

THE NOVOCASTRIAN WARBLER

November 1980

NEWSLETTER of the HUNTER (Newcastle) BIRD OBSERVER GROUP.

Issue No. 10/80 - Released monthly at General Meetings.

Meetings: 2nd Wednesday of each month (except January)  
at the Garden Suburb Primary School at 7.30 p.m.

Principal Officers: Chairman: Fred van Gessel

Secretary: Mrs. Wilma Barden (573928)

I. Notes from the October Meeting:

(a) Attendance. In addition to twenty members, we were pleased to have with us six visitors as well as the Guest Speaker.

(b) Visit by Victorian Wader Group. Our Chairman announced that our Group is to entertain a party of 'Wader' people from Victoria in March of 1981 and that assistance would be sought in providing hospitality for same.

(c) New Books - Two new books were circulated for perusal:-

(i) SEABIRDS of the WORLD by Nelson \$22.00

(ii) AUSTRALIAN MAMMALS by Hyett & Shaw \$16.95

(d) FEES - the news is not good - we have now received official advice that the fees payable for the 12 months commencing 1/7/80 are as follows:

Single Member... \$8.00

Family Member... \$9.00

Tom Kendall is our subscription Officer and he will be pleased to receive your contribution in due course.

2. BIRD CALL OF THE EVENING - The call played was that of the <sup>LITTLE</sup> ~~BROWN~~ THORNBILL (*Acanthiza pusilla*) and quite a few of our more knowledgeable members were UN-able to identify it.

3. BIRD OF THE EVENING. Gary Weber presented a very informative and interesting talk about the Little Lorikeet (*Glossopsitta pusilla*): both sexes are similar but the bronze-brown mantle on the male is more pronounced. As was to be expected, Gary illustrated his talk with a high class colour slide showing a pair of these birds at a nest site.

4. GUEST SPEAKER. William (Bill) Cooper, the noted artist and author gave us a stimulating and learned talk on the PLUMED BIRDS of PARADISE. There are 42 species of Birds of Paradise which are found only in New Guinea, the neighbouring islands and in Northern Australia. Bill Cooper confined his remarks to the seven plumed species. He pointed out that their distribution was governed by the occurrence of such geographical features as mountain ranges and stretches of intervening waters. Members listened with absorbed interest as Bill related his experiences of his many visits to New Guinea related to the study of these birds. At times his remarks anent his experiences with the natives were quite humorous. It appears that the very existence of these beautiful birds could be endangered by so called progress such as the granting of leases for mining and timber cutting. Judging by the number of questions fired at the Speaker, his audience was more than appreciative of his efforts to tell us something of these fascinating members of the avian world. On behalf of the Group, Ted Felton very capably moved a vote of thanks to Bill Cooper.

5. BOGGABRI WEEK-END CAMP 4 - 6 October 1980

For this week-end nine Birdos took up residence in the Vickery State Forest some 17 kilometres east of Boggabri.

A non member also tried to join the Group but our fearless ? leader proved to be not so fearless in rejecting an approach by Mr. Pseudechis guttatus. We couldn't understand this because a four foot blue-bellied black snake wouldn't take up much room and he certainly wouldn't eat much.

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The area was very dry but the weather on the whole was quite pleasant - cool nights with warmish days tempered with a cool N.E. breeze and myriads of flies.

Bird-wise, it was an excellent week-end despite the lack of wetlands, hence few water birds, some 95 species were logged for the grid and apart from the more common species included the following: Brown Goshawk, Little Eagle, Brown Falcon, Stubble Quail, Mallee Ringneck, Turquoise Parrot, Channel-billed Cuckoo, Boobook Owl, White-bellied cuckoo Shrike, Hooded Robin

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Crested Shrike-Tit, Black Faced Monarch, Leaden Flycatcher, Restless Flycatcher Grey Crowned and White Browed Babblers, Rufous and Brown Songlarks, Variegated Wren, Speckled and Western Warblers, Weebil, Broad-tailed Thornbill, Southern Whiteface, Varied Sitella, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Striped H.E., Fuscous H.E. Diamond Firetail, Apostle Bird, Masked, White-browed and Dusky Wood Swallows.

6. MONKERAI OUTING - Sunday 19th October.

Eight members attended the regular monthly outing, the venue on this occasion being the Monkerai area in which we find the Headwaters of the Karuah River.

Over 95 species were recorded and apart from that aspect it proved to be a very enjoyable day - our birding in mid afternoon being interrupted believe it or not by some steady RAIN.

Two unforgettable sights: a family of Wood Ducks crossing the road and then endeavouring to conceal themselves by merging in to the grass and dead timber., and a flock of Crimson Rosellas feeding on the seed of some tall grasses.

Excluding the usual sightings, the list recorded was as follows:

Brown Pigeon, Azure Kingfisher, Bee Eater, Rose Robin, Leaden Flycatcher, Restless Flycatcher, Rufous Fantail, Variegated Wren, Yellow-throated Scrub Wren, White-browed Scrubwren, Speckled Warbler, Brown Warbler, White-throated Warbler, Diamond Firetail, Olive-backed Oriole and Cackle Jacks (Choughs)

7 ATLAS OUTING to OWENS GAP (Near Scone)

Owing to other commitments by the Five participants, this scheduled week-end was reduced to one day - Sunday 26 October 1980., however, the Bird Count was very gratifying. In all almost ninety species were recorded - the less frequent observations being: Restless Flycatcher, Whistling Kite, Peaceful Dove, Rock Warbler (a family of 4) Black Fronted Dotterel, Cockatiel.

8 ATLAS RECORDS

Our Atlas Recorder, Jim Imrie, has requested that members' rare or unusual sightings be reported to him or Wilma. It is essential that the information supplied include the location of the sighting. This will ensure that the correct Atlas grid is credited. By way of illustration on 22nd October 1980, Mr. Wilf Dews sighted a male Regent Bower Bird in his garden - the location information in this case would be North side of Warners Bay road between Coronation St and Burton Road.

9 AUSTRALIA DAY BIRDWATCH 1980.

Results of the Bird Survey in private gardens throughout Australia have now been released. The Top Ten Garden Birds in Australia are:

<u>BIRDS</u>	<u>No. of Gardens.</u>	<u>No. of Individuals.</u>
* House Sparrow	910	14,798
Magpie	798	2,985
* Spotted Dove	624	2,292
* Myna	542	3,358
Mudlark	463	1,086
Siãvereye	454	2,847
Red Wattlebird	421	1,585
Kookaburra	394	1,047
* Starling	385	3,501
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\* Introduced.

It is perhaps sad to note that 5 of our top 10 birds are 'introductions'.

10. PROGRAMME - 1981

A draft of the proposed programme for 1981 has been prepared for consideration at the November meeting.

11. COMING EVENTS.

(a) Sunday 23 November - OUTING to GRAHAMSTOWN. Meet at the entrance to the Lion Safari (North of Raymond Terrace) at 8 a.m.

(b) Sat/Sun 6/7 Dec. WADER SURVEY - Port Stephens Area.

(c) FLORA & FAUNA MEETINGS/OUTINGS

Mon. 24 Nov. Room 11 Wickham School at 8 p.m.

Kevin McDonald: Natural History - At home and abroad.

Sat. 29th November - afternoon only/

Canoeing in Cockle Creek - John Dorman and George Buckton

(Phone 581564 in advance if you intend to be present)