



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

toowoomba bird club

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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

It was lovely to see Joyce Bartenstein at our last outing. Joyce has been a member for some time and, although she's been to our film evenings, finds it difficult to join us for the monthly outing. It was great to see her.

Many people are in the same situation as Joyce. It is often hard to put time aside on a weekend in order to go birdwatching. That is why most outings only last for the morning and those members that wish to make a day of it are able to continue at their leisure. I find that it is a good opportunity to catch up with fellow members' birding gossip - where birds have been seen - where members have been. We always manage to have a chat over a cuppa. Recent publications are generally available for those who can spare a little time from scanning the surrounding countryside to browse through some of the other clubs' news.

It is with great horror after looking back through the news-sheets to discover that Audrey Sorensen has not been formally welcomed to the club. Our sincere apologies, Audrey, and we do assure you that you are truly welcome. The March outing to your property was most informative and enjoyable.

Unfortunately Audrey was the third and last member to join this year. Admittedly we are a small group, however, our average for new members joining the club is twelve annually. So far this year our rate is not very good. Please encourage people who are interested in birds to join. As mentioned before it is not always possible to take advantage of our activities, but most people enjoy the news-sheet, and most importantly the subscriptions support the recording of bird information for this area. In September we are going to have a beginner's outing and with prior announcements, hope to encourage new people to the leisurely pastime of birdwatching.. It is important to promote birdwatching as the more people there are caring about our wildlife, the more chance it has to survive. Respect for the use and maintenance of our remaining bushland and pastures means that many species of birds are free from the pressure of dwindling habitats; a very real threat in today's world.

After all our efforts to have a film evening, we had to cancel it at the last moment due to industrial unrest at The National Library. Until that dispute is settled we are unable to borrow films. When things are back to normal we shall endeavour to organise another one.

Lesley Ball, Editor

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GREAT CRESTED GREBES

Returning from a Q.O.S. camp at Sunday Creek in the Conondales on the 13th of June 1983, John Walter and Steve Temple-Watts, who were travelling independently of one another, stopped at two different spots along the shore of Somerset Dam. John spotted 11 Great Crested Grebes (Podiceps cristatus) and Steve counted 26 of these birds. When they compared notes later they were amazed by the number of grebes that they had seen.

Steve decided to do a more detailed survey of the grebes on Somerset Dam and he invited me to go along with him to investigate the photographic possibilities, so on the 17th of July we set off from the launching site nearest the wall of the dam in Steve's boat. We cruised slowly along the shore along which runs the road to Kilcoy.

GREAT CRESTED GREBES CONT'D

En route, I photographed a Little Black Cormorant, and as we investigated the numerous inlets we counted the Great Crested Grebes until after some hours the weather turned bad. By that time we had counted about 130 grebes. We had also decided to build a hide in a tree which is submerged by the water.

On the 24th of June we returned to Somerset Dam earlier in the day than the week before. We built a hide as planned and I remained in the hide, while Steve set off in the direction of Kilcoy. While Steve was away I saw numbers of other birds e.g. Little Grebe, Cattle Egrets, Pied Cormorants, Pelicans, White-faced Herons, Darters, and on the shore Masked Lapwings, Willie wagtails, Magpie-larks and Noisy Min. s. On my right was another submerged tree in which was a large nest and I was aware of activity by two Whistling Kites. Welcome Swallows quite unafraid of our hide perched all around me, sometimes sitting only inches from my face. The Great crested Grebes, however, proved to be very shy and they afforded me only distant shots with my 800mm lens.

Steve returned to the hide tired and very cold after some hours, having counted no less than 600 Great Crested Grebes and 12 Caspian Terns while exploring just some of the inlets en route to Kilcoy. He estimates there may have been well over a thousand grebes on the dam that day!!

On the 31st of July we made a third trip to the dam. Our time there was, unfortunately, limited and I spent only two hours in the hide during which time I watched a Whistling Kite catch a fish, which it partially devoured before flying to its mate on the nest. I then watched the "change over" as the hunting bird "nudged" the incubating bird and the two then reversed their roles. During the time that I was in the hide Steve once again counted grebes and in that short time he counted over a hundred of them.

I felt the large concentration of Great Crested Grebes would be of interest and so I wrote this report. My sincere thanks to Steve Temple-Watts for taking me along with him and for allowing me to write this report on something which he has initiated.

Ray Viljoen

Members' bird notes show other reports of Great Crested Grebes, but this one is a mind boggler!

Thanks Ray, and congratulations on becoming President of the Toowoomba Field Naturalists Club. - Ed.

