



Hunter Bird Observers Club

NEWSLETTER No. 11/83 December 1983 (Released monthly at Club Nights)

President: Fred van Gessel

Hon. Secretary: Kay Imrie

Telephone Enquiries: Wilma Barden - 573928

Correspondence: Box 24 P.O. New Lambton, N.S.W. 2305

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

Club Badges \$2.50) Available from Club Treasurer (Ed. Hamonet)
Car Stickers \$1.50)

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 7.30 p.m.)

1. NOTES FROM THE NOVEMBER MEETING - 9th November 1983.

- a) Attendance 33. A welcome was extended to new members Nancy Chopping, Richard and Caryl Mallaby. Club membership is still growing and has now reached 77.

- b) Bird Call of the Evening - Wilma Barden
The GOLDEN BOWERBIRD (*Prionodura newtoniana*) has rather a harsh call. The 'natural' notes appear to be simple and when near the bower, the male utters a frog-like croak. Like other bowerbirds, it uses accomplished mimicry in its vocal displays.

- c) Bird of the Evening - Auriol Royds
This segment of the programme was very capably handled by Auriol Royds. Auriol chose the EASTERN SPINEBILL for her talk and dealt with the following aspects:

Scientific Name - *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris*.
Acantha = spine or thorn; *Rhynchus* = beak
Tenuis = slender; *Rostrum* = bill.

Identification: with the use of a colour slide as a reference medium, the various colours were pointed out and this proved to be quite effective.

The Voice, Nesting, Eggs and Distribution were all mentioned and finally we heard some details as to habitat and habits.

Thank you Auriol for an excellent presentation.

- d) Main Feature - THE IRON RANGE VENTURE by Bill Cambridge and Ray Walker.

During August 10 of our members travelled to Cairns and then flew on to Iron Range for a 10 day camp on the banks of the Claudie River.

Bill Cambridge in his section of the talk described certain aspects of the trip through northern N.S.W. and the east coast of Queensland and some of the birds sighted en route

Ray Walker then described the Iron Range locality and particularly the atrocious conditions encountered involving splodging through metre after metre of slimy brown mud. Birdwise however, the effort involved in traversing such areas proved very profitable - 135 different species were seen including, for the most of the group, many which had not been seen before.

2. ANNUAL MIGRATION - WESTERN NEW SOUTH WALES - 9/9/83 - 24/9/83.

Wilma Barden, Rosemary Waymark, Bill Cambridge and Jim Perry departed on the 9th Sept; first stop Dubbo. On to Wilcannia where the only caravan park was closed owing to flooding; we proceeded and camped a few kilometres out of 'town'. Birds very plentiful, 117 species so far, highlights: Black-tailed Native hens with young, Pink Cockatoos, Mallee Ringnecks, Blue Bonnets, Crimson Chats and a Spotted Bowerbird.

Sunday we arrived in Kinchega National Park; we found, as the Darling was in full flood, 37 of the 38 campsites under water. By 1850 there was a small settlement on the Darling River, later called Menindee. Kinchega gradually grew in size and by 1866 was a sheep station of 400,000 acres. Burke and Wills stayed there in 1860. The last sheep went through the large shearing shed, which still stands, in May 1967 and in June Kinchega was taken over by the N.P. & W. S. of N.S.W. Two nights at Kinchega and the highlights there were: Chestnut-crowned Babblers, Blue and White Wrens, Orange Chats, more Crimson Chats, Owlet Nightjar and Wedgebills.

On the 13th we replenished the larder in Broken Hill and headed N.E. for Mootwingee; a dreadful windy dusty day and none of us felt very confident of spending much time at Mootwingee. When we arrived, it seemed like a rocky oasis - no dust and we spent two very interesting days at this historic site. We found a number of nesting birds and our highlights were: White-breasted Woodswallows, Little Woodswallow on nest, Striped Honeyeater on nest, White-fronted Honeyeaters, Black-backed Wrens and Broad-tailed Thornbills.

