



NEWS-SHEET No. 97

JANUARY 1984

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

toowoomba bird club

Postal Address

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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 dead-
line of the last day of the month and should be mailed to
the editor.

EDITORIAL

Although it is only the first month of the year, the Club is already well and truly into its activities. As we broadcast last month, January is an S.S.S. month. I am fortunate in having the school holidays which allows me plenty of time to go birding (or so I thought! Isn't it amazing how other business gets in the way - like paying bills, buying food, visiting friends, etc.). Nevertheless, I've managed a bit of birding up-range and seen a few birds that are not often on my list. I must say that I've been encouraged to go along highways and byways unknown to me and this has been a pleasure in itself. I hope you have been able to do some birding yourself and have been a little adventurous and able to give Michael a useful list at the end of the month. At the end of this news-sheet is a tear-off page with the uprange and downrange study areas divided into the new subdivisions. Keep it handy with your bird books, binoculars, etc. This information is important as the club wishes to produce a book in about three years time using the data gathered by you.

February is the month for the Rotary Club of Toowoomba South's "Hobby -n- Craft Spectacular". We are looking for volunteers again to help on the display. More of that later in this issue.

To end on a high note, the Club had one more new bird for 1983. A Musk Duck was seen at Hood's Lagoon. It is a good omen for 1984. I'd like to wish all our members such exciting birding for the next twelve months. I am sure your New Year's Resolutions included one that read - "More involvement and support for the Bird Club." See you on the 22nd January,

Lesley Beaton, Editor

--ooOoo--

NEW TOOWOOMBA BIRD

240. Musk Duck. (Biziura lobata). 17.12.83. Hood's Lagoon, Helidon.
Brian Foulis, Terry Reis.

A lone female. Plumage generally blackish-brown finely marked with brown. Large head with short, broad, black bill; no lobe beneath bill. Sat low in the water and dived frequently.

--ooOoo--

MEMORY JOLT!

JANUARY IS A SEASONAL SPECIES SURVEY (S.S.S.) MONTH.

LET'S DO IT WELL.

Our New Subdivisions

In this newsletter are maps showing the 8 new subdivisions in our local study area. These subdivisions were agreed on at the last A.G.M. The Uprange and Downrange divisions still hold but now both of these have been cut in quarters for more accurate recordings.

It is desirable that members who fill out checklists become familiar with the subdivision boundaries and indicate by its number (1-8) the subdivision a species was seen in. This is particularly desirable for any unusual sightings. If all your birding is done at home, simply write the number of the subdivision you live in rather than a tick.

Magpies, currawongs, starlings and the like need only be ticked as in the past.

If there are any queries, please contact me.

Michael Atzeni, Records Officer

HOBBY-N-CRAFT SPECTACULAR

The Spectacular is being held on the weekend of February 17th, 18th and 19th.

Last year the Executive felt that the Bird Club's display was a great success. We have 2 aims for holding this display:-

- i) - publicizing the Club. (letting the Toowoomba public know that we exist.)
- ii) - membership drive. Last year we had such members as Don Gaydon and Dean Collins join the Club following our display.

It is important that there are members on the display at all times during the Spectacular. As long as you're enthusiastic about the Club and its activities you qualify as a genuine, gold-plated volunteer. Birding expertise is not necessary as any tricky queries may be passed onto more knowledgeable members. Marilyn is hoping that 3 members can be on at a time so that coffee breaks and comfort stops may be had without any fuss.

The Club has been given free passes for display volunteers for the following times:-

Friday 17th - 5pm. to 9pm.

Saturday 18th- 9am. to 12pm.
12pm. to 5pm.
5pm. to 10pm.

Sunday 19th - 9am. to 12pm.
12pm. to 5pm.

If you can help at any or part of the above times please phone Marilyn Jacobs (a/h 35 8594). 18 members are needed, PLEASE HELP.

---oo0oo---

ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT - BINS/GLASS/NOCKIES

So what do you call them? Binoculars is O.K. Diminutives indicate a certain hip-ness, hence bins, and glass is acceptably elite. On the other hand nockies is a bit twee, and sounds like something out of Noddy.