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AERIAL MYSTERIES

I was particularly interested in the item on Migration of Ibis, by Ann Shore, in the July news-sheet. I, too, have noticed how the ibis always come from the east, heading west over the range in flocks big and small, and almost every year at certain times.

I believe many migrating birds fly at night. Could it be that returning east-bound flocks of ibis make the journey during the night hours?

Incidentally, on bird mysteries: Long, long ago, when I had more money and less sense, I owned a magnificent pair of Zeiss binoculars with an almost incredible performance. They were the Telsexor Model, 16x 40, and I had to use a tripod with them. One night, with a brilliant full moon well up towards the zenith, and the air crystal

AERIAL MYSTERIES CONT'D

clear, I was watching the moon's craters through the glasses. Slowly across the wide, white surface of the moon drifted a black object on motionless wings. Considering the angle of sight and the magnification of the instrument, it must have been at a tremendous height. I am convinced it was not a flying-fox. It was certainly not an aircraft. Was it an eagle, or a migratory sea-bird? I don't think it was a pelican. I have often wondered what it was.

Bert Pottinger

Neil McKilligan also saw Ann's article and sent her a copy of his paper printed in "The Emu" in October 1975, titled 'Breeding and Movements of the Straw-necked Ibis in Australia'. This is what he has to say:-

'Movements over Toowoomba were predominantly north, north-east and east in late summer and autumn, when Ibis return to south-eastern Queensland, and in the opposite directions in late winter and spring when they depart'

The paper goes on to say that flooding of the Ibis' breeding grounds may produce the stimulus for the migration, as conditions are favourable.

One theory on how the Ibis locate inland floods is that they move towards distant rains. 'An Ibis at an altitude of 3 000 metres could see storm-activity at 1 000 metres from a distance of about 350 kilometres.'

Although this continues to make me full of awe for the ways of nature, I, like Ann, have never seen the Ibis returning from the inland in the flocks that they migrate to their breeding grounds.
Ed.

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FIELD DAY REPORT 24.7.83. MURPHY'S CREEK

A sunny day, perfect for bird watching, greeted 11 members (several of whom were 'new faces' to our Toowoomba outings) as we set off down the range on the Murphy's Creek Road. Our first stop was near Ballard railway crossing where we enjoyed a morning chorus of bird songs from the Pardalotes, Wrens, Silvereyes and Grey Fantails as they flitted in and out of the bushes. A bit further down the road, along the creek, two Whipbirds and several Scarlet Honeyeaters added their voices to the cool morning. A pair of Mistletoebirds, a beautiful male Golden Whistler and a female Rose Robin also greeted us here, while Ann's good eyesight found a soaring Wedge-tailed Eagle in the distance.

On to Spring Bluff for a much needed 'cuppa' and a chance to admire the well tended gardens. Ann again found us an aerial species, this time a lone White-backed Swallow.

We then proceeded to Murphy's Creek township where the brilliant colours of a male Red-backed Wren along the water's edge caught our eye, and a single Blue-faced Honeyeater was a welcome change from the persistent din of the Currawongs.

Lockyer Creek on the Lockyer Siding turnoff showed much evidence of erosion from the recent rains and was a peaceful setting for several species including a male Rufous Whistler. We were disappointed at the lack of water birds here. Before stopping for lunch at Rocky

FIELD DAY REPORT CONT'D

Creek, we were treated to a magnificent display from a Wedge-tailed Eagle who caused a great deal of anxiety amongst the inhabitants of a water hole as he landed nearby, pursued by several Magpies. He then took refuge in an adjacent tree but left when the persistent heckling got too much. We had some excellent views of this large raptor both in flight and perched.

Everyone agreed it had been a particularly enjoyable outing. Two enthusiastic members even continued on after lunch to Hood's Lagoon.

Members present: Joyce Bartenstein, Lesley Ball, Ron Colpus, Graham Corbin, Jane Corbin, Don Gaydon, Marilyn Jacobs, Sandy Pottinger, Bert and Margo Pottinger, Ann Shore.

