

HUNTER BIRD OBSERVERS CLUB.

NEWSLETTER No. 1/83 FEBRUARY 1983 (Released monthly at Club nights)

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Annual Subscriptions: Family Rate \$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: First Monday of each month (Public holidays
excepted) at Garden Suburb School at 8 p.m.

1. NOTES FROM THE DECEMBER 1982 MEETING - Wednesday 8th December 1982.

a) Attendance - no doubt due to other activities at this time of the year, our numbers were down on previous meetings - 23 being present.

b) BIRD of the EVENING - Dot Bates

The Superb Lyrebird (*Menura novaehollandiae*) was dealt with in a very complete manner by Dot Bates. Dot imparted some interesting information relative to the history of the observations of this bird and also dwelt on the structure of the nest in addition to her comments about this master mimic of the bush.

Thank you Dot.

c) BIRD CALL of the EVENING - Fred van Gessel

A call of the Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater (*Acanthagenys rufogularis*) was played by Fred, but members couldn't identify this one as it was a different call to the one we usually hear for the Spiny-cheeked.

d) BIRD QUIZ - Arthur Williams

Arthur bowled up some twenty questions covering a wide field of ornithology of a specific and general nature. After completing this 'exam' most members present realised that they still had a lot to learn about birds in general. Thank you Arthur for a challenging set of questions.

e) Annual Raffle

As is usual at the last meeting for the year a raffle was conducted to augment Club funds. Prizes were donated by Ted Felton, Dot Bates and Jim Imrie and we thank them for their generosity. Winners were: 1st (Flagon of Sherry) Arthur Austin; 2nd (Pot Plant) Fred van Gessel; 3rd (Christmas Cake) Kay Imrie.

(f) Members Slides

A showing of Members' slides completed the programme and the evening was rounded off by partaking of an excellent supper which had been prepared by some of our Lady members - thank you Ladies.

2. HALF DAY FIELD DAY - Awabakal Field Study Centre - Sunday 9th January 1983.

The hot, consistent gusty winds and high temperatures certainly affected the number of birds observed on this first half-day outing and probably the number of members who attended.

A 7 a.m. start with five stalwart members who braved the unpleasant elements, later being joined by two prospective new members, Glen & Jillian Albrecht and their daughter, Sarah.

The winds kept most birds low and there was none of the usual busy activity of the heathland honeyeaters.



Half Day Field Day (Cont)

Despite the adverse conditions a total of 50 species was recorded, the highlights being the sighting of a Japanese Snipe disturbed at the edge of a rather depleted waterhole, a hunting Swamp Harrier being harried by other species and a flying fox who resented our intrusion.

Our thanks go to Bill Cambridge who capably led, and, despite our apparent lethargy, kept us on the move to various points of interest - the cliff face overlooking the sea, lagoon, dry sclerophyll forest and heatland . Wilma Barden.

3. SEA BIRD TRIP - Sunday 9th January 1983.

At Nelson Bay we boarded the launch which we had hired for the day. The trip out was a welcome change from the hot land. After about half an hour we anchored off Cabbage Tree Island. We were fortunate that the sea was calm, enabling us to be ferried to the island in a small boat. There are no sandy coves or other suitable landing spots. We all managed to jump off onto the rocks without getting wet.

A White-breasted Sea Eagle welcomed us and stayed perched in a dead tree for quite a while. Just near our landing rock, there was a Little Penguin nesting in a rock crevice. It came to the edge of its home to ^{see} what all the noise was about.

Our two experts, Fred van Gessel and Bill Lane (Sydney visitor) went off rock-hopping up the gully in search of the GOULD PETREL. Sure enough and without much time passing, the call came - 'Here'. Two Gould Petrels and one egg were shown to the group. The birds were banded, admired and photographed by those members lucky enough to have brought their cameras. These beautiful birds nest only on Cabbage Tree Island (John Gould Nature Reserve) in rock piles and under cover of the palm forest. Without knowing where to look they could easily be missed.

Nearby was a different type of nest - a tunnel in the ground. It was that of the Wedge-tailed Shearwater. The bird was incubating one egg, about the same size as a domestic hen's egg. Another Shearwater was found wearing a very worn band so it was replaced. We hope to find out its age when records are checked.

We then rock-hopped up the gully to the top of the island and the view was well worth the effort. Other birds seen or heard on the island included Silvereyes, Yellow-faced honeyeater, Mistletoebird, Grey Thrush, Kookaburra, Pied Currawong, Raven and Reef Heron.

On rejoining our launch, we cruised out to sea. It was a bit like horse-riding but I think most members enjoyed the ride. Our Captain followed a fishing trawler and we all had good looks at hundreds of 'brown birds'. They included Wedge-tailed Shearwaters, Flesh-footed Shearwaters and a Pomarine Skua. It was a most impressive sight even for those who had seen it before. The birds seemed to come from everywhere. The total species number for the day was 24.