So what kind of bins/glass/nockies? The first thing to accept is that size impresses no one! and that goes for binoculars too.

So tiny poncy little binoculars are often very expensive and good, and the big butch ones are usually lousy!

Apologies to Bill Oddie (of 'The Goodies' fame) for the above abridged and mutilated extracts to Chapter 3 of his 'tongue in cheek' book on birdwatching entitled "Bill Oddie's Little Black Bird Book".

The intention of this article is that it may be helpful, and to pass on a few tips arising from the recent purchase of two successive pairs of binoculars for myself and my wife and encouraging her and my daughter to update their binoculars on similar lines.

In solving our individual problems we appear to have strayed from the accepted experts advice and right up to the moment of truth - parting company with our money - we were very conscious of the traditional guide lines and had serious doubts about our final decisions. Actual experience in the field has since allayed any fears we may have had.

In more precise terms we did not buy the well recommended 7x50's or 8x40's and the main reason for this is that our difficulties were

ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT CONT'D

overcome by what appears to be a new breed of binoculars. Referring to Bill Oddie again we have ended up with 'tiny pony little binoculars'; they were expensive; and they are excellent precision instruments.

However this is a little premature in its chronological order as it was in May 1983 that we made our first attempt to improve our binocular situation. Our reasons for wanting a change was that at that time I had a very heavy and cumbersome pair of Carl Zeiss 16x50 military binoculars which I had been quite happily lugging around for the past 25 years or more. For the purpose for which they were made, they were excellent. When it came to birdwatching the high magnification and small field of view coupled with the fact that I now wear bi-focal specs permanently, caused lots of problems in the field. Peggie on the other hand had a tatty pair of 7x50's of some obscure pedigree purchased from the Army Surplus Store in Launceston. At best they could be called O.K., but by comparison with a pair of Pentax 7x50 they were poor. Not surprising when you consider the price difference. It was certainly a case of 'you get what you pay for'.

On reflection we went about the selection of these purchases like amateurs. At least we did one thing right, we took our time; over an hour. Taking one brand after another into the street and twiddling with the movable eye piece and the focussing wheel, thinking we were doing the right thing. On hindsight we were not! There is a correct procedure to assist in getting the best results for one's particular eyesight, and it applies whatever the price range. I'm amazed that the vendors did not impart this information, after all it was at their fingertips. Actually I came across it myself in literature accompanying one brand of binoculars.

But on this first occasion I envied the binoculars that Peggie finally selected. They had a very close minimum distance of focus. This was enthusiastically demonstrated by being able to read the pages of a normal paper only 6ft away. Very few binoculars have this flexibility. They were a reputable brand with Zeiss lenses and retailing at \$170. Unfortunately I had difficulty with them in conjunction with my specs, and I settled for a less expensive brand at \$67 after the trade in on my old 16x50's. Incidentally both of our new binoculars were 8x40's. For the first time I was able to leave my specs on whilst birding, a facility I had not enjoyed up to then, and though I didn't have this short focus feature, mine gave me a new enjoyment in birdwatching! I could pick up my targets more easily, hold them if they moved around and they also let a lot more light in, and hence a much better colour definition.

During the ensuing 3-4 months we struck a period of birdwatching situations where the vegetation was relatively close to quite dense, and the majority of birds which came into view were very often under 15ft away. Peggie merely had to make a small adjustment to her focus, whereas I had to back-off to get within my minimum focussing distance which I estimated to be anything from 18-20ft.

At least on this second occasion I had at least one specification that I wanted, and that was short distance focus binoculars.

You've probably guessed it! They didn't have another pair like Peggie's in stock so somewhat non-plussed I began to go through what was available. What I was looking for was a pair that would do the same job as the popular 7x50's or 8x40's and yet be lighter and smaller.

... To be continued ...

