



NEWS-SHEET No. 93
SEPTEMBER 1983

"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

Spring again and not only the birds are busy but also the birds. October is always a BIG month for the Club, with the A.G.M. and the Bird Count. More about those later in the issue.

Because the birds are so active and because the weather is so lovely this time of the year the September outing is a slight departure from our normal field trips. We are going to run a Beginners' Outing. We encourage anyone who is not confident in their own expertise or who knows somebody who would like to know more about birding to come along. This event is particularly for a membership drive, however it has the added bonus of encouraging people to become more aware of birds and their habitat. The Executive is appealing to the members to support this venture. We need new members to swell our ranks and make the Club more viable.

We hope to get some media coverage, but your involvement is very important. Even if you prefer to birdwatch on your own, just this once make it to an outing. I feel that the news-sheet and records that the Club has produced over the years are of enough value to ensure their continuation. Rally round the flag! Make the effort! Show your face! Bring your thermos and your biccies, enlighten the uninitiated into the thrill of birding. You never know, you might enjoy yourself at the same time!

THE CLUB IS ONLY AS GOOD AS ITS MEMBERS.

Lesley Ball, Editor

--ooOoo--

NEW TOOWOOMBA BIRD

238. Apostlebird (Struthidea cinerea). 22.8.83. Cotswold Hills Stud, cnr Warrego Highway and Nugent Pinch Rd. Michael Atzeni, Lesley Ball, Pat McConnell.

Unusually, a single bird located by its call. A dull, dark grey with lighter streaks giving a ruffled appearance. A sturdy beak; dark around the eye; brownish colour on the wings and a drooping black tail. The bird was feeding in a pile of stable waste.

Five of these birds were seen in the same place last month by Lesley Ball.

--ooOoo--

SHOULD ANNUAL BIRD COUNTS CONTINUE?

There have been several question marks over the value of our Annual Bird Count from a scientific view. Although the data collected is quantitative one can appreciate the number of variables that must be controlled in order to make satisfactory comparisons from year to year. To date, we have attempted to cover the same sectors each year. Unfortunately, this has not always been possible. In any case we have not placed any rules on time spent counting on the day, specific areas to be visited within each sector, or sampling methods e.g. walking a defined transect at a specific time.

The Executive discussed the fate of the census and decided that it was still important to have a major annual event for members to participate in, but to modify census methods to proper scientific standards would take the enjoyment out of it and probably deter many from participating.

SHOULD ANNUAL BIRD COUNTS CONTINUE? CONT'D

I then made the suggestion of an annual species count. I proposed that sectors be abolished and instead, divide both the Uprange and Downrange blocks into quarters to produce eight subblocks. In this way we can begin to gain a more accurate picture of species distribution in the Toowoomba/Helidon region in a similar way the R.A.O.U. Bird Atlas did for Australia.

On the species count, a group would be assigned to a subblock and asked to record as many species as possible in the time they can spare. Even people that are otherwise engaged can make a note of the species they see (at home, work, church, etc.).

As records officer I can then compile and update checklists for each subblock. Historical records e.g. personal sightings, past bird count sheets can be drawn upon also. A long term goal could be to produce a Toowoomba Bird Atlas.

At present the Executive is keen to listen to objections or alternative suggestions but it is imperative they be voiced before the A.G.M.

Michael Atzeni, Records
Officer

--ooOoo--

POSTSCRIPT TO GOOSE POWER (News-sheet 87, March 1983)

Joe Deuble was asking about V formation flying in the above-mentioned article. Ron Colpus suggested he write to Tring Museum in England. Joe did this and received a reply from Ian Galbraith, Head of the Sub-department of Ornithology. Unfortunately Ian was not able to throw much light on the subject as many references on geese and books on bird flight were unhelpful. He writes:

"My own impression about the aerodynamic advantage of the formation agreed with your snippet, but the only reference I have been able to find is in the article 'Flight' of the New Dictionary of Birds (ed. Landsborough Thomson; Nelson, London, 1964), p. 300: 'Much of the drag component is due to the formation of wing-tip vortices [which] are increased during flapping flight. Some birds fly in V-formation to make use of these vortices: each one, except the leader, has one wing partly supported by the upward vortex caused by the bird in front'."