Jeanette Stephenson.

4. THE CRESTED HAWK (*Aviceda subcristata*)

On 16/1/83 I was riding my bike along a track near my home in Rankin Park. I noticed a large bird flying, I got some adults to come and observe this bird. It was a CRESTED HAWK perching in a tree. Almost right away an adult bird came flying in with a lizard to feed this large baby. On closer observation we noticed that there were two immatures and one adult.

In Australia the Crested Hawk lives in two separate regions, one down the Great Dividing Range from Cape York to about 280 kilometres south of Sydney and the other from Roper River through Arnhem Land and the Kimberleys to Fitzroy River. It has never been recorded more than 350 kilometres inland. It lives in eucalypt woodlands.

Mathew Stephenson

Crested Hawk (Cont) Editor's Note;

Mathew is only nine years old and we must compliment him not only on observation of the Crested Hawk but also that he took the trouble to write about his experience and of most importance, he made this information available for members of the H.B.O.C.

5. A COMMON NODDY ?

On Thursday 6/1/83 1715-1800 hours, while paddling a surf ski at Blacksmiths Beach, a dark grey bird was noticed in a flock of Common Terns and Silver Gulls.

The bird was dark grey all over with the exception of a white or light grey area from the forehead to the crown. This light coloured area did not appear to go beyond the crown. The bill and legs were both dark. The tail when fanned in slow speed manoeuvres appeared to be slightly rounded with a definite notch in the centre. The wings appeared to be slightly shorter, broader and not as sharply pointed as the wings of the Common Tern. The bird was about the same size as the Common Terns.

When feeding, the bird took its food from the surface of the water while in flight. It was also seen flying slowly a few feet above the beach where it made numerous changes of directions - it was apparently searching for food although it was not observed taking anything from the beach. A Common Noddy ? Bill Cambridge.

6. BIRD BOOKS FOR SALE

The Cumberland Bird Observers Club has arranged with some publishing firms to buy books at discounts ranging from 35% to 40% less than the retail price. The Club then adds 10% to each book for Club funds.

Some examples are as follows:

BIRDS OF AUSTRALIA by Pizzey Retail: \$25.00. Discount price \$17.90

READERS DIGEST BOOK OF AUSTRALIAN BIRDS - Retail \$39.95. to \$ 28.60

THE WRENS & WARBLERS OF AUSTRALIA - Retail \$49.95 to \$37.50.

In addition, postage from Sydney would be applicable - the amount varies with the weight of each book.

Anyone interested in purchasing from this source, please see Ed Hamonet.

Note: A deposit of the full purchase price is necessary before orders can be placed.

Incidentally there is a new book coming out about March 1983 on KINGFISHERS by Joseph Forshaw and William Cooper. The price is to be about \$700.00 but if a number are ordered a discount of 25% would be available - discount price \$525.00

7. FIELD DAY TO MARTINSVILLE - GAP CREEK - Sunday 23rd January 1983.

LAND RAILS really are real ! Some of the 25 members on the field day on the 23rd January saw this bird for the first time, including one member who has been looking for such birds for twelve years. As we pulled up to visit the property of George Pope, this bird was sighted on a small wet area at the side of the road and was eventually sighted by most of the group.

Once inside the property, a bird of prey was heard and on investigation it was found to be a COLLARED SPARROWHAWK carrying prey which proved to be a Peaceful Dove. One young was also sighted.

From here we went on to Fred Hullman's property at the Gap Creek Reserve. All told a total of species was seen for the day. Thanks are due to Ray Walker who led this outing in his usual inimitable style.

Jim Perry.

8. AUSTRALIA DAY WEEK-END CAMP 29-31 January 1983.

The H.B.O.C. Camp held in the WOKO National Park on the Manning River from 29-31 January was highly successful with a record attendance of 23 members and a record bird count of 122 species.

At all times of the day persons with 'nockies' could be seen (or heard) combing the gullies, the forests and river flats looking for considerable feathered species to pop out to be observed and counted in the official H.B.O.C. list for the week-end.

What was seen ? Ten species of the Columbidae family including Wompoos, White-headed and Topknot Pigeons; a POWERFUL OWL devouring a Tawny Frogmouth; 2 or 3 Lyrebirds; Peregrine and Little Falcons; Spectacled Flycatcher and Red-backed Wrens to name some.

For many there were no new birds but Rosemary and Pat had an "Owl of a time" learning about the new birds they saw at the Camp. All agreed on the success of the week-end and many thought it the best yet.

Jim Imrie.

