

HUNTER BIRD OBSERVERS CLUB.

NEWSLETTER NO. 9/82 October, 1982 (Released monthly at Club Nights)

President: Fred van Gessel

Hon. Secretary: Kay Imrie

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Annual Subscriptions: Family \$6.00; Single \$5.00; School Student \$1.00  
Due on 1st January each year.

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

Committee Meetings: 1st Monday of each month (public  
holidays excepted) at Garden Suburb School at  
8.00 p.m.

1. NOTES FROM THE SEPTEMBER MEETING - Wednesday 8th September, 1982

- a) Attendance - School holidays plus the fact that spring-time appears to be that time of year when members disperse in all directions for holiday trips, somewhat affected the numbers in attendance, there being a total of 20 members.
- b) Bird Call of the Evening - Wilma Barden  
The harsh, scratchy calls, reminiscent of the sound of tearing sandpaper, was revealed as the voice of the Apostlebird (*Struthidea cinerea*) also referred to as Happy Family, Lousy Jack or Twelve Apostles.
- c) Bird of the Evening - Ray Walker  
Birds of the Evening would be more appropriate as Ray played a tape made from the excellent recordings of Harold Pollock's Australian bird-calls. Included amongst the variety of species calls were Grey, Pied and Black Butcherbirds, Noisy Pitta, Satin and Great Bowerbirds, Whistling Kite, Pallid Cuckoo, Albert and Superb Lyrebirds.
- d) Back-Benchers Spot/Observations  
Wilma Barden - reported hearing calls of the Pallid Cuckoo at Hillsborough and Blackbutt Reserve and commented that this was the first time for about three years. Further indications of the Pallid Cuckoo in the Warners Bay area came from Eva van de Werken, Sue Hamonet and Ray Walker.  
Sue Hamonet - briefly reported on some of her observations whilst on a trip to Perth recently. Several road kills noted were a male Orange Chat and a Red-necked Avocet. Sue has an impressive list of southern and western bird species some of which were 1st sightings for her. One species which successfully eluded Sue was the Western Spinebill.  
Ray Walker - reported briefly on the junior members outing to Dudley where a total of 43 species were observed. A nest of the Eastern Yellow Robin was found and another of the New Holland Honeyeater containing two young.  
Tom Kendall - sightings of 2 Peregrine Falcons hunting in Tumut, Common Blackbird at Batlow and whilst at the walk-in-aviary at Taronga Zoo saw a male Satin Bowerbird painting his bower and then chasing away an immature male. Tom was intrigued by the apparently tame, free-flying White Ibis about the Zoo grounds, one of which was foraging in a garbage tin.  
Nigel Walker - added that similarly, the White Ibis were evident at Sydney Botanical Gardens and didn't appear over-anxious by the public frequenting the area.

Gary Weber - advised that the Association for Environmental Education's publication "The Blackbutt Book" was now available for \$2.00 per copy.

2. ITEMS OF INTEREST

- a) Rolling Bird Survey: Reference was made to a news-clipping from the Newcastle Morning 'Herald' of 31st August, 1982 which is probably referring to the Rolling Bird Survey which is organised by the R.A.O.U. (Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union) in Victoria. The basis of the survey is that the same observer makes sets of at least 5 visits in a three-month period to the same area a year apart, e.g. 5 visits during the period March to May and 6 visits during March to May the following year. The survey is not restricted to particular species but it will probably be most useful to focus on habitats where the majority of species are. The observer should select an area where a good many species occur, which you will be able to visit, several times at least, a year apart. On each visit you move along a route selected in advance, at about the same time of day, stopping to record birds for a fixed period of five minutes at particular points. It is best if the route selected is the same (or virtually the same) on successive visits, and that the stopping points also be approximately the same. At each stopping point all species seen or heard are recorded on a score sheet, irrespective of distance away and whether flying or not. Estimates of the number of individuals should not be attempted; simple presence or absence is to be recorded. Stopping points should be at least 200 m apart, but they do not have to be at equal intervals. Additional species recorded during moves between stopping points may also be entered on the sheet. The number of stopping points during one survey will depend on circumstances, but about 10 points would usually be appropriate (corresponding to a visit of a couple of hours). The date, time and weather of the visit will be recorded. The score sheet requests habitat information according to a simple classification set out on the sheet. Do not attempt a sophisticated answer to this. The R.A.O.U. is looking to see whether a number of different observers consistently record increases or decreases in the abundance of species from one year to the next. Anyone wishing to participate contact Wilma Barden.
- b) Closer-to-home Field Days: Members comments were sought on a proposal for an additional "closer-to-home" field  $\frac{1}{2}$  (or full) days outings per month. Members selections of areas to be handed to the Committee.
- c) Information Folder: A folder containing information on various Study Groups; colour-marked and colour-banded birds; information required on data and location of breeding sites for various species including raptors; and other items, was compiled by Wilma Barden for the interest of members.
- d) Pack-Walk: A 2 day (1 night) pack-walk was proposed from Kerrapit (Gloucester Tops) to Carey's Peak, weekend of ~~13-14th~~ November. Interested members to contact Wilma Barden. Ph: 57.3928. → 27/8 Nov.
- e) MAIN FEATURE: Bird Observers Club, Victoria - Cassette/Slide Show "WHERE HOME IS A HOLLOW"  
An enterprising young man pondered upon the effects of large-scale tree-felling and land clearing operations throughout Australia for such as wood-chip, paper packaging production and pine plantings particularly in regard to tree-hollow dwellers and users, as hollows in trees take about 100 years to form. This feature shows how he went about the study and the results of that survey.