Roy Beaton

It is with a sad heart that I announce the death of Bert Pottinger. In the comparatively short time that he, with his wife Margo, was a Club member he had made an impression that will linger for some time. He was an enthusiastic birder and was an excellent raconteur, regaling members with his amusing and interesting anecdotes during our field outings, and also as a contributor to this news-sheet. It is a shame that we will no longer have him as a source of information on early birding in Toowoomba.

On behalf of the Club I should like to express my sympathy to Margo, Sandy and Marilyn. However, on future outings, I shall see Bert out of the corner of my eye - with that infectious smile of his - just as excited as we are at the particular bird we are viewing. His spirit is with us.

Lesley Beaton, Friend

--ooOoo--

MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES

Tahiti Petrel. 12.11.83. Brisbane Seabird Trip. BF, PM, TR.
Black-winged Petrel. 3.12.83. Coff's Harbour. BF, TR.
Freckled Duck. 27.12.83. Dynwor Lakes. MA, BF, TR.
Musk Duck (♀). 17.12.83. Hood's Lagoon. BF, TR.
" " " 19.12.83. " " " MA, DG.
" Cotton "Pygmy"-Goose. 13.11.83. Atkinson's Dam. LB, JAB.
Crested Hawk. 19.12.83. Connole's Rd, Postman's Ridge. MA, DG.
White-breasted Sea-Eagle (3). Atkinson's Dam. LB, JAB. 13.11.83.
Lewin's Rail (heard). Mullimbimby. BF, TR. 4.12.83.
Bush-hen (heard). 4.12.83. Mullimbimby. BF, TR.
Red-necked Stint. 20.11.83. Hood's Lagoon. LB.
Australian Pratincole. 27.12.83. Dynwor Lakes. MA, BF, TR.
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo. 6.11.83. East Ck Swamp. LB, JAB.
Bourke's Parrot. 26.12.83. Eulo. MA, BF, PM, TR.
Grass Owl. 3.11.83. Luggage Pt. BF, TR.
Marbled Frogmouth. 6.11.83. Conondales. PM, TR.
Australian Owlet-Nightjar. 12.12.83. Upper Withcott. LW, JW.
White-throated Needletail. Nov/Dec. Upper Withcott. LW, JW.
Forest Kingfisher. 13.11.83. Atkinson's Dam. LB, JAB.
Chestnut-breasted Quail-thrush. 26.12.83. Eulo. MA, BF, PM, TR.

MA: Michael Atzeni, LB: Lesley Beaton, JAB: John Ball, BF: Brian Foulis, DG: Don Gaydon, PM: Pat McConnell, TR: Terry Reis, LW: Lorraine Wilson, JW: John Wilson.

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FIELD DAY FOR JANUARY

Date: Sunday, 22nd January 1984. Place: Helidon Hills

Assembly Point: Pigott's Car Park.

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

Weather permitting, this should be a good outing. It is not an area we go to, as a Club, very often. Yet there are some birds seen there that are not necessarily seen in any other part of our study area. These include the beautiful Squatter Pigeon and the Fuscous Honey-eater.

FEBRUARY OUTING

Just a quick plug for February 26th. This will be a joint outing with the Chinchilla Field Naturalists Club at a property in Stockyard Creek. A great opportunity to meet some new people in a place not available to the general public.

APRIL OUTING

Please note that the date of our outing in April has been changed to the 29th because of the Easter break. This will be the fifth Sunday of the month not the fourth.

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PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Q.O.S. Newsletter. November & December 1983. (Queensland Ornithological Society.)

There is some interesting reading in these two issues - Bribie Island, RAOU Report, Lake Gregory in northern W.A. are just some of them.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

Please remember your 1984 subscriptions are due. Ann has only received half a dozen renewals and it does make her job all that much harder. The Club's budget runs on a tightrope between the black and the red. In order for the news-sheet to survive, money needs to be in the bank. Thank you.

