

HUNTER BIRD OBSERVERS CLUB.

NEWSLETTER No. 3/83 APRIL 1983 (Released monthly at Club nights)

President: Fred van Gessel

Hon. Secretary: Kay Imrie

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

Note: a RED CROSS at the head of this Newsletter indicates fees are due.

Club B adges: \$2.50 - available from the Treasurer.

Meetings: CLUB NIGHTS - 2nd Wednesday of each month (except January)
at Garden Suburb School at 7.30 p.m.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS: First M^Wnday of each month (Public holidays
excepted) at Garden Suburb School at 7.30 p.m.

1. NOTES FROM THE MARCH MEETING - Wednesday 9th March 1983.

- a) Attendance - 23. The reduced attendance was no doubt due to the 40+ degree temperature which had prevailed throughout the day.
A welcome was extended to new member - Jack Flanagan.

b) BIRD CALL OF THE EVENING - Wilma B arden

Wilma played two calls - the Blue-faced Honeyeater and the Restless Flycatcher. The former has a strong, strident and distinctive call which has been likened to a penetrating, querulous 'woik, woik, woik'.
The Restless Flycatcher or Scissors Grinder as he is sometimes known has several calls one of which is a curious, sustained, grinding, churring, hence his alternative name.

c) BIRD OF THE EVENING - Jim Imrie.

A bird which is only found in the Cape York Peninsula area - the Northern Scrub Robin - was the one chosen by Jim who related his experiences in trying to sight this bird, involving many hours of patient scrub sitting at Iron Range.

The scientific name: *Drymodes superciliaris* means - *Drymodes* = of the woods; *superciliaris* = browed, hence, above the eye.

The Northern Scrub Robin is similar in size to its Southern counterpart but is more brightly coloured. It inhabits much heavier vegetation, runs about quietly - hence difficult to observe - its voice is a loud shrill whistle which it will answer if imitated.

Thank you jim for an informative talk on a less well-known bird.

d) MAIN FEATURE - Arthur Austin.

From his collection of over 2,000 slides taken in areas ranging from Tasmania to North Queensland, Arthur presented a fascinating viewing interspersed with appropriate recordings of calls. All told we saw over 100 slides, some were of very well known local inhabitants, others, particularly those taken in North Queensland not so well known. Thank you Arthur for a first class contribution.

- e) Junior member, David Bone raised a few eyebrows when he reported a sighting of the rare Water Rail (*Rallus pectoralis*) at Dudley - no doubt this area was well combed in the weeks succeeding the meeting.

2. FIELD DAY TO GRAHAMSTOWN DAM - Sunday 20th February 1983.

A very successful Field Day held on the 20th February. 18 adults, incl newcomers and two visitors, one from Sydney and one from the U.K. and present on a mainly cloudy and not too hot day.

Firstly we visited the catchment area for the Grahamstown Dam, spendin in the surrounding forest area, then walking close to the water and in the adjacent scrub.

Several interesting sightings: approximately 11 Mountain Ducks, a Brown Bittern on the wing and a female Southern Emu Wren. Fred heard and some of us sighted somewhat in the distance, a yellow-tailed Cockatoo, we took his word for that sighting. Other highlights were 4 Wood Sandpipers, Tawny Marshbird and Little Grass Bird. A number of Little Lorikeets and various Honeyeaters were seen in the eucalyptus blossom.

After lunch in the Balickera Park we drove along the canal. A flock of several hundred White and Straw-necked Ibis were sighted on the roadway.

On the way home some of us stopped at the Seaham Swamp where a number of Egrets had been nesting. Some of them were still there together with a few Ducks, mostly Grey Teal.

A total of 108 species sighted and/or heard on the day. For myself, as a beginner another successful day with a number of new sightings - my total list is growing fast
Rosemary Waymark.

3. HALF DAY OUTING TO THE TERALBA AREA - Sunday 6th March 1983.

Ten members met at the Speers Point pool for a half day outing to the Five Islands, Teralba area. Ray Walker led the group (for the most part in the right direct' n)

First stop was at the bridge at Teralba where 22 species were observed; a point of interest was a well-camouflaged duck's nest, that had been in use early in the season. One unhatched egg still remaining in it.

From Teralba, the group then moved on to a small area around a creek at Rhondda. Our arrival at the creek was held up a few minutes while a small group of Choughs hopped slowly across the road. Although the creek had dried up considerably since last visited, quite a few birds were seen. Notably a Night Heron, Rufous Fantails, Black-faced Monarch and Eastern Whipbird.

From this area, it was decided that as the day had become very hot, that the Sewerage treatment works at Edgeworth might yield more birds. This area did prove very rewarding, 39 species being recorded in a short time.

The highlight of the day being 5 Whistling Kites flying a few feet overhead, also two Sea Eagles, all interested in what looked like a dead eel lying in the centre of the creek. A flock of Spice Finches were also seen and many species of water fowl on the sewerage dam including Pink-eared Ducks, Shovellers, White-eyed Ducks, Little and Hoary-headed Grebes. 72 species seen altogether.

Marion Walker.

