

THE NOVOCASTRIAN WARBLER.

December 1980

NEWSLETTER of the HUNTER (Newcastle) BIRD OBSERVER GROUP.

Issue No. 11/80 - 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)

1. NOTES FROM THE NOVEMBER MEETING.

Sixteen members were present, including new member, Keith Howard, from Maitland.

2. BIRD CALL OF THE EVENING.

Fred presented the calls of seven members of the family Muscicapidae, namely Yellow Robin (*Eopsaltria australis*) the familiar sad piping call of this species, heard quite commonly in our own locality: Pale Yellow Robin (*Eopsaltria capito*) contact call only: Grey-headed Robin (*Heteromyias cinereifrons*) North Eastern Queensland inhabitant of the edges of rainforests, its call is a distinctive whistle, followed by three shorter, lower notes; Rose Robin (*Petroica rosea*) familiar around creeks and watercourses, its song is soft and pretty, as delicate as the bird itself; Red-capped Robin (*Petroica goodenovii*), a soft, toy-like, musical call; Hooded Robin (*Petroica cucullata*) a strong un-Robin-like song; Scarlet Robin (*Petroica multicolour*) a shrill, almost piercing call.

3. GUEST SPEAKER for the evening. Al Gillies assisted by his wife Mavis gave us a most interesting and entertaining illustrated account of their time spent in the State of Minnesota in the upper Mid-west of the U.S.A. While birdwatching on skis in sub-zero temperatures may not appeal to everybody, it certainly does not deter the North Americans, who have adapted themselves noticeably well to their environment. Birdwatching is a very popular pastime, and is said to be the largest participatory sport among the population.

Many people set up feeding stations in their gardens to attract birds and quite a regular visitor to the window ledges is the beautiful Red Cardinal, which is rapidly becoming a resident species under this influence.

We certainly envy the people for their toleration and awareness of natural history. Al's descriptions of the annual migration of the Canada Geese, and re-discovery of a species thought to be extinct; and his visit to Hawk Ridge, Duluth, where the Ornithological Union has purchased the whole area of the Ridge and employs a watcher full-time, whose duties are to count the number of each species as they fly over day by day on their annual migration path (in one day as many as 16,000 birds have been identified, and this is estimated to represent an approximate 90% of birds seen) held us quite spellbound. We all look forward to a follow-up of the evening, when we will hear of their Panamanian adventures. Many thanks to Mavis and Al.

4. GRAHAMSTOWN OUTING - Sunday 23 November.

This Outing was rather poorly attended - only six members being in attendance. However, it proved to be a very rewarding day as over 80 species were recorded for the day. Among the more interesting ones were: Darter, Freckled Duck, Musk Duck, Whistling Kite, Swamp Harrier, Brown Quail, Red-Capped Dotterel with nest and 2 eggs, Red-necked Stint, Common Tern, Spine-tailed and Fork-tailed Swifts, Singing Bushlark, White-winged Triller, Rufous Songlark, Brown Songlark, Southern Emu-Wren, White-fronted Chat and Mistletoe Bird.

After lunch the party moved on to Ironbark Creek to assist the Flora and Fauna Society in their efforts to impress the Lord Mayor of the recreational potential of that area. Quite an enjoyable afternoon was spent paddling up and down this waterway with its many tributary channels.

5. COMING EVENTS: (A) Sunday 14 December - Outing to Buttah (near Wangi)

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Meet at the Park on the Southern side of Fennel Bay  
Bridge at 8 a.m.
- (B) Next General Meeting - as there will be NO meeting in  
January 1981, the next General Meeting will be held on  
Wednesday 11 February 1981/