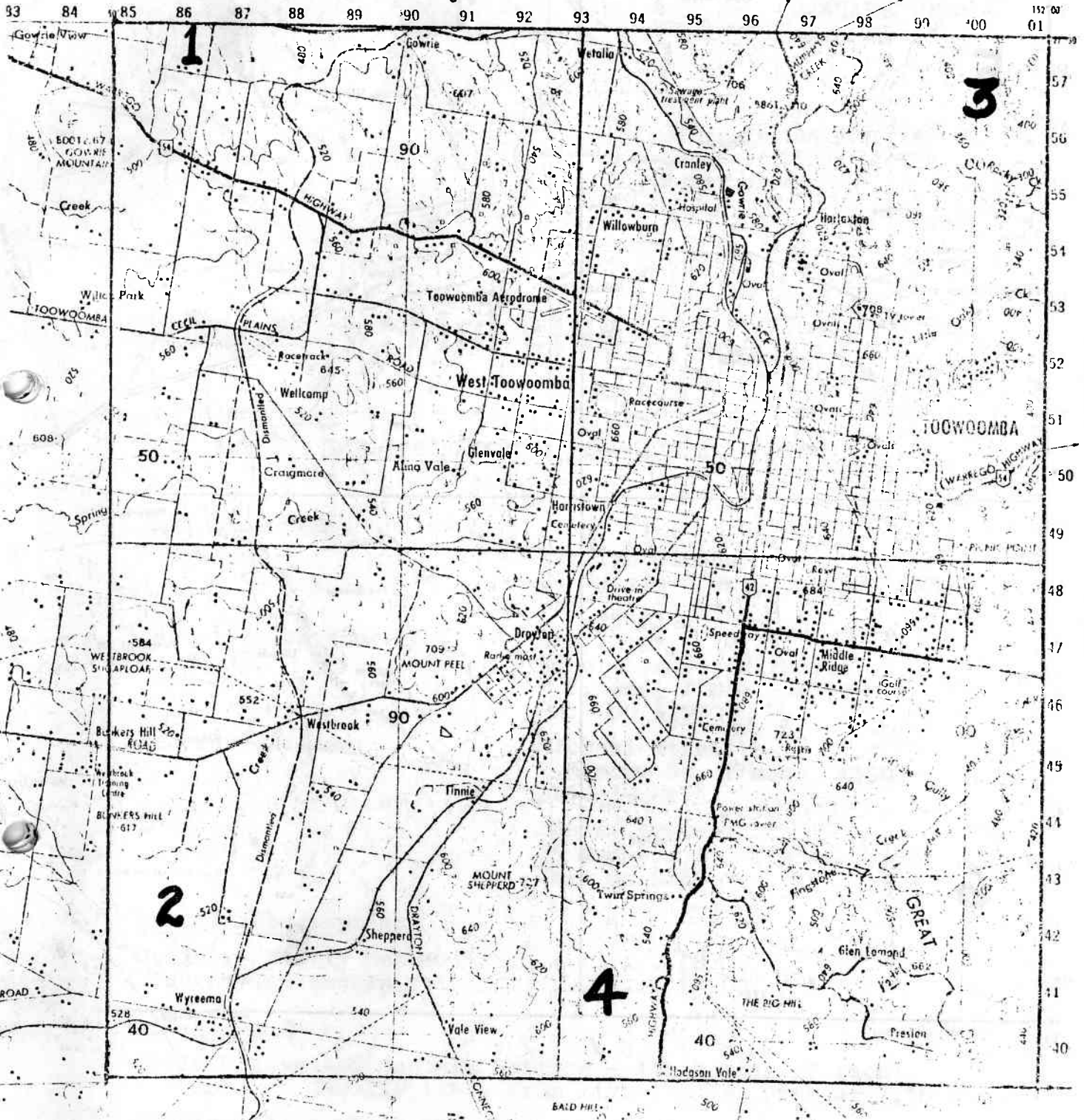
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SUPPLEMENT TO NEWS - SHEET No. 97.

Up Range

NATIONAL TOPOGRAPHIC MAP SERIES

CROWN'S NEST 35 km MURPHY'S CREEK 12 km



TOOWOOMBA BIRD CLUB LOCAL STUDY AREA.