From Mootwingee back to Broken Hill and on to Mildura where we camped in a caravan park on the banks of the Murray. Next a.m. to the Office of the Victorian N.P.W. & S. to find our way into Mallee Cliffs National Park, which is yet to be opened to the general public. We spent two very quiet and peaceful days and nights there and the highlights were: Chestnut Quail-thrush, Yellow-rumped Pardalote and Budgerigars.

The 18th found us in Hattah Lakes National Park and for the first time we had to camp in a busy area; time spent there was spoilt for the individual campers by a large group of badly supervised High School students. The birding was good, although the only new sightings for the trip were Yellow Rosellas, Regent Parrots, a Blue-winged Parrot, Mulga Parrots and, sitting on an egg, a Spotted Nightjar which Bill nearly fell over and had Wilma and I endeavouring to sprint through the mallee in answer to Jim's call.

We changed our plans for the homeward trip and went further south into Victoria and stayed a night in the Wyperfeld National Park. Soon after arriving in the Park we were treated to the spectacle of about 40 Regent Parrots flying with 40-50 Galahs and 2 Mallee Ringnecks, against a clear blue sky - the colour was magnificent. The Regents then alighted in a dead pine to give us a yellow flowering tree! Soon afterwards we found a Black-backed Wren in a clump of yellow daisies - another photogenic sight. At last we caught up with the Malleefowl and its mound but not together. Wilma and Bill had flushed one at different times in Hattah. Next morning we set off to try and track down the Southern Scrub Robin - we followed his call for quite some time and finally were successful. Then we found a pair of Gilberts Whistlers.

We had to leave and get to Hay for the night of 21st; we then followed the Murrumbidgee to Darlington Point; in that area we finally found the Superb Parrots. On to Cocoparra N.P.; soon after arriving we had a very good close view of some Mulga Parrots and a good sighting of Speckled Warblers.

So to our last days, we reached Burrendong Dam late afternoon and left early next morning, rejoining our outward route at Cassilis. Home during the afternoon of the 24th having covered some 4,200 Kms and a total list of species for the trip of 157.

Rosemary Waymark

3. HALF DAY OUTING TO MOUNT SUMMIT (Mt. Sugarloaf area)

The Half-day outing to Mt. Summit on Sunday 6th November was attended by seven members. Weather, overcast to begin, with a promise of rain which did not eventuate. The area is well timbered with dry sclerophyll forest and sandstone ridges with some wet sclerophyll and woodland areas.

43 species were recorded for the morning of which the highlight was undoubtedly the numerous Rock Warblers (*Origma solitaria*) in swarm proportions. Arthur and Bill were able to track down a nest with young almost ready to fly. Evidence of a Lyrebird's early morning presence was found but no bird was seen.

Sue Hamonet.

4. BUTTABA DRAMA

Three Dusky Woodswallows were hatched in an Angophora across the road from my home; one evening a few weeks ago I was watching one of the young on the power line; I then caught sight of a bird of prey. while I was wondering which BOP (possibly a Whistling Kite), it dropped onto the unlucky young Woodswallow; immediately the rest of the family dived onto the Kite which released its prey. The youngster flew off and I found a few feathers so presumed all was well. Since then I have been unable to observe all the family together so I am not certain if it did survive; what I have noticed is that one of the young has only one leg! It flies without trouble and balances well enough when it lands, often leaning against another member of the family.

Rosemary Waymark.

5. NEWSLETTERS

Newsletters are only available at Club Nights unless other satisfactory arrangements can be made, e.g.

- i) Addressee to provide stamped, addressed envelopes.
- ii) Some other member to collect for delivery.
- iii) To be collected at a given address.

It will be appreciated that our Club membership is now becoming more widespread and the time and distance involved in delivering Newsletters is therefore prohibitive. Please contact our Secretary (Kay Imrie) in person or by mail (Box 24 P.O New Lambton) to arrange details.