Marilyn Jacobs

Species in Club Area:

Australasian Grebe, Little Black Cormorant, Little Pied Cormorant, White-faced Heron, Black Duck, Maned Duck (Wood Duck), Wedge-tailed Eagle, Dusky Moorhen, Purple Swamphen, Comb-crested Jacana, Feral Pigeon, Peaceful Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, Crested Pigeon, Galah, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Pale-headed Rosella, Kookaburra, Welcome Swallow, Tree Martin, Richard's Pipit, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Jacky Winter, Rufous Whistler, Grey Fantail, Willie Wagtail, Eastern Whipbird, Grey-crowned Babbler, Superb Fairy-wren, Red-backed Fairy-wren, White-throated Gerygone (Warbler), Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Noisy Friarbird, Noisy Miner, Brown Honeyeater, Scarlet Honeyeater, Striated Pardalote, Silvereye, Sparrow, Starling, Mynah, Figbird, Magpie-lark, Dusky Woodswallow, Pied Butcherbird, Magpie, Currawong, Crow. 48 species

Species out of Club Area: (Murphy's Creek)

Black Duck, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Aust. Brush-turkey, Peaceful Dove, Bar-shouldered Dove, Crested Pigeon, Galah, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Little Lorikeet, Pheasant Coucal, Kookaburra, White-backed Swallow, Rose Robin, Golden Whistler, Rufous Whistler, Grey Fantail, Willie Wagtail, Eastern Whipbird, Golden-headed Cisticola, Superb Fairy-wren, Red-backed Fairy-wren, White-browed Scrubwren, Brown Thornbill, Striated Thornbill, White-throated Treecreeper, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Noisy Miner, Lewin's Honeyeater, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill, Scarlet Honeyeater, Mistletoebird, Spotted Pardalote, Striated Pardalote, Silvereye, Sparrow, Red-browed Firetail, Double-barred Finch, Mynah, Olive-backed Oriole, Figbird, Magpie-lark (Peewee), Grey and Pied Butcherbird, Magpie, Currawong, Crow. 48 species

Total species 69

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MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES

Great Crested Grebe. 12.6.83. Perseverance Dam. MJ, SP.
" " " 9.7.83. Perseverance Dam. MJ, SP.
" " " 31.7.83. Perseverance Dam. LB, AHS.
Masked Lapwing nesting since approx. mid-June, hatched 5th & 6th July. Biggs Road, Withcott. AHS.
Red-tailed Black Cockatoo (2). 12.6.83. Ravensbourne. GC.
Glossy Black Cockatoo (4 flying over, N - S). 11.7.83. 'Shorelands' Withcott. AHS.
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo. 12.6.83. Perseverance Dam. MJ, SP
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo. 27.7.83. Feeding with Galahs at East Creek, Alderley St. - escapée?) LB.

MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES CONT'D

Spotted Harrier. 26.6.83. Flagstone near Back Flagstone turnoff.
LB, RRB, PB.
Azure Kingfisher. .6.83. Perseverance Dam. MJ, SP.
White-winged Chough (5-10). 20-28.7.83. Cotswold Hills Stud,
Warrego Highway, T'mba. LB.
Apostlebird (5). 26.7.83. Cotswold Hills Stud, Warrego Highway,
T'mba. LB.

LB: Lesley Ball, PB: Peggie Beaton, RRB: Roy Beaton, GC: Graham
Corbin, MJ: Marilyn Jacobs, SP: Sandy Pottinger, AHS: Ann Shore.

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FIELD OUTING FOR AUGUST

Date: Sunday, 28th August 1983. Place: Tenthill Creek, Dyer's
Lagoon

Assembly Point: Pigott's Car Park

Time: 7.15 am. for departure at 7.30 am. sharp.

We are trying to arrange to spend some time on Mr Mann's property at
Tenthill. A variety of species have been seen here. Hopefully we
can watch the Superb Fairy-wrens fighting their images in the car
side mirrors.

For those who need help with transport please phone Ann on 30 3207.

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NEW MEMBERS

Please refer to the editorial for further details of Audrey's belated
welcome.

Audrey Sorensen. "Lingalonga", Flagstone Creek. (March membership)

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PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

The Bird Observer. June & July 1983. (The Bird Observers' Club)
'Breeding and Movements of the Straw-necked Ibis in Australia',
The Emu. October 1975.

The Darling Downs Naturalist. June & July 1983. (Toowoomba Field
Naturalist Club)

Q.O.S. Newsletter. July 1983. (Queensland Ornithological Society)

The Sunbird. March 1983. (Queensland Ornithological Society)

Urimbirra. June & July 1983. (Chinchilla Field Naturalists' Club)

Western Australian Bird Notes. March & June 1983. (Western
Australian Group of the Royal Australasian
Ornithologists Union)

There are some excellent articles in these newsletters and journals.
Among them are the sighting of a new bird for Australia, the Red-
rumped Swallow; Victoria's Endangered Alps; Butterflies in the
Classroom; Rufous Rat Kangaroo. It is also interesting to read the
bird notes in the Western Australian newsletters.

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