4. BIRD BOOKS FOR SALE.

In the February Newsletter we advised that Bird Books could be purchased through the Cumberland B.O.C. at discounts of 30% to 40% off the retail price. However, it should be appreciated that these prices are the amounts to be paid to that Club. The books then have to be transported/posted to Newcastle. Postage charges range from \$2.25 to \$2.45 per book in addition to packaging which could be another 70c. When considering such purchases members should bear in mind that these additional costs may be incurred. The Cumberland club cannot place orders with the Publishers until requests total a value of \$50 - \$100 - delivery dates are therefore very uncertain.

5. EASTER CAMP 1 - 4 April 1983.

Originally planned for the Vickery State Forest, the venue was changed to 'Carlton' the property of Mr. Robert Shanley. This holding is adjacent to the Kelvin State Forest and the change-over was suggested by Ted Jones who was visiting his daughter in the area at that time.

Our camps were set up close by a bore water trough and tank which Mr. Shanley kept running for us throughout the week-end. His thoughtfulness in that regard was much appreciated as the water was used for washing (including Jim Imrie's improvised shower) and the trough alongside the tank provided almost day long enjoyment to Bird Watchers who focussed binoculars, telescopes and cameras on the thirsty habitues: Apostle birds, Zebra and Double-barred finches, Peaceful and Bar-shouldered Doves, Common bronzewing, Eastern Rosellas, a King Parrot, and White plumed, Spiney-cheeked, Singing and Striped Honeyeaters.

During an evening 'Bird Call' session, Ian Shanley, the young son of the owner was invested as an honorary member of the H.B.O.C and presented with a Club Badge.

The weather was mostly overcast with a cool south-west breeze.

Habitat was dry woodland with very little understorey; Iron bark, Wilga, Kurrajong and Cypress Pine being the dominant trees. The area is badly drought affected and provided an interesting study in the feeding patterns of some birds. A large proportion of the species recorded were ground feeders and we noticed Rufous Whistlers foraging for long periods on the ground in an unfamiliar way. Many remnant nests were noted but our resident nest authority - Arthur Williams - remarked that in the main these were nests of finches and suggested that some rainfall may spark off nesting activity among other species which were obviously paired off. Wrens seen were all in eclipse plumage.

83 species were recorded for the camp and those in attendance were: Wilma Barden, Bill Cambridge, Al & Mavis Gillies, Ed and Sue Hamonet, Jim & Kay Imrie, Chas. Mann, Jeanette Stephenson with Mathew and his two sisters, Fred van Gessel, Arthur Williams together with day visitors - Ted & Rua Jones with Ted's brother and his Wife.

6. NEWSLETTER REPORTS

Preparation of material for the Newsletter commences from the date of issue of the previous Newsletter. It would therefore be appreciated if members who have 'volunteered' to compile reports on Field Days etc. could let the Editor have their copy within seven (?) days of the event. Thank you.

7. APPOINTMENTS

At the Management Committee meeting held on 7th March the following appointments were made:

Club Librarian - Eva van de Werken
Newsletter Editor - Ed. Hamonet
Newsletter Distributor - Jim Imrie.

8. ANNUAL MIGRATION

Consideration of further details at the Planning meeting held on 16/3/83 resulted as follows:

- i) ROUTE: Nyngan, Broken Hill, Mootwingee, Minindee Lakes, Mallee Cliffs, Hattah Lakes, Willandra, Cocoparra and the Weddin Mountains.
- ii) NUMBER OF PERSONNEL - Maximum for the bus = 12.
- iii) COST - will vary, dependent on the number of bus passengers but should be in the range of \$185 - \$230 per person plus food and camping fees.
- iv) The next meeting will be held when further details are available and any interested members are advised to contact Jim Perry.

9. COMING EVENTS

23/24/25 April - ANZAC WEEK-END - CAMP AT TUGLO WILDLIFE REFUGE AT CARROWBROOK

Contact: Kay Imrie - Phone: 524524

TRAVEL DIRECTIONS:

Proceed to Singleton; cross the Hunter River (via Dunolly Bridge); turn RIGHT about 200 metres from the bridge. After making this turn a Caravan Park will be seen on your left.

About 16.5 Kms from the bridge take the RIGHT fork at the 'Big Post' (A post with several signs). From here on there are several fords to be crossed the last being about 40 Kms from Singleton and this is where the bitumen ends.

After crossing this ford take the road to the LEFT (gravel surface), cross a grid and travel up the hill. This road climbs for about 6 Kms. Turn LEFT into CASSELLS Road; continue along this road for about 1.5 Kms to a gate on the left with the sign: TUGLO WILDLIFE REFUGE. Enter the property and seek directions to the camping area.

Note: It will be necessary to take drinking and washing water.

Sunday 1st May - HALF DAY OUTING to MINMI/STOCKRINGTON.

Meet: Minmi School at 9 a.m.

Contact: Kay Imrie.

Monday 2nd MAY - Management Committee Meeting 7.30 p.m.
(Note the altered time)

Wednesday 11th May - CLUB NIGHT.