It revealed that there are three main types of forests - "old" forests of 300 years or so (with a number of hollows) - "middle-aged" forests of 30 years (without hollows) and "young" forests of about 12 years consisting of small shrubby growth, again without hollows. Bird species such as Rosellas, Owlet Nightjars, Owls, Treecreepers and others as well as possum species, Sugar Gliders, Greater Gliders and other hollow-dwelling creatures are highly at risk. Experiments using artificial nesting hollows i.e. nest-boxes and pieces of hollow logs fixed to trees in a "middle-aged" forest produced data concerning space required for living quarters or territories of breeding birds and animals; how this relates to permitted occupancy of other hollows in a territory; to how many territories (with suitable hollows) can be maintained in a forest etc.. If no suitable or sufficient hollows are available when the time comes for the young to disperse they must die. An excellent production - very thought provoking as to what may lie ahead for many of our indigenous tree-hollow dwelling bushland creatures.

3. Committee Meeting for September was not held as a number of members of Committee was expected to be away.

4. JUNIORS SECTION (as suggested by David Wilks)

David also suggested that junior members may wish to become involved in monitoring or recording data for a specific area or project as well as field excursions.

Now Junior Members - this space is for your comments, opinions, observations etc. - OVER TO YOU ! Any material to be in the hands of the Editor no later than Friday 5th November for the next Newsletter.

Junior Outing - Sunday 29th August 1982 - Leader: Ramon Walker.

Three members attended - Stuart Johnson, David Wilks and Stephen Bell - 40 species sighted.

First port of call was the gully on the east side of Dudley -Nth end and down to the beach. It was rather foggy at first, we started at 7 a.m. but it turned out to be rather hot later on. The highlight of this area were the two male Regent Bowerbirds sighted. Also seen were: Welcome Swallow, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Whipbird, Superb Wrens, Striated Thornbill, Yellow Robin, Grey Fantail, Grey Shrike-thrush, White-throated Tree-creeper, Spotted Pardalote, Silvereye, Eastern Spinebill, Lewins Honeyeater, Yellow-faced honeyeater, White-naped honeyeater, White-cheeked honeyeater, Noisy Friarbird, Red-browed Firetail, White-browed Scrubwren, Magpie, Currawong, Silver Gull, Common Tern, Eastern Rosella, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo and Kookaburra.

We then went to the heathland above the Awabakal Reserve. Sightings there were: New-Holland, White-cheeked and Tawny-crowned honeyeaters, White-browed Scrubwren, Superb Wren, Australian Pipit, Raven, Large Black Cormorant, Australasian Gannet, Grey Butcherbird, Little Wattlebird, Dusky Woodswallow, Bar-shouldered Dove, Welcome Swallow and Tasmanian Silvereye. The highlight of this area were the two baby New Holland honeyeaters and the very protective parents who came within 300 mm of us as we had a quick look. Also sighted in the gully area was a Yellow Robin's nest with two eggs. When I returned the following week the eggs had hatched.

- Ramon Walker

5. WEEK-END CAMP - 2nd, 3rd, 4th October 1982 - MUNGHORN GAP.

Over the long week-end, twelve members of the Club plus three adults and one child found their way by a long way (through Bylong and back) to Munghorn Gap which is somewhere west of Sandy Hollow. The trouble was caused by a missing sign-post, but once there the long dusty trip was deemed worthwhile, the location and weather both being ideal for bird watching and camping.

Although planned as a combined outing with F.O.C. members from Sydney, crowded conditions at their campsite made it advisable to establish our camp some half a mile away. However, some liaison was still possible, and contact was also made with two members of the Manning River Club.

Highlight of the week-end must have been the tracking down of the Painted Honeyeater (*Grantiella picta*) through its distinctive "see-saw" call. Two pairs of Turquoise Parrots (*Neophema pulchella*) as well as Masked Woodswallows (*Artamus personatus*) were also sighted, Brown and Stubble Quail (*Coturnix australis* & *Coturnix pectoralis*), were flushed out, and Dusky Woodswallows (*Artamus cyanopterus*) and Crested Shrike-tits (*Falcunculus frontatus*) abounded. Many species were either nesting or accompanied by young.

Most members spent some time by the side of a small pool watching numerous White-plumed, Yellow-tufted, Black-chinned and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters, Pardalotes, Wattle-birds and Noisy Miners fly in for a drink as well as the elusive Little Lorikeets (*Glossopsitta pusilla*).

106 species were listed, and most members were able to add at least one "first" to their personal list.

BY THE WAY ---

Which members went BYLONG -er way than the rest ?

Who took a MOUNTAIN of bedding ?

Who had a closer-than-desired encounter with a handsome dark stranger ?

Who is going to leave his girl-friend behind next time, to make way for -- you've guessed it ! - his tape recorder.

And finally many thanks to the charming lady who provided the scrumptious Mulberry Trifle.

Eva Van de Werken.

6. COMING EVENTS

Sunday 24th October - FIELD DAY to BLACKBUTT RESERVE

Meet at the Eastern entrance in Mahogany Drive, New Lambton  
at 8 a.m.

Contact person and Leader: Wilma Barden.

Monday 1st November - MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING  
8 p.m. Garden Suburb School.

Wednesday 10th November - CLUB NIGHT  
7.30 p.m. Garden Suburb School.