6. NEWSFLASH

British Airways have just flown more than four tonnes of birds including Flamingoes and Hornbills from Nairobi to Detroit to restock various American Zoos. The man organising the whole affair was a Ken EGGS and the information was supplied by a colleague called Ken GOSLING!

7. FIELD DAY to DUNN'S CREEK - Sunday 20th November 1983.

The seven o'clock 'meet' in temperate weather conditions took place at the Oak factory, Hexham. In possession of some nine vehicles, a record number of 26 people having travelled via Morpeth (where the official bird list for the day commenced) were warmly greeted by Olga Grushka on her property at Dunn's Creek. Mrs. G's introduction to the area was greatly appreciated by all in attendance.

White-naped, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Grey Fantails and a fine display by the Leaden Flycatchers were good early viewings. The call of a Bowerbird proved a good challenge for one member who actually hunted down a Regent Bowerbird. The excellent aural abilities of another member detected calls of young birds from a termites nest. Patience and a close up ground perch allowed for a good sighting of the Sacred Kingfisher, returning to the nest to feed the young.

Records of the birds observed during the morning were received during a happy little picnic lunch. At that time 86 birds had gone on to the list.

7. Dunn's Creek Outing (continued)

Afternoon activity included a short drive along Dunn's Creek Road followed by a healthy walk along a bush track descending to a depleted creek, save for a minute. water hole or two. Eastern Spinebill and the Black-faced Monarch in particular, performed to the Ornithologists' delight. The kind 'vigil' one member displayed, allowed all attending to gain a 'close-up' of the Tawny Frogmouth to complete the successful and enjoyable day in the field. 93 birds were recorded. Scribe: Anon !

8. HANDLIST OF THE BIRDS IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

A further supply of this book has been received from the F.O.C.
Copies are available from Ed. Hamonet for \$5.25.

9. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

A gentle reminder that Subs for the year commencing 1st January 1984 will be due on the 1st January but may be paid in advance.

10. OBSERVATION BOOKS.

The Club Observation Books are located on the Library table and members are requested to record any unusual or new sightings in the appropriate book.

11. COMING EVENTS.

Sunday 22nd January - FIELD DAY to RILEY's ISLAND AND BOUDDI NATIONAL PARK
Meet at Coles' Car Park, BELMONT at 6.30 a.m. Contact: Sue Hamonet - 581023
Intending participants are advised to obtain a route map from Ed. Hamonet.

Week-end 28-30 January 1984 - CAMP in the WOKO NATIONAL PARK
Contact: (by noon Friday 27 Jan. - Sue Hamonet)
Travel directions: Proceed to Rookhurst (North west of Gloucester) and follow the H.B.O.C. signs from Rookhurst School.

Week-end 4/5 February - SUMMER WADER COUNT - Newcastle Area
Week-end 11/12 February - SUMMER WADER COUNT - Port Stephens area.
Co-ordinator for both areas will be Jim Perry - 432496

Week-end 25/26 February - CAMP - DILGRY RIVER AREA. Contact: Sue Hamonet
The camp area is approximately 50 Kms from Gloucester on the Gloucester-Scone Road.
More details at the February meeting.

Sunday 11th March - HALF DAY OUTING to STOCKRINGTON area.
Contact; Ray Walker 581942. Meet at MINMI SCHOOL at 9 a.m.

Sunday 25th March - FIELD DAY to STANHOPE CREEK
Meet at the OAK, Hexham at 7 a.m. Contact: Jim Perry - 432496

-----606-----

Monday 6th February 1984 - Management Committee Meeting. at 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 8th February - First Club Night for 1984.
The Annual General Meeting will be held on this night and will be followed by a talk, illustrated with colour slides, on THE IBISES of AUSTRALIA.

'Volunteers' have agreed to be nominated for the various positions which comprise the Management Committee - this of course does not preclude any other nominations but it does mean that a member would not be 'railroaded' into a position which he or she may not really want to have.