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Hunter Bird Observers Club

NEWSLETTER NO. 9/84. October 1984. (Released monthly at Club Nights)

President: Jim Perry

Hon. Secretary: Kay Imrie

Telephone Enquiries: Wilma Barden - 573928

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

Newsletter Editor: Bronwyn Taylor - 595692

Annual Subscriptions: Family Rate \$6.00; Single 45.00; 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.)

Management Committee: 1st Monday of each month (public holidays excepted) at 7.30 p.m.

1. NOTES FROM THE SEPTEMBER MEETING - 12th September, 1984.

a) ATTENDANCE - 37 - A warm welcome is extended to new members Trevor Jurd, Fred Van Gessel, Alan Stuart, Jim and Judy Cook, Brian & Pat Howe, Brian & Marie Hare, Rick and Marie Tietze.

b) BIRD CALL OF THE EVENING: Wilma Barden presented the call of the evening and once again had us all guessing. This time it was the Eastern Bristlebird (*Dasyornis brachypterus*), a bird found only in the heathland. It lives on the ground among thick vegetation, searching the ground litter for insects and seeds. The distribution of the bird runs from Gunningham's Gap, Qld to Dorrigo Plateau and Barren Grounds in N.S.W. to Nadgee-Mallacoota area on the N.S.W./ VIC border.

c) BIRD OF THE EVENING: Bill Cambridge. Bill chose to speak about the Streaked Shearwater (*Calonectris leucomelas*), a bird which is fairly rare to our part of the world. It is a large bird, the overall length being 19" with a wingspan of 48". Colour ranges from grey-brown above and pale below, and a white-streaked head. The bill is 2½" and is powerful. Legs are pale pink fading to white towards the toe.

The Streaked shearwater breeds in Japan and North Korea and in the northern winter disperses south to Northern New Guinea. The bird is distributed throughout north-west Pacific and has been recorded in eastern Queensland. Three of these birds were seen on Stradbroke Island in 1984. Bill, in January of this year, came across a Streaked Shearwater on Blacksmiths beach. It died later that day and is now in the Australian Museum.

d) MAIN FEATURE : In lieu of our Guest Speaker, Bill Worrad who was unable to make it to our meeting, the members were presented with a series of slides from the B.O.C. Slide Library. Titled 'Spring in South Western Australia' it traced the holiday of Keith and the late Beryl Richards. For 3 months in 1977 they toured, photographing the changes in vegetation,

bird life and the beautiful array of native plants that abound in Western Australia.

Spotted Bowerbird, Singing Honeyeater, Spotted Crake, Black Fronted Dotterel, Bar-Tailed Godwits, Caspian Tern were a few of the species illustrated in Keith's presentation.

2. Reports on the Field Day to Vacy and the Weekend Camp to Gunnedah will be published in next months newsletter.

3. LIBRARY REPORT.

While holidaying on Norfolk Island, Lynn Millington made contact with the local Flora and Fauna Society, who sent our Club a book entitled 'A Review of Norfolk Island Birds: Past and Present', which is now available from the library. This would be very helpful for anyone intending to visit the Island, but is also of great general interest to those interested in the distribution of common local birds such as the Sacred Kingfisher. Thank you Lynn, for making contact with the Society and bringing back their token of friendship.

Eva van de Werken. (Librarian.)

4. NEW WALKING TRACK - GLENROCK LAGOON AREA

For anybody with two or three hours to spare, I can recommend the newly-formed walking track which leaves the Burwood Road just south of the old Kahibah Railway Station. A parking area has been established on the western side of the road.

The track, named 'YEULABAH', is easy walking, is well sign-posted and follows Flaggy Creek down through some interesting vegetation types including dry sclerophyll, Sub-tropical rain forest, heathland and finally the beachfront. Allow at least 90 minutes casual walking time each way. On a recent Sunday morning stroll we saw some 40 species of birds including the magnificent Regent Bowerbird, Emerald Doves, Topknot pigeon and a Scaly Thrush.