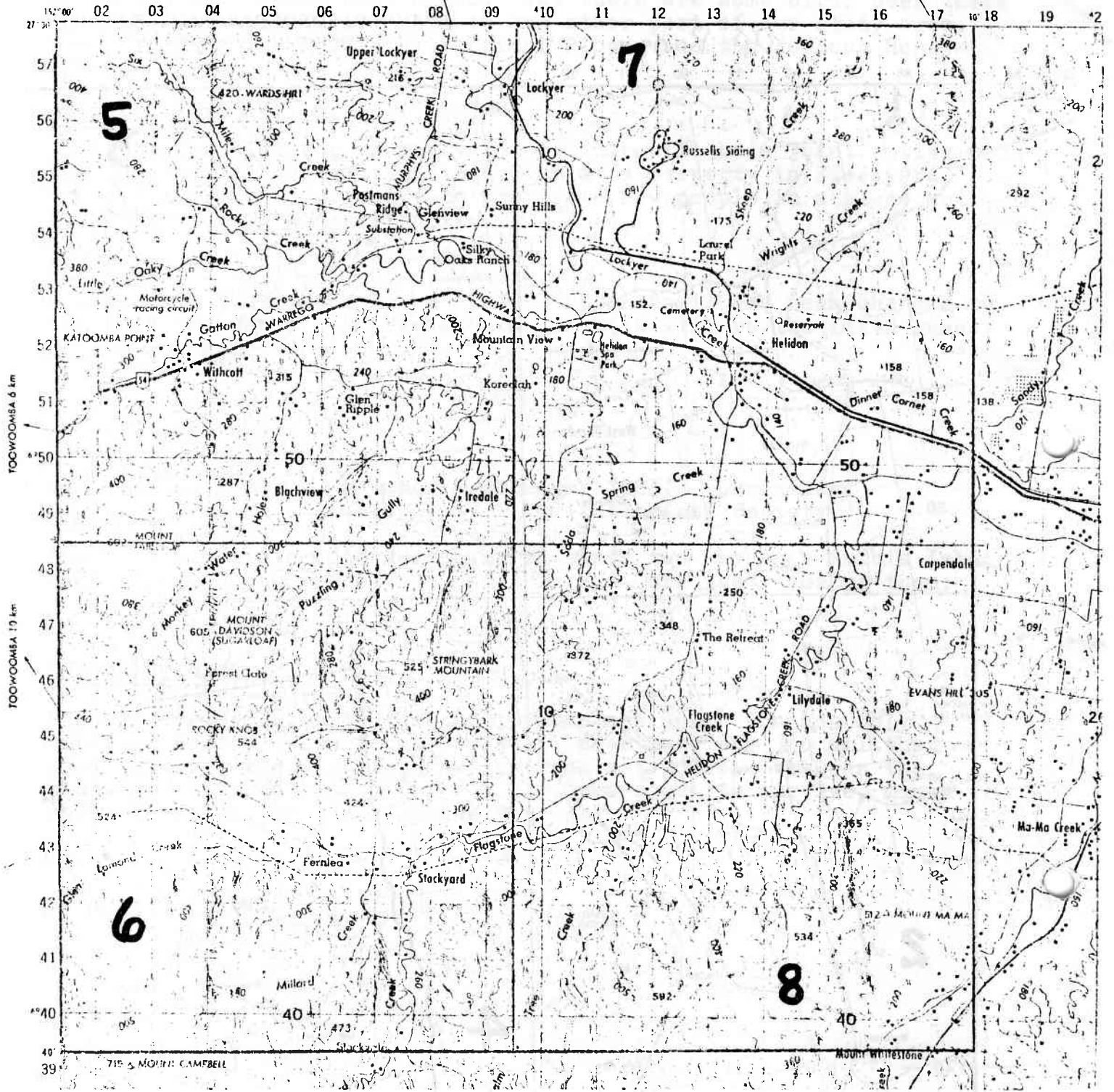
UP-RANGE.

TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY

MURPHY'S CREEK 4 km

Down Range

HAMPTON 35 km



TOOWOOMBA BIRD CLUB LOCAL STUDY AREA.

DOWN-RANGE.