

THE NOVOCASTRIAN WARBLER.

November 1981

NEWSLETTER of the HUNTER (Newcastle) BIRD OBSERVERS CLUB.

Issue No. 10/81 - released monthly at Club Nights.

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 the October meeting 14/10/81

- a) Attendance. In addition to 20 members we were pleased to have with us Mr. Graham Feletti and Mr John Bell with his son Stephen.
- b) Lord Howe Island Trip. - The Department of Community Programmes at the University of Newcastle is arranging a birding expedition to the Island from 28/2/1982 to 6/3/1982. Anyone interested should contact the Department.
- c) New Zealand Sea Bird Book. Arising from our Sea-Bird trip, we became aware of a N.Z. publication - SOUTHERN ALBATROSSES AND PETRELS. Six copies have been ordered and all are spoken for.

2. BIRD CALL OF THE EVENING - for this part of the programme Fred played some of his recordings of the two OWLS - the Boobook and the Barking Owl.

3. BIRD of the EVENING. Arthur Williams presented what must be one of the most absorbing, interesting and fascinating talks we have ever had the pleasure to listen to. Arthur's subject was the White-bellied SEA EAGLE (*Haliastur leucogaster*). Drawing from his experience of many years of observation, Arthur was able to tell us some of the habits of this particular species. Its method of catching fish - using one talon to grip the fish while the other was used to assist the bird to become airborne and its huge stick nest usually located 60 - 70 feet above the ground. To gain access to the nests, Arthur uses a rope ladder and some of his slides of this arrangement were quite breathtaking. Many thanks Arthur for entertaining us in such an impressive way, it was 'ne plus ultra'.

4. GUEST SPEAKER - Alan Gillies

The main feature of the evening was a talk, illustrated with colour slides of the BIRDS OF PANAMA by Alan Gillies. Alan and his charming wife Mavis whilst working in the U.S.A. had the opportunity of visiting the country of the famous canal and spent some 3 weeks in the rain forests. Although only a small country by Australian standards, Panama boasts of 833 different species of birds and it would be possible to see no later than 373 from one particular spot - surely a Bird Watcher's paradise. The colour slides showed the brilliant colours of some of these birds; the unusual if not weird feathering on some of the heads and the massive bill of the Toucan. Thank you Al and Mavis for a glimpse of another bird world.

5. NEW BOOK - 'HAWKS IN FOCUS' by Jack & Lindsay Cupper.

This book contains over 300 colour photographs and 70,000 words of text in the culmination of 7 years of intense travel, work and study of the 24 species of Australian diurnal birds of prey. One of the episodes related in the book, is the recording of black-breasted Buzzards rearing seven Kestrels, feeding them on other Kestrels! Price is \$29.50 but with H.B.O.C. discount of 15% at Arthur Warners Bookshop should be available for \$25.10.

6. FIELD DAY to BROKE - Sunday 20th September. This outing did eventuate but to date we have not been able to record any details

7. UPPER ALLYN ATLAS OUTING

Scheduled for the week-end 7/8 November, was curtailed to a one day trip on the Sunday. Rain in the area on the Saturday did not enhance bird watching activities. More details next issue.

8. NOTES FROM NOVEMBER COMMITTEE MEETING.

- a) Constitution - a draft of the proposed Constitution for the Club was considered and after several amendments it is hoped to be able to table the document for perusal by members at the December meeting. Presentation for adoption is planned for the Annual Meeting in February 1982.
- b) Cabbage Tree Island Trip - a trip to this island is being planned for January 1982. To avoid disturbing the nesting Gould Petrels as much as possible, numbers are to be restricted to 15 and the cost per person would be not less than \$12. More details at the December meeting.
- c) Membership - has now reached 41.
- d) Bird for Club Badge - Two more birds have been added to the list under consideration so that we now have the following: Golden Whistler, Gould Petrel, King Parrot, Regent Bowerbird, Scarlet Honeyeater and the Wompoo Pigeon. At the February Meeting, a talk will be given on each bird nominated and at the conclusion of these talks, an exhaustive ballot will be conducted to determine the most popular choice.
- e) Club Night Programmes - Details for the November, December and February Club Nights were dealt with. For the December meeting, members are asked to bring along their favourite slides for viewing; at the close of this meeting, as it will be the last for 1981, it is proposed to partake of a light supper. Members are therefore asked to bring their own cup and ladies to also bring a 'plate'.

9. BLACK EGGS a novel by Nicolette Devas.

Noticed this book in the local Library.

Nicolette Devas writes with great enthusiasm about the world of birds and the rewards to be found in Birdwatching. Two excerpts from the book:

'Armchair naturalists were those who like to watch a bird in fine weather during the intervals between regular meals.'

'Experts and enthusiastic amateurs prepared to labour for their results; wade through melted ice rivers, climb mountains with slopes of loose stones, lie for hours on jagged lava under a mist of glacier winds, eat a sandwich on the prowl or skip a meal altogether'

10. COMING EVENTS

Sunday 22nd November - Field Day to SWAN BAY - Leader: David Waterhouse
Meet at the Oak, Hexham at 7 a.m.

Sat-Sun 28/29 November Atlas week-end to CURRICABARK (50 Km. N.W. of Gloucester)
Details: Jim Imrie.

Sat-Sun 5/6 December Atlas week-end to WARRA-WARRANULLA-WAUKIVORY
Details: Jim Imrie.

Monday 7th December - Final Committee Meeting for 1981
8 p.m Garden Suburb Primary School.

Wednesday 9th December - Final Club Night for 1981