



Hunter Bird Observers Club

NEWSLETTER NO. 7/84. August 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 Jan. 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 JULY MEETING - 11th July, 1984.

a) Attendance. 25

b) BIRD CALL OF THE EVENING: Eva Van de Werken. Superb Lyrebird
(Menura novaehollandiae)

The superb lyrebird's call is made up from the birds own call, which last around 8 seconds, intermingled with calls of other species, usually the more loud and clear sounds. A comparison was made between the Superb Lyrebird and Albert's lyrebird, the latter lyrebird's song not varying as widely between groups as the superb lyrebird's song.

c) BIRD OF THE EVENING: Peter Nelson. Spotted Pardalote.
(Pardalotus punctatus)

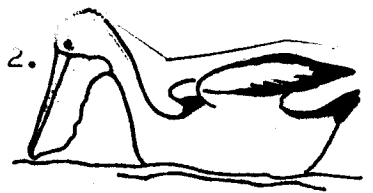
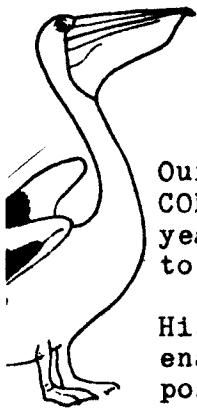
This bird is found in coastal districts ranging from central Queensland to eastern South Australia, in Tasmania and in south-west Western Australia.

Pardalotes are an aberrant member of the flower pecker family and occur only in Australia. They are dumpy bodied with short tails, thick bills and strong legs. The male is brilliantly spotted with red rump. Above is grey and brown, crown, wings and tail black, spotted white, eyebrows white, throat and vent yellow. The female is duller with buff spots. They eat a variety of small invertebrates, including thrips, moths, spiders. They also favour scale insects which they forage for in the foliage of eucalypts and wattles.

Peter illustrated his talk with slides he obtained whilst viewing this bird at close quarters in the Watagan Forest.

d) MAIN FEATURE - PELICANS. Michael Noonan.

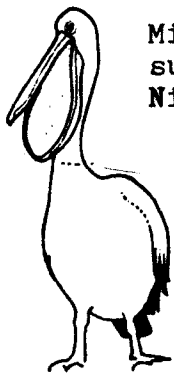
The genus Pelecanus has been with us for more than 20 million years and such has been their suitability for their ecological niche that they have remained substantially unchanged till the present day.



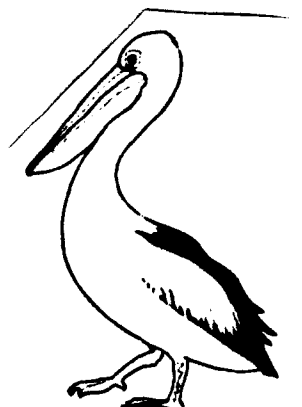
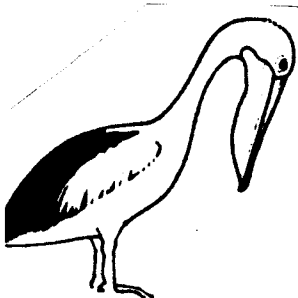
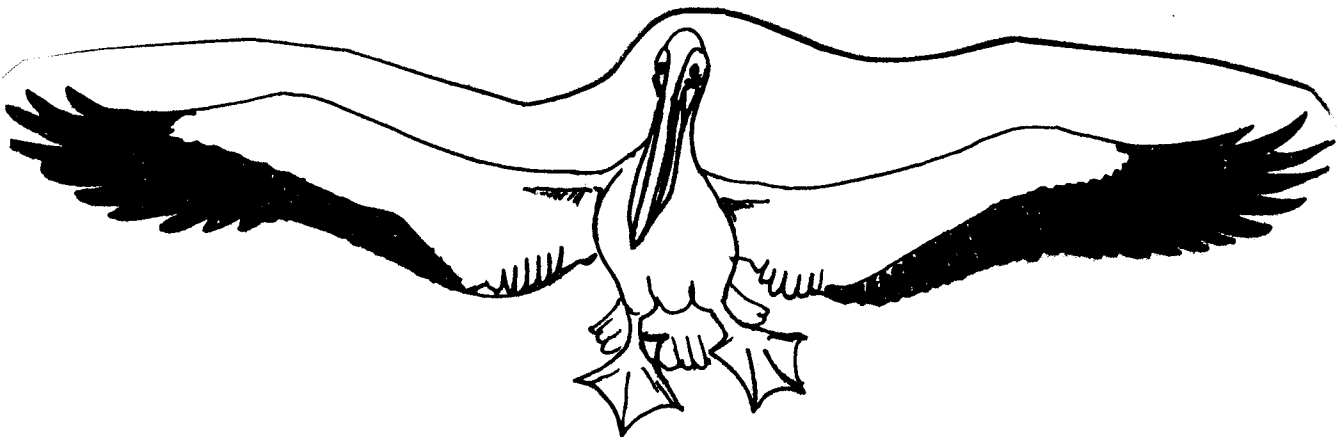
Our interest in the Australian member of this genus; *PELECANUS CONSPICILLATUS* has been stimulated of late by the discovery early this year of a nesting colony by Graeme Brown on Wallis Lake near Forster, to our knowledge the only coastal site in Eastern Australia.

