



Hunter Bird Observers Club

NEWSLETTER No. 5/83 JUNE 1983 (Released monthly at Club Nights)

President: Fred van Gessel

Hon. Secretary: Kay Imrie

Enquiries: Wilma Barden, 19 Carisbrooke Ave., Kotara. Phone: 573928

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 Treasurer (Ed. Hamonet)

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

Management Committee: 1st Monday of each month (Public holidays
excepted) at Garden Suburb School at 7.30.

1. NOTES FROM THE MAY MEETING - Wednesday 11th May 1983.

a) Attendance - 31 - a welcome was extended to new member - Marie Reinschmidt.

b) BIRD CALLS OF THE EVENING - Fred van Gessel.

Fred played calls of two members of Muscicapidae family: the Rose Robin (*Petroica rosea*) and the Red-capped Robin (*Petroica goodenovii*)

c) BIRD OF THE EVENING - Stuart Johnson.

Centropus phasianinus - the Pheasant Coucal was the bird chosen by Stuart as his subject for a most interesting talk. The Coucal appears to be the odd member of the Cuculidae family; it runs and flies heavily and frequents thick vegetation particularly that of a damp nature. One of its less admirable characteristics is that it sometimes takes eggs or nestlings of other birds.

d) GUEST SPEAKER - Arthur Williams.

Arthur continued the talk he commenced at the April meeting and treated his audience to two hours of slide viewing accompanied by absorbing and interesting commentary. His subjects were drawn from the Hunter region and the birds were therefore mostly familiar to members present. In the selection of slides we saw some of Arthur's methods of gaining access to nests - by the use of flimsy looking rope ladders; views of birds, their young, their nests and their eggs. The quality of the pictures was first class and ranged from a series showing a Pied Currawong checking out the nesting hollow of a pair of Eastern Rosellas to a delightful picture of 'Winkin', 'Blinkin' and 'Nod' - three baby Welcome Swallows perched on a branch. In his 40 years of birding, Arthur has certainly had some interesting experiences and has acquired a wealth of bird knowledge which he makes freely available and for which we are most appreciative. Thank you Arthur.

2. FIELD DAY - Sunday 21st May - WOLLOMBI/YANGO.

Despite the threatening inclement weather, 14 members and one visitor turned out for the Field Day held in the Wollombi-Yango Creek area. All told 80 species were recorded, this being an increase of 19 on the last visit to this district in August 1980. Our thanks are due to Bill Cambridge for his leadership.

3. CLUB PROJECT

Suggestions put forward by members at the last Club Night for a Club Project included the following: Backyard Surveys, Nest Recordings, Yellow-faced Honeyeater Survey, Wader Survey. These ideas and any others which may be proposed are to be considered by the Management Committee.

4. PRESIDENT ON LEAVE

Our President, Fred van Gessel, will be absent on leave for six weeks from 4th June. Fred is to visit his homeland - Holland - and we wish him bon voyage and good birding during his trip.

5. STATUS OF THE ORANGE-BELLIED PARROT (extracted from the Newsletter of the International Council for Bird Preservation)

Government agencies, conservationists and a chemical company are working together to study the life history and protect the habitat of the endangered Orange-bellied Parrot (*Neophema chrysogaster*), whose population is estimated at 120-170.

It breeds in Tasmania and winters at a few salt marshes on the adjacent mainland coast, between Westernport, Victoria and Coorong in South Australia. In 1978, when I.C.I. purchased land to build a petrochemical plant at Port Wilson, Victoria, not far from a major wintering ground, there was an upsurge of interest in the current and future status of the species. I.C.I., World Wildlife Fund/Australia and the State Wildlife Authorities of Tasmania, South Australia and Victoria contributed to a study of the parrot. Work commenced in 1979, co-ordinated by the Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service. Many professional and amateur ornithologists have participated.

As a result of this study and one begun by I.C.I. in 1978, the land at Port Wilson used by the parrots has been given nature reserve status. In addition, an important breeding area has been found, winter feeding areas located, food plants identified and regular censuses instituted. Several initiatives are in hand to preserve the species. They include fire management plans, improved protection of feeding grounds - especially on the migration route, restoring salt marshes, reducing interference from off-road vehicles and walkers, and control of predators. The proposed petrochemical works have, for the present, been deferred.

6. COMING EVENTS

Queen's Birthday Week-end - 11/12/13 June - CAMP at WALLINGAT River.
Contact: Kay Imrie.

Travel directions:

Proceed to Bulahdelah. Four (4) kms from the Bulahdelah bridge turn right into the LAKES WAY. Travel for 28 kms on this road to an intersection signposted WALLINGAT STATE FOREST PICNIC AREAS. Turn LEFT. $\frac{1}{2}$ km from this intersection is a Toymaker's Cabin. 3 kms from the Toymakers a cross roads will be reached. Turn LEFT into the LINK road. The campsite is 5.6 kms from the crossroads.

Note: As this camp site is in a State Forest we will not be using the H.B.O.C. signs.

Sunday 19th June Full day's Outing to NERONG (Bulahdelah) STATE FOREST.
Meet at 7 a.m. at the OAK, Hexham. Contact: Wilma Barden.

Week-end 25/26 June NATIONAL WINTER WADER COUNT - Port Stephens Area.
Members interested to contact Jim Perry or Wilma Barden.

Week-end 2/3 July WINTER WADER COUNT - Newcastle area.
Contacts as for 25/26 June.

Monday 4th July - Management Committee Meeting at 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 6th July - CLUB NIGHT - Guest Speaker, BILL POPE, Subject: FINCHES.