As Joe suggests, it goes to show these people are interested enough, not only to answer his letter, but also to do a bit of research in order to answer it.

Joe Deuble

Thanks, Joe, for that follow up. Ed.

--ooOoo--

BIRDING HOLIDAY DOWN SOUTH

Five of us needed only one major incentive to spend a holiday in southern Australia in winter. And what better incentive than Orange-bellied Parrots without Bass Strait between them and us! We began our three and a half week birding holiday on the 15th July along with Terry Reis and Brian Foulis and linked up with Tony Palliser from Brisbane and Kevin Bartram from Melbourne at Port MacDonnell (S.A.) the next night. Birds of interest on the drive

BIRDING HOLIDAY DOWN SOUTH CONT'D

down were Pink Cockatoos at Goondiwindi and Long-billed Corellas in good numbers south of Avoca and at Glenjohnston and Casterton (Vic.)

Boat Trip

The next morning we embarked on an organized boat trip off Port MacDonnell which proved very rewarding. Apart from the amusing antics of hardened seabirders, balancing while trying to focus on everything that flew, highlights included Royal Albatross, Slender-billed Prion and Grey-backed Storm-petrel.

Other species seen:

Little Penguin	Fairy Prion
Wandering Albatross	Short-tailed Shearwater
Black-browed Albatross	Sooty Shearwater
Yellow-nosed Albatross	Fluttering Shearwater
Shy Albatross	Black-faced Cormorant
Southern Giant Petrel	White-fronted Tern
Northern Giant Petrel	Arctic Tern
Great-winged Petrel	
Cape Petrel	

From here on, Kevin, a member of the 600 Club, became our guide. Next stop at Nelson yielded Hooded Dotterel, Calamanthus, Greenfinch and Beautiful Firetail. Then a stab at Carpenter Rocks for Orange-bellied Parrots failed but we had excellent looks at a Little Penguin and heard the Rufous Bristlebird.

Twitching a Redshank

It was opportune that the I.C. Saltfields near Adelaide, as well as being a site for Samphire Thornbills, Banded Stilts and Elegant Parrots, also had South Australia's first record of the Redshank, an attractive and rare wader in Australia. Its bright red legs looked inept amongst the dull legs of the many wintering waders it was feeding with. We dipped out on Elegant Parrots here and they eluded us for the entire trip, as did Blue-winged Parrots.

Birding on the Eyre Peninsula

On the Eyre Peninsula we hoped to see some of the western species whose eastern most range is this point. At Lake Gilles we recorded:

Port Lincoln Parrot	Varied (Black-capped) Sitella
Purple-crowned Lorikeet	Rufous Treecreeper
Turquoise Fairy-wren	Yellow-plumed Honeyeater
Western Yellow Robin	Tawny-crowned Honeyeater
Grey Shrike-Thrush (western form)	

The Rufous Treecreeper took the good part of a day to locate and was the first of several species for which we had to spend excessive time searching, sometimes requiring a stay overnight.

Michael Atzeni, Pat McConnell

Unfortunately, that's all we have room for this time. Don't miss next month's conclusion 'Achieving our Main Goal' Ed.

--ooOoo--

FIELD DAY REPORT - SUNDAY 28TH AUGUST or Now I am a Bird-dog

The alarm roused me from my basket at 6 am. - brrr it was cold and the wind was fierce.

They got up and scurried around - coffee, toast - then out came the

FIELD DAY REPORT CONT'D

Thermos flask and picnic hamper - Ah! I became interested - an excursion - I trotted around, very excited, looking hopeful and being as polite as possible - then out came the binoculars and bird books - Phooey - I thought, there goes my chance for an outing.

At this point perhaps I should tell you that I am a good looking, brown quadruped of the canine persuasion, but of indeterminate heritage. This bird-outing business is a bit of a trial for me because usually the weekends are when I share in my owners' activities so when Bird Outing Sunday comes around I become rather depressed.

Imagine my surprise and delight when my water bowl was placed beside the picnic basket. I was very excited but quickly got myself in paw - had to show that I was worthy of this opportunity.

A very small group met at Pigott's and proceeded down the range to Withcott where Ann Shore joined the party. Before venturing to Mr Mann's property we called by Karrasch's Lagoon where we saw a Darter, White (Sacred) Ibis, a solitary, splendid Pelican, some Grey Teal and Black Duck - a surprisingly limited variety in a usually rich area.