His personal experience and an exhaustive study of available literature enable Michael Noonan to give us a comprehensive dissertation on possibly the largest of the world's pelicans.

During the course of the evening we saw and heard of these magnificent birds in powerful and graceful flight and formation swimming and fishing. Michael's coverage of courting and nesting included the courtship displays and colours developed in the gular pouch, plumage, the nature of the scrapes and nests, juveniles in the creche and their strange convulsive behaviour after feeding.



Michael illustrated his presentation with an almost inexhaustable supply of slides taken mainly at 'our' colony supplied by Michael, Nigel Walker and Graeme Brown.



2. FIELD DAY - CESSNOCK AREA. Sunday 22nd July, 1984.

Despite inclement weather, 14 observers turned out for an interesting outing in the Pokolbin State Forest and Ellalong areas.

On their first outing with the Club were Alan Keating, Margaret Smith, Allan Richards (from Sydney), Sylvia Thibault, Marie Rak and Calvin Stafford. They were most welcome, as was the varied array of birds which obligingly hopped out in front of our binoculars.

At Mt. Bright whipbirds cracked and there were good views of a Rose Robin, Spotted Pardalote, Golden Whistler and dozens of Red-browed Firetails. Further to the North West on the edge of the State Forest we observed ducks, moorhens and grebes swimming on a dam. A white cedar tree was full of Ravens, orioles and Satin bowerbirds. In the paddock before us Double Barred Finches, Yellow Rumped Thornbills and Jacky Winters moved about feeding in the grass. Road conditions were slushy so we ventured only a short distance.

In the swamp at Ellalong there were a few water birds. The group turned its attention to bushland on the opposite side of the road where good views were had of several Yellow Tufted Honeyeaters and Speckled Warblers.

At Congewai we had a late lunch. Only a few more birds were seen - we had done our dash. It was hometime. On the way we paused briefly at a small swamp where White Eyed Ducks and cattle egrets were seen at close quarters. A rewarding day ended with 61 species observed.

Jim Imrie.

3. JAPANESE SNIPE SURVEY

Hans Naarding from the Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service has asked for assistance from bird clubs and other interested parties to carry out this survey. Success as always will depend upon the interest of the parties involved.

It is widely believed the number of Japanese snipe visiting Australia has declined in the last 30 years, because extensive swamp drainage and flood mitigation programmes have destroyed much of the birds' former summer habitat. (Reader's Digest Complete Book of Aust. Birds)

Points to be noted are as follows:-

- a) Stick to transect area.
- b) Length of transect (or duration)
- c) Short description of transect area with name of area/sketch/co-ordinates
- d) Numbers flushed from area
- e) Short description of weather/wind details
- f) State of wetland (recent rain etc.)

Dates of survey are as follows:-

Sept. 3 - 7.
Oct. 15 - 19.
Nov 26 - 30.
Jan 21 - 25
Feb 18 - 22.

4. YELLOW-TAILED BLACK COCKATOO SURVEY

The second of the surveys the H.B.O.C. has been asked to participate in is the Yellow-Tailed Black Cockatoo Survey. This survey is looking at the movement and the seasonal distribution of YTBC from Queensland to Sth. Australia and Tasmania.

The Observer Record Sheets are trying to find out the DESTINATIONS and the COMPOSITION of flocks.

