



# Hunter Bird Observers Club

NEWSLETTER NO. 2/85. March, 1985. (Released monthly at Club Nights).

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## 1. NOTES FROM THE FEBRUARY MEETING: 13/2/85.

- a) Attendance - 51, including visitors Thelma Smith, John Harrison, Michelle Dunn and Jason Williams. A warm welcome to new junior member Nigel Williams. It was pleasing to see the seating arrangements taxed to capacity for the first meeting of the year.
- b) ANNUAL REPORT. This being the Annual Meeting of the Club, President Jim Perry presented a very comprehensive report covering all aspects of the Club activities for the preceding year. A bound copy of this report and all appendices is lodged in the Club Library and is available for members' reference.
- c) ELECTION OF OFFICERS. Resulted in little change, reflecting the continued enthusiasm of office-bearers, and also the confidence of the membership. President - Jim Perry. Vice-President - Wilma Barden. Hon. Secretary - Kay Imrie. Hon. Treasurer - Edgar Hamonet. Committee Members - Nigel Walker, Arthur Williams, Marion Walker, Rosemary Waymark. Hon. Auditors - Messrs. H. Doherty, R. Watson.
- d) BIRD CALL. Presented by Wilma Barden featured the call of the Powerful Owl (*Ninox strenua*). The largest of our nocturnal birds of prey, and favouring dense mountain gullies, coastal forests and woodlands. The call is a very slow and deliberate "whoo-hooo". Already recorded in the Dudley area, it was interesting to learn that Wilma lately heard the call of this bird from the Blackbutt Reserve.
- e) BIRD OF THE EVENING. Arthur Williams chose for his subject the Red-capped Dotterel (*Charadrius ruficapillus*), a familiar bird of the shoreline, preferring salty and brackish waters. More numerous on the coast, but also found on suitable waters far inland. One of the smaller Plovers, known in Australia as Dotterels, these birds are characterised by thick heads, short necks, short tails and short, stout bills and the typical feeding habits. Although these birds suffer a fair amount of disturbance they do not seem to be endangered at present, however, reclamation of habitat could threaten them in the near future.
- f) GUEST SPEAKER. It was a particular pleasure to welcome former President, Fred van Gessel, on leave from Darwin, who entertained us with some excellent slides to illustrate his talk on the Northern Territory birds and habitat. Fred presented such mouth-watering tid-bits as Japanese Gull - a rare straggler recorded only once in Australia, Rufous Owl, Red Goshawk, Banded Pigeon, White-throated, Black and Carpentarian Grasswrens, Hooded Parrot, Rainbow Pitta, Chinese and Pin-tailed Snipe, to name but a few, and regaled us with his many memorable experiences in searching for and finding new birds in the Territory. Taped calls of the usual excellent quality accompanied the slides. As we all expected, Fred has found much to excite him in his new and completely contrasting surroundings.

Sue Hamonet.

2. FIELD DAY to ALLWORTH. 24/2/85.

The inclement weather of the preceding week obviously kept a few of our stalwarts at home, but nevertheless a party of eleven made the trip to Allworth. Although very overcast for most of the day, at least no more rain fell, and a strong South-Easterly breeze kept the temperature down to a comfortable level.

At Allworth we found the tide out and many birds enjoying the pickings on the exposed mud and oyster-banks. Among these a nice Mangrove Heron, and White and Straw-necked Ibis in large numbers. A walk some distance along the Mangrove and Swamp-Oak lined bank of the Karuah River produced a list of 65 species, including Southern Emu-wren, Rainbow bird, Azure Kingfisher, Dartar, Rufous Fantail, Wonga Pigeon. A White-breasted Sea-Eagle entertained the early finishers by scooping up his lunch from the river near the party.

Across the highway in the Cromarty Creek woodland area birds were decidedly scarce. Underfoot the ground was very wet and only those with rubber boots kept feet dry. Here we added only seven different species to our day's list, including Hooded Robin, Double-barred Finch, White-naped and White-cheeked Honeyeaters. It's interesting to speculate about the possible reasons for the lack of activity in this area where we have always had much success on previous outings. Was it the time of year - (our previous visits were in January, August, September)? Maybe the obviously heavy rain of the last week upset things. Perhaps the breeding species have already dispersed. What about interference? (nearby a parked bulldozer, and a good part of the adjacent land in process of being cleared and fenced for sale).