At one resting place overlooking a well-timbered gully with a glorious view of Lagoon and Ocean, our attention was drawn to the antics of a pair of Ravens and closer scrutiny through binoculars showed them to be harassing a very large Goanna who was seen of with his tail tucked defensively back towards his head.

While sitting quietly eating lunch, a Bandicoot crossed the track just a few feet in front of us and at another spot on the track the alarm call of White-browed Scrubwrens and Lewins' Honeyeaters directed our attention to a large Carpet snake slithering through the undergrowth.

Overlooking a waterfall (of John Dorman fame) we counted up to fourteen water dragons of varying sizes sunning themselves on the rocks.

Hundreds of Shearwaters and one Gannet could be seen out beyond the

line of breakers. Altogether a most enjoyable walk and well worth the time and effort involved.

Sue Hamonet.

5. AN ENDANGERED SPECIES.

Lynn Millington recently visited Norfolk Island and has submitted this report.

The Norfolk Island Parrot (*Cyanoramphus novaezealandiae cookii*) is one of several subspecies of the Red-fronted Parrot, a species widely distributed throughout New Zealand and outlying islands.

On Norfolk Island they are found in pairs and are now restricted to the Pine Forest in the Mt. Pitt Reserve. The birds spend most of the day in the treetops or in shrubs, feeding on seeds, berries and buds. They can sometimes be seen on the ground scratching amongst forest debris in a fowl-like manner. At certain times of the year they visit farms, feeding on peaches and guavas.

The male is about 30cm long and the female is slightly smaller. They are basically bright green in colour, becoming lighter and more yellow on the underparts. A large bright red patch covers the forehead and crown and extends in a band across the eye. A red patch on each side of the rump is another distinguishing feature.

The breeding season is usually from October to December when five white eggs are laid in a nest in a hollow limb or a hole in a tree.

The Norfolk Island Parrot is now listed as an endangered species and is classified as rare by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. It is thought that there are only about eighteen birds on Norfolk Island. This decline has been brought about by loss of habitat, disease, competition from introduced species especially the Crimson Rosella, and predation of rats and feral cats.

Currently the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service is attempting to establish a programme of controlled breeding on Norfolk Island. In August 1983 four birds were caught by mist netting. Some problems were encountered and the three surviving birds were found to be male. Some consideration was given to mating these birds with New Zealand birds. The decision was made to try to capture some more birds during 1984. A special aviary has been built on Norfolk Island with assistance from the Lions Club. It is completely closed to the public.

Fund raising activities have been initiated to aid this most important breeding programme.

6. OBSERVATIONS - Members are reminded to record all sightings in the appropriate books. These are:-

Raptors	Nesting Records
Egrets	Birds of the Hunter Region
Migratory Birds	Spangled Drongo.

7. WINTER 1984. WADER COUNT.

✓ In a recent report on the Wader count, Alan Morris, the N.S.W. co-ordinator of the Winter Wader Count, (he) expressed his gratitude for the assistance given by nine of our members. In the statistics, the HBOC featured with 1053 Pied Stilt, 82 Eastern Curlew, 22 Whimbrel, 4 Greenshank, 15 Black-tailed and 411 Bar-tailed Godwits and 90 Curlew Sandpiper reported at Kooragang Is.

8. COMING EVENTS Friday 19th Oct. - 3/4 Nov.
ANNUAL MIGRATION TO NORTHERN N.S.W.

Sunday 21 Oct. FIELD DAY to TELEGHERRY S/F - Meet McDonalds Car Park,
Hexham. 6.30 Contact - Kay Imrie 524524

Weekend 24/25 Nov.- CAMP AT BRETTI/NOWENDOC - Contact: Jim Perry 432496
H.B.O.C. signs will start from Rookhurst School.

Sunday 9th Dec. FIELD DAY to SWAN BAY: Meet 6.30 McDonalds, HEXHAM.
Contact: Kay Imrie - 524524
Leader: Jim Imrie- AN EXTRA PAIR OF SHOES/BOOTS would be
advisable.

CLUB NIGHT: 14th November.

Management Committee Meeting: 5th November, 7.30 p.m.
