



Hunter Bird Observers Club

NEWSLETTER No. 4/84. May 1984. (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)

Club Badges \$2.50 - available from Treasurer (Ed Hamonet)

Car Stickers \$1.50

Handlist of the Birds in N.S.W. Available from Club Treasurer.

MEETINGS: Club Nights - 2nd Wednesday of each month (except Jan.)
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 APRIL MEETING - 11th April, 1984.

a) Attendance - 32. New member - Bob Heaney.

b) BIRD CALL OF THE EVENING - Wilma Barden. - Calls were played of the WOOD SANDPIPER (*Tringa glareola*) which has a sharp whistled tee-tee call and the COMMON SANDPIPER (*Tringa hypoleucos*) which has a high pitched swallow like twee-wee-wee.

c) BIRD OF THE EVENING - Kay Imrie. Kay chose the PIED STILT (*Himantopus himantopus*) as her subject and dealt at some length on this interesting bird. The talk was accompanied by some excellent slides from our slide library. Thank you Kay.

d) MAIN FEATURE - Guest Speaker - Dr. Max Maddock.
Max's presentation reinforced in our minds two facts which are undeniable. They are that the Shortland-Marist Park wetland area is unique and beautiful and an asset which Newcastle would be foolish to let slip away. The second is that all of us are humbled by the diligence and enthusiasm of men such as Max shouldering the burden on our behalf to ensure the protection of this area for our future enjoyment.
Knowing he would be preaching to the converted, Max concentrated his lecture on the swamp's birdlife, illustrating the information about swans, egrets, herons, pelicans, cormorants, ducks and other birdlife with excellent slides from his own collection (some of which we hope to obtain for the club.). Personal observations such as how to entice a swan to expose her eggs momentarily for the camera, the egret hierarchy and "amateur" photographs of such quality and feeling that made us feel some of the empathy he has for this area and its residents. Max's continuing efforts provides an enviable stream of invaluable information.

As well as the park establishment his plans for the future include an array of bands for the egrets to wear which should make them the fashion envy of the colony. Mention was made of the wealth of assistance given by Sue Hamonet, Wilma Barden and Arthur Williams and we must also thank them. Jim Perry moved a vote of thanks which was carried with acclamation.

Peter Nelson.

2. EASTER WEEKEND CAMP. * COOPERNOOK FOREST PARK. 20-23 April 1984.

After a slightly damp start, a weekend of lovely sunny weather and cool nights was enjoyed by 14 adults and 10 children. Coopernook Forest Park is in the Landsdowne State Forest and boasts an extremely well arranged camping area, with a hot shower and electricity the two huts were used, one for sleeping, by some of the children and other contained washing-up, cooking and eating facilities. Perhaps the only drawback was the abundance of leeches! During the first hour of birding the writer collected 2 birds and 6 leeches and by the end of the weekend was obsessed!

Our hosts, from the Manning Valley Bird Watchers, Bob and Marie Langdown and Ted and Ann Wilson, looked after us very well and we thank them for their time and kindness.

On the Saturday we drove to Crowdy Bay National Park and found the birdlife more active there than in the forest area. Hundreds of White-cheeked Honeyeaters all over the Park. To the coastal area for lunch where we observed 3 dolphins in the Bay. On to Crowdy Head where we watched a number of Gannets feeding, quite spectacular to observe their quick movements in the air and then their entry into the sea. Other highlights for Crowdy Bay were Sea Eagles, a Swamp Harrier, Brown Quail, Southern Emu-Wrens, Tawny-Crowned Honeyeater.

On the way back to camp we were taken to a fairly small area near Harrington, which produced nearly as many birds as the State Forest, the highlight being a Golden Plover in breeding plumage.

Sunday, Bob and Marie took us for a drive in the Forest, to Vincents Lookout for a spectacular panoramic view and onto Big Nellie, a Volcanic knob, which the more energetic climbed. The highlights for the Forest were a Pheasant Coucal, Regent Bowerbirds, Pale-Yellow Robin, Green Catbird, Topknot Pigeons, numerous King Parrots in the camp area and also seen in the camp, by a lucky few on the Monday morning, a pair of Crested Hawks.

Total number of species seen over the weekend was 115.

A special "thank you" to Kay Imrie for being so generous and providing Easter eggs for everyone, the children certainly enjoyed the egg hunt Kay organised on Easter Sunday and we all enjoyed eating the chocolate eggs.

Rosemary Waymark.

3. I had an interesting letter handed to me for submission to the newsletter from one of one of our members, I hope you enjoy it as much as I did.