After lunch we called in at Seaham Swamp en route home, where a nice flock of Glossy Ibis rounded off the day's activities. Total species for the day - 72 Allworth area.

Sue Hamonet.

3. COMING EVENTS.

SUNDAY 24th March. - Field Day to GRAHAMSTOWN DAM.

Contact: Wilma Barden. 573928. Leader: Arthur Williams  
Meet: 6.30 a.m. McDonald's Car Park, HEXHAM.

EASTER CAMP: April 5 - 8. PILLIGA STATE FOREST. Camp Site - Schwagers Bore. Map available from Forestry Comm. or Coast Camping at Broadmeadow. \$3.50.  
Details from Ed. Hamonet.

SUNDAY 21st April. - Field Day to HEXHAM/MINMI

Contact: Kay Imrie. 524524.

Meet: 7.00 a.m. McDonald's Car Park, HEXHAM  
Alternative venue if swamp is dry.

WEEKEND 18/19 May: Camp-McDonald Valley (St Albans).

MONDAY 1st April : Management Committee Meeting. Garden Suburb Public School.

WEDNESDAY 10th April: Club Night. Garden Suburb Public School, 7.30 a.m.

4. WEEKEND AT BARREN GROUNDS. 1-3 March 1985

Fourteen members spent the weekend at the Barren Grounds Bird Observatory and Field Study Centre situated on top of the plateau above Jamberoo, which is about 15 km. inland from Kiama. The highlight of the weekend was a well earned sighting by a few members of the Ground Parrot, for which the reserve is renowned but which were unusually elusive this particular weekend. Other uncommon birds sighted were the Pilotbird, Eastern Bristlebird and the Beautiful Firetail. Our group, or rather Arthur Williams, got a new bird for the reserve - the Little Pied Cormorant - for which he received the prize of a Mars Bar. We also sighted the Little Wattlebird ( only an historical record previously), Little Eagle, Satin and Leaden Flycatchers and Shining Bronze-cuckoo, all of which are only very occasionally encountered. Our thanks to the wardens Richard and Pat Jordan for looking after us so well.

5. AUSTRALIAN BIRD ENVIRONMENT FUND 1985.

Applications have again been invited from the Bird Observer's Club for the distribution of money made available as the Australian Bird Environment Fund. This is for projects associated with the protection of native birds by ensuring continued presence of habitat appropriate to their needs. More details can be obtained from our club newsletter of June 1984, but note that this year the closing date for applications is 31st May, otherwise conditions remain the same.

6. SLIDE LIBRARY.

The slide librarian is making an appeal to anyone who has surplus slides of birds that they could donate to the slide library. We know that many members have excellent slide collections and we are not asking for your best ones. We can arrange to have duplicates made of any slides that can be loaned to us for that purpose. Please bring them to the next meeting or phone Michael Noonan on 468022 who can arrange to collect them if necessary.

7. SEATING.

Most members would have discovered long ago ( probably on the first club night that they attended) that the seating for club nights, while perfect for six year olds, is not ideal for persons of more substantial build. As a result you can now feel free to bring your own folding chairs or cushions to make the meetings into more comfortable and enjoyable evenings out.

8. BIRD BANDERS TAKE NOTE

The inscription on the metal bands used by the U.S. Department of the Interior to tag migratory birds has been changed. The bands used to carry the address of the Washington Biological Survey, abbreviated: Wash. Biol. Surv. One day the agency received a letter from an Arkansas farmer: ' Dear Sirs, I shot one of your birds the other day. My wife followed the cooking instructions on the leg tag and I want to tell you it was horrible.' The bands are now marked Fish and Wildlife Service.

9. COMING EVENTS.

SUNDAY 21st April - Field Day to BOB'S FARM AREA.

Contact:- Kay Imrie 524524.

Meet:- 7a.m. McDonalds' car park, Hexham.

Note:- This is a change of venue due to Hexham Swamp being dry.

WEEKEND 18/19th May - Camp at McDonalds Valley (St. Albans).

Details:- Rosemary Waymark 751819.

WEEKEND 8-10th June - Camp at Sharpes Creek (Gloucester Tops).

SUNDAY 23rd June - Trip to Australian Museum, Sydney.

MONDAY 29th April - Management Committee Meeting. Garden Suburb  
Public School. 7.30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY 8th May - Club Night. Garden Suburb Public School. 7.30 p.m.