



HUNTER BIRD OBSERVERS CLUB.

NEWSLETTER No. 4/83 May 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)

Club Badges: \$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.

Management Committee Meetings: First Monday of each month (Public holidays
excepted) at Garden Suburb School at 7.30 p.m.

1. NOTES FROM THE APRIL MEETING - Wednesday 13th April 1983.

a) Attendance - 30 members and 4 visitors including one from Queensland.

b) Bird Call of the Evening - Fred van Gessel

Fred played calls of two of the Pittidae family. The familiar 'walk to work' of the NOISY PITTA and the similar but much higher pitched call of the RAINBOW PITTA.

c) BIRD OF THE EVENING - Nigel Walker.

Nigel spoke at some length on the characteristics of the 3 Frigate Birds found in Australia - the Greater Frigatebird (*Fregata minor*), the Lesser Frigatebird (*Fregata ariel*) and the Christmas Island Frigatebird (*Fregata andrewsi*). The more interesting aspects of these birds are: although they frequent coastal waters and feed on fish, they never alight on water; because they can quickly become water logged; they have the largest wing area in proportion to body weight of any bird; they often chase their own and other species forcing them to disgorge food; the breeding display of the male is quite spectacular as the throat sac expands to a crimson balloon as big as a man's head. Thank you Nigel for enlightening us anent birds which are seldom seen off the New South Wales coast.

d) GUEST SPEAKER - No. 1 Arthur Williams.

Due to the late arrival of our scheduled Speaker, Arthur Williams very capably filled in with a viewing of some of his slides, this was accompanied by a commentary by Arthur drawn from his vast wealth of knowledge about our feathered friends. A big thank you to Arthur for so competently stepping into the breach at such short notice.

No. 2 Graeme Phipps.

Graeme is an aviculturist of some renown and has been very much involved in Avian research at the Macleay Museum in Sydney. This is the second occasion on which we have been privileged to hear this gifted speaker. Graeme took as his subject the KAKARIKI (Parakeet) species. These are birds which are found in New Zealand, New Caledonia and Norfolk Island. Because of the intrusion of man's activities, the future of these birds in some areas could well be in jeopardy. One could not but be impressed by the Speaker's eloquence, his knowledge of the subject and the entertaining manner in which he presented his illustrated talk

2. ANZAC WEEK-END CAMP 23-25 April 1983.

The Anzac week-end camp was most successful with 25 campers and 5 day trippers taking part. Our thanks once again must go to the Smithers family who allowed us the use of their lovely 'Tuglo' property at Carrowbrook. Our previous visit was in October 1981, so we were able to compare conditions and bird populations at different seasons.

The property in the Mt. Royal Range takes in a variety of plant associations, including rainforest, dry sclerophyll, woodland and grassland and although stressed by several years of drought it was good to see the obvious ready response of nature to recent good falls of rain.

Sixty one species were recorded for the week-end in comparison with 47 at our previous visit. Of these 29 were new birds listed while 14 recorded last time were missing this visit.

A selected party of 'spotlighters' were thrilled with their excellent viewing of the uncommon MASKED OWL, which must rank as the highlight of the week--end. Other creatures picked up included Greater Gliders, Brush-tailed Possums, Pademelon and Red-sided Wallaby. It was pleasing to find Koalas in the area (in one instance quite close to our campsite) and also Platypus tucked away in secret pools. Good to know that a few natural delights survive so close to home.

- Sue Hamonet

3. LIBRARY ADDITION.

Another new book has been acquired by the Club for our Library - 'Sharing a Dream' by Glen Threlfo. Glen, a photographer and guide working at O'Reilly's in the Mt. Lamington National Park, has produced a book containing new pictorial insights into bird behaviour, presented in such a way as to appeal to those with a keen but not academic interest in nature.

4. NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

We can use stories and small articles of interest to members, so if you know of or have had any interesting experiences involving birds, we will be pleased to receive same. Here is an example submitted by Wilma Barden:

SISQUOC, the first California Condor to be hatched in captivity is 'eating voraciously' says a spokeswoman for the San Diego Zoo. Two days after it was born the chick (sex undetermined) ate 26 finely diced mice. A second Condor had to be helped to break out of its shell, and the zoo is concerned that it may be premature.

5. COMING EVENTS

Sunday 22nd May - Field day to YANGO/DEVIL'S ROCK
Meet at Wollombi Park at 7.30 a.m.
Contact: Sue Hamonet

Note: The walk from the car park to Devil's Rock is approx. 8 km's (16 there and back). Members wishing to undertake the walk should bring a 'packed' lunch.

11/12/13 June - Queen's Birthday Week-end Camp.
This is being arranged for the Myall Lakes area - final details will be available at the June Club Night (8/6/83). Contact: Wilma.

Monday 6th June - Management Committee Meeting at 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 8th June - CLUB NIGHT. Guest Speaker - BILL LANE.