

THE NOVOCASTRIAN WARBLER

August 1981

NEWSLETTER of the HUNTER (Newcastle) BIRD OBSERVERS GROUP.

Issue No. 7/81 - released monthly at General Meetings.

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

Chairman: Fred van Gessel.

1. Notes from the July meeting - 8th July 1981

(a) Attendance 19 - very good for a very cold evening.

(b) Membership Fee - arising from a decision made at the July Committee meeting a ballot was conducted to ascertain whether members were prepared to pay a fee to cover operating costs of the Bird Observers' Club. 90% of the members present indicated that they would and this information was to be considered at the August meeting of the Management Committee.

(c) Keys - Meeting Room - announced that the Bird Club now had its own keys - this will relieve somebody of the chore of obtaining the key from the School each meeting day.

(d) Register for Newsletters - In future, each individual or family member who so desires will have his/her name written on a Newsletter each month so that, if absent, that member may collect same at the next or subsequent meeting. To avail themselves of this service, those who wish to do so should record their name with Jim Imrie. Newsletters may be posted but only if the member concerned provides a S.A. envelope for that purpose.

(e) Sea-Bird Trip - Saturday 5th September 1981. Arrangements made by Tom Kendall for this outing are as follows: as numbers are restricted bookings will be taken at the August meeting. Cost has been set, initially, as \$10. per person, if we get a full complement there could be a rebate. The fee of \$10 or a deposit should be paid to Tom Kendall on or as soon after the 12th August as possible. The boat is expected to leave Nelson Bay about 7.30 a.m. and don't forget to bring your lunch. Tom's address: 3 Slade Close, Rankin Park. 525279.

2. BIRD CALLS OF THE EVENING. - Jim Imrie presented an intriguing quartet of Calls of the 'grunting' variety. The EMU, the PELICAN and the BROLGA were soon identified by our more learned Birdos but the fourth had everyone puzzled until we learnt that Jim had rung in a male KOALA. Thanks Jim, very instructive and entertaining.

3. BIRD of the EVENING - Yellow-nosed ALBATROSS.

In keeping with our proposed Sea-Bird trip, Wilma gave us some information about one of the 'mollymawks' - *Diomedea chlororhynchus* Gmelin (Chloros = yellow-green, rhynchus = beak). Dimensions: Length 700-800 mm, wingspan 1800-2000 mm (5'10" - 6'9") weight 200-275 grams. Colour: the body is wholly white except for slaty brown back, mantle and tail. Main colour feature is the glossy black bill with a yellow streak along the upper mandible ridge and orange or pink at the tip. Breeding distribution - the Yellow-nose breeds on Prince Edward, Amsterdam, St. Paul and Crozet Islands in the South Indian Ocean and the Islands of Tristan da Cunha and Gough in the South Atlantic. The nest is a cylindrical structure of mud, grass and moss, lined with dry grass. One egg is laid, incubated by both parents, the incubation period being about 78 days. Nestlings depart the breeding site about 130 days after hatching. These birds are most plentiful off the southern coast of Western Australia but have been sighted on the East Coast as far north as Rockhampton. Thank you Wilma for a very interesting talk.

4. GUEST SPEAKER - Fred van Gessel.

In lieu of a learned dissertation on some aspect of Ornithology, our versatile Chairman presented a viewing of his home-made movie - the subject being the 'Waders of Kooragang Island'. All and sundry were pleased to see close-ups of many birds and his shots of huge flocks were very impressive. This was Fred's first essay into the world of moviedom and we will be looking forward to seeing his next coming attraction. Many thanks to Fred and also our guest projectionist - Noel Whinney.

5. BACK-BENCHERS' SPOT - Sightings reported by members since the last meeting: Kay Imrie a Boobook Owl at Rankin Park; Wilma Barden a Cicada Bird at Blackbutt and a Sooty Owl in the Watagan Mountains; Ted Jones a Shining Bronze Cuckoo and two White-breasted Sea Eagles at Budgewoi; Arthur Williams a White-Breasted Sea Eagle incubating eggs; Sue Hamonet, a Crested Tern playing with a fish at Port Stephens also some Rainbow Lorikeets in the same area; at Kooragang, Fred van Gessel sighted inter alia, White-fronted Terns, a Dominican Gull, a Gull-billed Tern, a Freckled Duck and a Blue-wing Shoveler; Tom Kendall, a Yellow-nosed Albatross and a Black-browed Albatross, East of Newcastle.

6. ANNUAL DINNER - Wallsend R.S.L. Club Friday 26 June.
Sixteen members were present on this occasion and spent a most convivial and congenial evening. Surplus funds were invested in Special Lottery No. 3346 with Ticket No. 75688 - don't bother to look up the result.