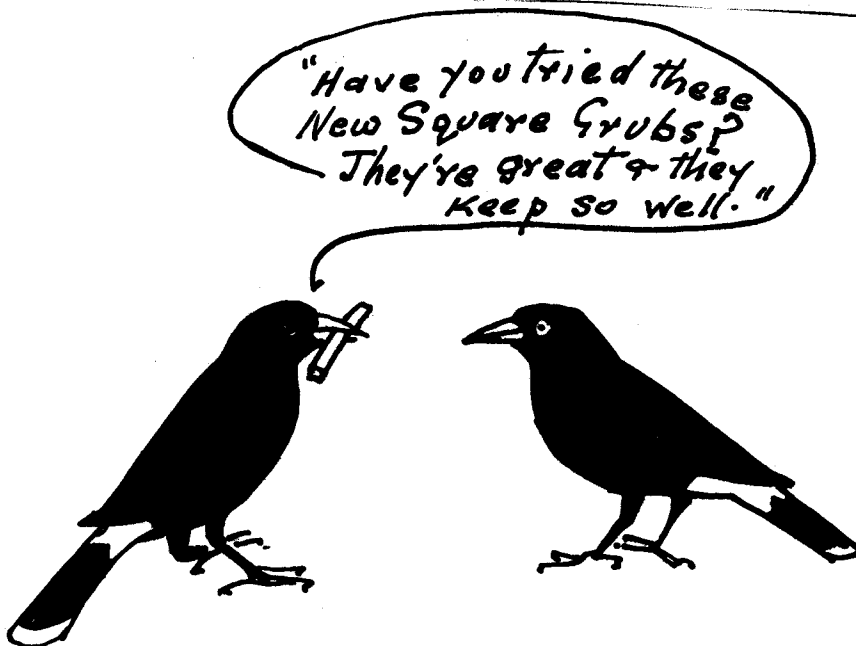
An episode in the life of a passive bird watcher. The last hour of sunlight each day I try to spend sitting quietly watching what goes on around the bird feeders and baths, a past-time I find relaxing, entertaining and sometimes surprising.

One such afternoon a Currawong (not my favourite species), landed in a young Grevillea Robusta no more than a metre from my chair. He obviously hadn't seen me and when he did, fixed me with that piercing golden eye and a hesitant "are you going to hunt me?" look, as well he might, for normally I fling abuse and anything else handy at the blighters for buzzing the parrots in panic off the feeders just for fun, and for their unpleasant habit of regurgitating all their mucky purple seeds into the baths necessitating my emptying and cleaning them daily.

However, on this occasion I must have been in a very benevolent mood, for I just sat still and watched and when he realised I wasn't going to throw things, he went about his business as though I wasn't there. He bounced out of sight to the top branches and bounced back down with a large creamy fawn grub in his beak. I thought you beaut, and was about to forgive him all his nasty ways, when I realised that we didn't have

any square grubs. All colours and sizes we have in abundance, but no square ones. It then hit me that what he was pulling apart and downing with great relish, was indeed a potato chip. That surprised me enough but when he bounded back up and came down with yet another fat chip, I nearly fell off my perch. I can only guess that a resident nearby had tossed out the unwanted remainder of lunch to the Currawongs and this boy (or girl) having had his fill decided to stash a little for later. Even the birds are catching the junk food syndrome. Currawong shares have risen slightly in my book, and I no longer would resent being called a "bird brain" really quite a compliment.

Aileen Black



4. PELICAN COLONY

It was recently brought to our attention by Graeme Brown (from Percy Pelican fame) that a colony of pelicans were breeding on Pelican Is. in Wallis Lake. This is the third known nesting site of pelicans in N.S.W.. Wilma Barden and Graeme have been compiling nesting records. Up to date we have counted 58 nests and Graeme informs us that they are still nesting.

5. KOORAGANG SURVEY.

A survey was conducted by Members of the Kooragang Island Trust and Association of Environmental Education with the view to adjusting the landscape to suit birds and their habitat. Jim and Kay Imrie along with Jim Perry assisted in the survey.

6. LIBRARY NEWS.

Another addition to our collection - PIGEONS AND DOVES.

7. SLIDE LIBRARY.

Further to our story on the pelicans, Graeme Brown has offered to provide us with a number of slides that should prove invaluable to our library. Our thanks go to Graeme for his assistance.

8. COMING EVENTS.

Sunday 20 May - FIELD DAY to BROKE/BULGA

Meet: 7.00 a.m. Oak at Hexham. Leader: A. Williams, Contact: Sue Hamonet.

Weekend 9/10/11 June - CAMP to MUNGHORN GAP

First venue cancelled, inaccessible owing to weather. Alt. venue

Munghorn Gap. Be prepared for VERY COLD weather
Details for directions from Ed. Hamonet. Contact: Kay Imrie.

Sunday 24 June - FIELD DAY to SWANSEA STH.

Meet: 7.30 a.m. Coles Car Park - Belmont. Contact: R. Waymark
Leader: Bill Cambridge.

Weekend 30 June/1 July. - WINTER WADER COUNT.
Newcastle area.

Weekend 7/8 July. - WINTER WADER COUNT
Port Stephens area.

Sunday 22 July. - Visit to the AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM
Michael Noonan is looking into the availability
of Family Rail tickets from Wyong Station. More
details in next newsletter.

Monday 4th June - Management Committee meeting at 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 13th June - CLUB NIGHT - This night we will be forgoing
Bird Call and Bird of the Evening to include 2 main features -
Audio Visual, Glenrock Recreation Area - Arthur Austin and
talk by Hassan el Taher.

Oct 20th - Nov 3. - ANNUAL MIGRATION COUNT.
Northern N.S.W. - Southern Queensland. Interested
parties see Kay Imrie.

Footnote: Hamilton Book Exchange has Pizzey for \$12.00. Situated in
Beaumont Street, Hamilton opp. Hamilton Hi Fi.

CLARIFICATION

In the March newsletter summary of 1983 Annual Report it stated that
the Slide Library has "318 colour slides including 259 species". This
259 refers to the total no. of slides. The library at present covers
116 different bird species.

Michael Noonan.