Sunday, 26th June 1983.

Place: Lion's Park, Hodgsonvale  
and Stockyard Creek Road

Assembly Point: Pigott's Car Park

Time: 7.15 a.m. for departure at 7.30 a.m. sharp.

Previous outings to this area have always been rewarding. The past rains have seen some changes and movements in our local bird population so who knows what we may find. Please join us, we've scheduled this outing as a morning jaunt. Transport may be arranged through Ann on 30 3207.

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