9. REMINDERS

- a) Membership Fees are now due and our Treasurer will be pleased to receive your subs A.S.A.P.
- b) Club Badges are also available.
- c) Contributions for the Newsletter - We welcome any items such as were submitted by Bill Cambridge and Mathew Stephenson.
- d) Our Librarian - Eva van de Werken would like to add to her stock of books; so if you have any suitable volumes available Eva will be pleased to take them off your hands.

10. COMING EVENTS

Sat/Sun - 12/13 Feb. 1983 SUMMER WADER COUNT & FRECKLE DUCK COUNT.

Areas to be covered include the following: Grahamstown Dam, Morpeth Sewage ponds, Kooragang Island, Swansea, Port Stephens and the Swamps at Shortland, Wentworth, Ellalong, Teralba and Minmi.

If you would like to assist, please contact Jim Perry at the February Club Night or on 432496.

Sunday 20th February - FIELD DAY to GRAHAMSTOWN DAM.

Meet at the Oak, Hexham at 7 a.m. Contact member: Sue Hamonet.

Friday 25th February - Mist Netting is to be carried out) Members interested in
on Kooragang Island.) either of these
Saturday 26th February - Cannon netting is to be) activities, please see
conducted, also on Kooragang) Fred van Gessel.

Sunday 6th March - HALF DAY Outing to Stoney Creek (Toronto) etc.

Meet at the Speers Point Swimming Pool at 7 a.m.

Contact member: Sue Hamonet

Monday 7th March - Management Committee Meeting - 8 p .m. Garden Suburb School

Wednesday 9th March - Club Night. Guest Speaker: Graeme Phipps from the McLeay Museum.

STOP PRESS: Whilst returning from the Australia Day Camp on Monday 31st January, Marion Walker & Eva van de Werken sighted in the sky near Cardiff a bird which could only have been a GREATER FRIGATEBIRD. The last sighting recorded in N.S.W. was at Terrigal in 1930.

OBSERVATIONS.

NAME	Date of SIGHTING	PLACE	OBSERVATION
Wilma Barden	29.11.82	Blackbutt Reserve	Channel-billed Cuckoo - 2
H.B.O.C.	5.12.82	Barrington Guest House Area	Pale Yellow robin
w.Barden/M&J Imrie	4.12.82	Clarencetown	Pallid Cuckoo
R.Boyce	Nov. 1982	Sulphide works, Boolaroo	Letter-winged Kites - 2
H.B.O.C.	21.11.82	Ourimbah State forest	Crested Hawk
K. & J. Imrie	28.11.82	Mt. Thorley	Plumed Whistling Duck - 20
F.van Gessel	4.11.82	Kooragang Island	Pink-eared Duck
	28.11.82	Marist Park, Shortland	Peregrine Falcon
	28.10.82	Mayfield	Little Falcon
	28.11.82	B.H.P.Golf Course -Shortland	Pink-eared Duck
	4.11.82	Kooragang Island	Glossy Ibis
	28.11.82	Marist Park- Shortland	Glossy Ibis
R.W. Mark	16.11.82	Buttaba	Long-billed Corella
Stuart Johnson	15.11.82	Dudley	Banded Rail
Alan Raine	24.11.82	Whitebridge	Rufous Songlark

OBSERVATIONS OUTSIDE THE HUNTER REGION.

Su Hamonet	10.8.82	50km. east of Mundrabilla W.A.	Crimson Chat - 4
	11.8.82	Norseman W.A.	Rufous Treecreeper
	15.8.82	Lake Monger (Perth)	Great Crested Grebe - 21+
	16.8.82	Fremantle	Arctic Skua
	18.8.82	Fremantle	White-tailed Black Cockatoo (Baudin's)
	18.8.82	Busselton W.A.	Red-capped Parrot - numerous
		Margaret River W.A.	Splendid Wren
		" "	western Rosella
		" "	Port Lincoln Parrot (semitorquatus)
		" "	Western Yellow Robin
		" "	Elegant Parrot
		" "	White-breasted Robin
		" "	White-browed Scrubwren (Maculata)
	19.8.82	Cape Leeuwin	Rock Parrot
	22.8.82	Two People Bay W.A.	Noisy Scrubbird
		" " "	Red-eared Firetail
		" " "	Red-winged Wren - plentiful
		" " "	Western Whipbird (H)
		" " "	Western Bristlebird (H)
		" " "	Purple-crowned Lorikeet
	24.8.82	Stirling Ranges W.A.	White-tailed Black Cockatoo (Carnaby's)
		Esperance	Black-faced Cormorant
		"	Black-tailed Native Hen - plentiful
		"	Redthroat
	27.8.82	Mundrabilla homestead W.A.	Black Falcon
		Lake Hamilton S.A.	Cape Barren Goose - 3
	31.8.82	Morgan S.A.	Orange Chat (Road kill)
		Waikerie S.A.	White-fronted Honeyeater