

September 1981

NEWSLETTER of the HUNTER (Newcastle) BIRD OBSERVERS CLUB.

Issue No. 8/81 - released monthly at General Meetings.

MEETINGS: Club Nights, 2nd Wednesday of each month (except January) at the Garden Suburb Primary School at 7.30 p.m.
Committee Meetings: 1st Monday of each month (public holidays excepted) at Garden Suburb Primary School at 8 p.m.

Chairman: Fred van Gessel. Enquiries: Wilma Barden 573928

1. Notes from August meeting - 12 August 1981.

- (a) Attendance 32 - excellent for a cold winter's night.
Our Chairman was pleased to welcome some new faces: Annette Forster, Judy Balfour, Herma Reedman and a visitor from South Australia - Elaine Kirkland.
- (b) Sea Bird Trip - Bookings taken by Tom Kendall indicated that a full quota of 'Sea Birders' would be on board on the 5th September.
- (c) October week-end Camp at Carrowbrook - to date 10 members have advised intention of attending.
- (d) Jim Imrie sought numbers likely to attend the Upper Allyn Atlas Outing (Camp) on the week-end of 7 - 8 November - 8 possibilities.
- (e) Club Fees - The Chairman reported that the Club fees for the half year ended 31st December 1981 were now due and the Treasurer was kept busy during the evening recording subscribers. As a result we can now publish an official list of members of the Bird Club. Members to date are: Brian Archer, Tony and Judy Balfour, Wilma Barden, Dot Bates, George and Kathy Buckton, Bill Cambridge, Annette Forster, Ed and Sue Hamonet, Jim and Kay Imrie, Ted and Rua Jones, Jean Maiden, John and Sue O'Malley, Jim Perry, Jim and Vera Ralston, Herma and Bill Reedman, Henry and Tere Sabella, Eva Van De Werken, Marion and Ray Walker, Ern Walpole and Arthur Williams.

- 2. BIRD CALLS OF THE EVENING - In keeping with our Sea Bird theme, Fred played calls of the Fairy Prion, the White-fronted tern, the Black-billed gull and the Caspian Tern - all calls were characterised by their raucous nature.
- 3. BIRDS of the EVENING - Tom Kendall our seafaring expert, gave us some interesting and informative details relative to a number of Sea Birds. His comments reflected his personal experience and wide knowledge of this branch of the Bird World. Birds dealt with in some details were: The Black-browed Albatross, the Yellow-nosed Albatross, the Fluttering Shearwater, the Australasian Gannet and the Fairy Prion details of which were further enhanced by the 'skin' of the bird which had been picked up on Stockton beach.
- 4. MAIN FEATURE of the EVENING. - Fred van Gessel.
Following Tom's talk, Fred took over and showed slides of over 15 different species of Sea Birds. Some were shown in the water, some in flight and others held in the hand (after netting). These viewings were embellished with comments from Fred's vast knowledge of ornithology. Birds shown and discussed were: Common, Crested, Lesser-crested, White-winged black and White TERNs; Red-tailed Tropic Bird; White fronted, Storm, Gould and White-winged black PETRELS; Fairy Penguin; Wedge-tailed and Fleshy-footed Shearwaters; White-capped NODDY; Masked and Australasian GANNETS. As a result of all this 'Sea Birding' members who intend to go boating on the 5th September will be better equipped to identify the birds which will be, we hope, present in large and varied numbers. Many thanks to Tom and Fred for furthering our knowledge of SEA BIRDS.

5. BACK -BENCHERS' SPOT. - Sightings reported by members since the last meeting. Fred van Gessel - 42 Musk Ducks, 5,000 plus starlings, Red-crested POCHARD all at Kooragang and a Top-knot Pigeon at Dudley. Tom Kendall - Black-browed and Yellow-nosed Albatross, Giant Petrel, Fairy Prion and Sooty Oyster Catchers, all off the coast of Newcastle; Kay Imrie - 8+ Red-tailed Black Cockatoos near Martindale; John and Sue O'Malley - 10+ Black-browed Albatross off Fraser Park.

6. ATLAS OUTING to DENMAN - Sunday 9th August.

Bleak conditions which prevailed throughout the day greeted the five members who participated in this outing and it must go on record as one of the coldest days we've spent in Birding. Nevertheless, thanks to the perseverance and knowledge of some of those present, over 60 species were recorded. Gratifyingly this was an increase of 23 on the previous count for the grid.

7. CROMARTY CREEK - ALWORTH, FIELD DAY. - Sunday 23rd August..

The month of August found many of our Birdos scattered on various expeditions throughout Australia. Our next few meetings should prove most interesting with many tales to be told of these trips. With so many away however, only a small group of six met at the Oak, Hexham for the Cromarty Creek - Alworth outing which was led by Ray Walker. Although the cool windy weather was still around, 57 species were recorded and this was considered to be quite successful for the day for the small band of observers. Highlights were a Brown Falcon and an immature Rose Robin which seemed to show no fear, coming up to within a few inches of observers. Thank you Ray for an interesting day.

8. SEA BIRD TRIP - Saturday 5th September, Leader: Tom Kendall.

Eighteen Birdos gathered at Nelson Bay (some Sydney friends), eagerly anticipating the sea bird trip. Though the sky was overcast and the wind between light and moderate most were full of enthusiasm. The sea just past the heads was a little on the rough side which caused some of us to be nauseated. It was decided, after the Skippers' suggestion to turn around, into calmer waters and to draw the birds by continuing to feed them. Species seen around the trawler feeding were: Short-tailed Shearwaters (like mosquitoes), Black-browed Albatross (Imm. & Adults), Yellow nosed Albatross, The Shy Albatross (Imm.), and the Southern Giant Petrel. At one stage there were 16 Albatross feeding around the boat. Other species sighted were the A.Asian Gannet, Crested Terns, Pied Cormorants, Pelicans and the White Breasted sea Eagle. The day was thoroughly enjoyed by all, so glad the sun did show itself for a good while too! Thank you Tom for such a profitable time and thanks to your Skipper friend too.

9. REPORT from COMMITTEE MEETING

As this was held only two days before the Club night, details have been held over until the October Newsletter.

10. COMING EVENTS

Weekend 12/13 September. Atlas outing to Cassilis-Merriwa, Details from Jim Imrie.

Sunday 20th September. FIELD DAY to Broke-Warkworth-Milbrodale. Leader: Gary Weber. Meet at OAK-HEXHAM, 7 A.M.

Sat-Mon 3-5 October. Weekend camp at CARRUMPOOK. Numbers are limited, please advise Judy Adcock (573030) if attending.

Weekend 10/11 October Atlas outing to CURRICABARK - details Jim Imrie.

Monday 12th October, Management Committee meeting 8pm

Wednesday 14th October, Club Night - 7.30 pm.