7. FIELD OUTING - Sunday 19th July - Stockrington.
Contingents from the Flora and Fauna and the National Parks group swelled the numbers for our Stockrington outing to almost 40 persons. Ray and Marion Walker led the party through Mr. Jacobs' property and participants then spread along the floor of the valley, penetrated the rain forest area and returned via a track which traversed the ridge on the western side of the valley. It was a cool, almost cloudless day with little wind and lovely warm sunshine. After lunch the group meandered along the Hexham swamp railway line from the Minmi end before calling it a day which everyone voted was most enjoyable. Bird-wise, 64 different species were recorded, the sightings of the day being the male Regent Bowerbird and a male Satin Bowerbird displaying in his bower. For the tyros, the Golden Whistler and the Shining Bronze Cuckoo proved to be quite a thrill. Thank you Marion and Ray.

8. LEWIN WATER RAIL - *Rallus pectoralis*.
Terry Lindsey of Double Bay is doing some research work on the Lewin Water Rail and is trying to clarify its distribution and status - whether a migrant, a nomad or a resident. If any member has any local experience of this bird would you please let us have the details for onforwarding to Terry.

9. NOTES from the JULY and AUGUST COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

a. Attendance: both meetings 8.

b. Club Fees - At the July meeting after a long discussion which finished after midnight, it was agreed that a poll of members be conducted to ascertain their feelings towards the payment of an annual fee to the Bird Club. The result of this poll was further discussed at the August meeting and it was unanimously agreed that a membership fee be set to cover, initially, such expenses as Telephone calls, Postage, Stationery and a donation to the Garden Suburb School for the use of the meeting room. The fee determined was \$5.00 per person except for family groups where the Fee would be \$5.00 plus \$1.00 for each additional adult (18+ age group). It was also decided that the 'year' would be the calendar year and the initial payment would be \$2.50 (+ 50c for additional adults) for the half year commencing 1st July 1981.

An Account is to be opened with a Building Society and the withdrawal signatories to be the Chairman (F. van Gessel) Hon. Treasurer (Ed Hamonet) and the Assistant Secretary (Marion Walker)

c. 1982 Programme

A draft of the 1982 programme is to be prepared at the September Committee meeting on 7th Sept and suggestions are invited from members.

d. Content for the General meeting programmes for the August, September and October were reviewed and given tentative approval.

e. Committee Meetings will in future be held at the Garden Suburbs School in a classroom adjacent to the Library. These meetings are held on the first Monday of each month but in October will be held on the 2nd Monday (12/10/81) - any member who wishes to attend may do so - time 8 p.m.

f. Atlas Programme

.. It is proposed to combine the Waukivory outing (11/10/81) with the Warra -Warranulla outing on the 5th December. In lieu of the Waukivory trip on 11/10/81 the Curricabark is to be substituted - this area was deferred on 4/5 April because of the heavy rain which fell on the Friday night.

10. EYRE BIRD OBSERVATORY

A series of study courses is taking place at the Eyre Bird Observatory on the Great Australian Bight. Four more are planned for the remainder of the year on aspects of bird study. Anyone interested should write to the Eyre Bird Observatory, Cocklebidy via Norseman W.A. 6443

11. BUSTARDS

A recent National Parks & Wildlife Service publication had the good news that more than 800 Bustards have been sighted in the National Parks in Western N.S.W.

12. NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS - CANBERRA.

Visiting Canberra? a visit to the Botanic Gardens could be worthwhile - in addition to the 100 species of birds attracted by the Gardens' native flora, a bird display is being established. The display is specifically designed to encourage a knowledge of the songs and appearance of Australian native birds.

13. LOGGING of RAINFORESTS.

The logging of rainforests in Australia results in the floor of the forest being greatly damaged through the use of heavy machinery and the clearing of roads to accommodate this equipment. An experiment being conducted in the Washington State conifer forests may well yield a long-overdue solution to the controversy which surrounds such logging. Timber jinkers drawn by teams of horses are being used to haul logs from the forest.

14. COMING EVENTS

Sunday 23rd August - Field outing to CROMARTY CREEK-ALLWORTH.
Meet at the Oak, Hexham at 7.30 a.m. Leaders: Marion and Ray Walker.

Saturday 5th September - SEA BIRD TRIP - see page I for details.

Monday 7th Sept. Management Committee meeting - 8 p.m. Garden Suburb School in classroom adjacent to Library.

Wednesday 9th Sept. Ordinary general meeting -7.30 -usual venue.

Saturday -Monday 3rd to 5th October. Week-end Camp at CARROWBROOK.

Because of limitation of numbers prior bookings are advisable - contact Sue Hamonet if you propose to attend.

15.

ABSENTEES

During August/September, several of our members will be out of the district. Fred van Gessel will be away for 4 weeks from 15/8 to 6/9 Atlassing in Central Australia and the Kimberleys with the R.A.O.U.; the Imries and the Hamonets will be attending the B.O.C. Safari at Iron Range (Cape York) from 14 - 31 August; Wilma Barden will be sojourning in the N.T. with friends from the F.O.C. for about 6 weeks from 7 August.

The Newsletter for September will be in the hands of Sue O'Malley whose address is 762 Freemans Waterhole Road, Cooranbong. Phone No. 771263 (9a.m to 5 p.m.)