After arriving at Mr Mann's property, "Pyara", the more stalwart members accompanied Mr Mann along the creek bank. I declined to accompany them as the wind in my whiskers was most annoying.

Upon their return, Marilyn told of the numerous exciting observations including Rainbow Bee-eaters - the first of the season, a pair of Rufous Whistlers, Dusky Woodswallows and Red-backed Wrens.

Leaving Mr Mann's we continued towards Dyer's Lagoon, stopping along the way to see a bird of prey ably identified by Don as a Whistling Kite. Dyer's Lagoon certainly showed evidence of the year's heavy rains as the water level seemed very high. The birds seen included Little Black and Pied Cormorants, a Pelican, Black Swans, Intermediate (Plumed) Egrets and a Sacred Kingfisher. I pride myself on discovering several Little Grebes which, incidently, ignored me completely.

Dyer's Lagoon also afforded us a welcome lunch stop and a chance to bask in the sun out of the strong wind.

On the return journey, a Wedge-tailed Eagle was seen to dive on some prey, while magpies and crows circled around making loud comments.

I enjoyed my first official bird outing and sincerely hope I can be included again as I feel my behaviour was quite exemplary - this opinion being shared by Hilary Phillips, a visitor from Sydney who also joined the outing.

Those present included:

Ron Colpus, Don Gaydon, Marilyn Jacobs, Hilary Phillips, Sandy Pottinger, Ann Shore, Brontë-the-dog.

Brontë

Species list available from the Records Officer. There's not enough room this month for full details.

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MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES

Great Crested Grebe. 6.7.83. Coolmunda Dam. DG.
Peregrine Falcon. 10.7.83. Wilsonton Aerodrome. JD.
Topknot Pigeon. 23.7.83. Jubilee Park. DC, DG.
Brown Pigeon (Cuckoo-dove). 9-10 birds. 8 & 13. 8.83. "Brandywine",
Sylvan Court, T'mba. MJ, SP.
Wonga Pigeon. 23.7.83. Jubilee Park. DC, DG.
Musk Lorikeet. 26.6.83. Jubilee Park. DG.
Eastern Rosella. 21.7.83. Jubilee Park. DC, DG.
White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike. 3.7.83. Helidon Hills. DG.
Rose Robin. 23.8.83. cnr Lindsay & Kent Sts. LB.
Scarlet Honeyeater. 23.8.83. Anzac Ave. JD.
Regent Bowerbird. 23.7.83. Jubilee Parl DG.

LB: Lesley Ball, DC: Dean Collins, JD: Joe Deuble, DG: Don Gaydon,
MJ: Marilyn Jacobs, SP: Sandy Pottinger.

--ooOoo--

FIELD OUTING FOR SEPTEMBER

Date: Sunday, 25th September 1983

Place: Beginners' Morning to Flagstone Creek

Assembly Point: Pigott's Car Park

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

This will be a short trip, lasting only 2-3 hours. Bring your friends, family and kids.

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NEW MEMBERS

It is pleasure that we welcome Poppy who was able to join us on an outing earlier this year.

Poppy Levonis 35 Margaret St, Toowoomba.

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PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

The Bird Observer. August 1983. (The Bird Observers' Club)
Birds. Summer 1983. (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, U.K.)
Q.O.S. Newsletter. August & September 1983. (Queensland
Ornithological Society)

Urimbirra. August 1983. (Chinchilla Field Naturalists' Club)

There is an excellent article about beginning birdwatching and choosing binoculars in Birds magazine. Q.O.S. are also assessing the value of bird counts and Dot Brown writes about The International Year of the Tree in Urimbirra.

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OCTOBER A.G.M.

This year the A.G.M. is to be held on Tuesday, 18th October 1983. As last year's meeting at a member's home was so successful we will do this again. This time at John and Lesley Ball's place.

I take this opportunity to invite all members not only to the A.G.M. but to our home for a convivial evening. If tea or coffee is not quite strong enough for your taste please feel welcome to B.Y.O. As usual, members, please bring a small plate for refreshments. Entertainment in the way of bird slides will finish off the evening. See you there - Lesley.