DESTINATIONS

'Black cockatoos leave the roosting trees at dawn to drink and then fly to the feeding area, where they remain the entire day, moving from one clump of trees to the next. During the heat of the day, they shelter in the foliage of a tall eucalypt. Towards sunset, they visit a stream or waterhole to drink; a few at a time fly down from a tree, alight on the ground and then walk to the water's edge. The roosting trees are usually large eucalypts along the banks of a water course. Before settling down for the night, the birds frequently indulge in excited aerobatics, flying through the tree tops and wheeling about overhead.' (FORSHAW Australian Parrots.)

COMPOSITION OF FLOCKS

Males, females and juveniles can be distinguished by three things:

1. Bill colour

MALE - black

FEMALE - whitish

JUVENILE MALE - the beak starts to darken in the second year, starting at the base of the upper mandible.

JUVENILE FEMALE - almost indistinguishable from adult.

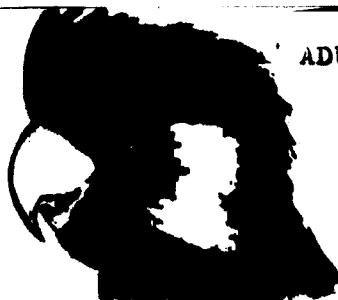
VERY YOUNG BIRDS - squawk almost continuously with 'insistent, rasping, begging calls.'

2. Size of the yellow cheek patch

Females have a brighter and larger cheek patch than males.



ADULT MALE



ADULT FEMALE

3. Eye-ring colour

MALES - pink

FEMALES - darkest grey.

Any interested parties wishing to participate in this survey please see Wilma Barden for further details.

5. SAFARI - SEPTEMBER 1985.

You are reminded that the Annual Migration set down for September, 1985 will take the form of a fully escorted 4 wheel drive safari from Darwin to various parts of the Northern Territory. The starting date is September 13th, 1985 and the cost per person at present is quoted at \$800.00 for three weeks. Everything is supplied by the operator except your sleeping bag. The return super apex fare from Newcastle via Sydney to Darwin is \$508.70 (at Present).

Interested parties please see Kay Imrie. We need 10 starters to confirm our tentative booking.

ABSOLUTE DEADLINE FOR BOOKING is 31ST, AUGUST, 1984. DONT HESITATE. Deposit \$200.00.

6. COMING EVENTS:

Sunday 19th August : FIELD DAY to MONKERAI
Meet: OAK (Hexham) 7 a.m.
Contact: Jim Perry 432496.
Leader: Wilma Barden

Sunday 23rd September: FIELD DAY to VACY
Meet: OAK (Hexham) 7 a.m.
Leader and Contact: Jim Perry - 432496

Weekend 29/30 Sept & 1 Oct: CAMP at 'CARLTON' GUNNEDAH.
Meet: Gunnedah Park 11 a.m.
Contact: Sue Hamonet - 581023

Friday 19th Oct to 3rd Nov. : ANNUAL MIGRATION to NORTHERN N.S.W.

***Meeting for participants after Club Night ***

Sunday 21st October: FIELD DAY to TELEGHERRY FOREST
Contact: Kay Imrie 524524
Meet : NOTE NEW MEETING PLACE !!!!!!!
McDonalds (Hexham)
Time : 6.30 a.m.

Club Night : 12th Sept. GUEST SPEAKER: Bill Worrada

Management Committee Meeting: Mon 10th Sept.

7. BOOK REVIEW

Recent addition to the Club Library is "Fairy Penguins and Earthy People" by Pauline Reilly. Pauline, a past President of the R.A.O.U. tells an intriguing story of thirteen years of work and study by an extremely dedicated band of people who most of us will know by reference in the B.O.C. Newsletter as the Penguin Study Group.

The story unfolds in quite readable style and is part-mystery, part-drama with a sprinkling of humour. Those of us who have witnessed the parade of Penguins at Phillip Island will readily relate to the experiences of these "earthy" people who really went beyond the call of duty in a effort to learn more about the habits and secrets of these fascinating little birds, knowing that their efforts would in time promote the well-being and help with the preservation of the colony. The personalized accounts of the comings and goings of such characters as Ebb and Flo, and the more than aptly-named Jezebel will entrance readers. If you hadn't already recognised the human-like qualities of Penguins, you surely will after reading this story.

Sue Hamonet.

LIBRARY NEWS: We have two new additions to the Club Library.
BIRDS OF THE FOLIAGE & AUSTRALIAN BIRDS AND THEIR YOUNG.

STOP PRESS: The editor looks to members for contributions to the newsletter.

We extend a warm welcome to new members Sylvia Thilbault, Reg Page and Ruth Parke.