



# Hunter Bird Observers Club

NEWSLETTER NO. 2/86 March 1986 (Released monthly  
at club nights)

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## 1. NOTES FROM THE FEBRUARY MEETING 12/2/86

a) Attendance - A total of 54 people (including six visitors) attended the first Club night of 1986 which was also our Annual General Meeting.

b) Annual General Meeting - Our president Jim Perry read out the Annual Report which detailed all the activities of the Club over the past twelve months. Some proposed alterations to the constitution were debated and ~~noted~~ <sup>noted</sup> upon before all offices and positions were declared vacant and the election of officers undertaken. There was little change in the upper echelons but two new faces appeared on the Management Committee. The elected officers for 1986 are:

President: Jim Perry  
Vice-president: Wilma Barden  
Hon. Secretary: Kay Imrie  
Hon. Treasurer: Ed Hamonet  
Management Committee: Mavis Gillies,  
Peter McLauchlan, Nigel Walker and  
Rosemary Waymark.

Members were then called upon to volunteer for the various tasks associated with the running of our Club. Our thanks to the following people:

Atlas Recorder: Jim Imrie  
Conservation Officer: Glen Albrecht  
F.O.C. Recorder: Wilma Barden  
Gear Steward: Jim Perry  
Librarian - books:- Eva van de Werken  
Rosemary Waymark  
Librarian - slides: Michael Noonan  
Newsletter Editor & Printer: Ruth Parker  
Newsletter Distributor: Jim Imrie  
Notice Board Attendant: Mavis Gillies  
Public Relations Officer: Wilma Barden  
Wader Survey Co-ordinator: Jim Perry

Watson & Doherty were then reappointed as auditors. With the A.G.M. out of the way for another year the evening's proceedings continued as usual.

c) Bird Call of the Evening - Presented by Wilma Barden. Although reputedly almost silent outside the breeding season, the male Rufous Songlark (*Cinchorhamphus mathewsi*) becomes very vocal during Spring. It was this loud, clear, varied song that Wilma played this evening and which the male will utter almost continuously from a conspicuous high perch when breeding.

d) Bird of the Evening - Presented by Gordon Harrison. Most of us expected to hear about one of the pigeon family when Gordon stood up, but he fooled us all by forsaking his favourite subject and instead told us about the Marsh Crake (*Porzana pusilla*). Also known as Baillon's Crake, this is the smallest

bird in its family (Rallidae) being only sparrow-sized. Its long toes and small size enable it to emulate the Jacana by walking about on the surface of water plants in the wetlands which it inhabits.

e) Scientific Names - Presented by Ed Hamonet.

The family to come under Ed's magnifying glass this evening was the Woodswallows (family Artamidae). In the early days they were mistakenly affiliated with the shrikes of Europe and were given their name from the Greek Artamus meaning butcher. This refers to the shrikes' habit of storing insect food by impaling it on thorns etc. There are ten species of woodswallows worldwide, with six in Australia. The five Hunter Region representatives are:

- A. personatus - Masked Woodswallow - means "masked". beak".
  - A. superciliosus - White-browed Woodswallow - means "over eyebrow"
  - A. cyanopterus - Dusky Woodswallow - means "blue wing".
  - A. minor - Little Woodswallow - the smallest member of the family
- Thank you Ed for enlightening us once more.

f) Purchase of Japanese Snipe Specimen - It was decided to purchase a mounted specimen of a Japanese Snipe for presentation by the Club to the Shortland Wetlands Centre. A collection taken up raised \$22. It is anticipated that the balance of some \$38 will be forthcoming at the March meeting.

g) Bird Quiz - Presented by Kay Imrie.

The evening's activities were rounded off with a light-hearted quiz on bird names, habitats, characteristics etc. This produced ten minutes of furious memory jogging and brain wracking, with varying results! Good fun, and I hope to do better next time!

Welcome to new members Dale Val, Ken Johnston, Jean Chambers, Paddy Lightfoot, David and Vanessa Blagden.

2. FIELD DAY AT STOCKTON BOREHOLE SWAMP - Sunday 23rd February.

Twenty-two keen observers attended the second Sunday outing for 1986. For five, it was their first experience of a Club field day and we hope they will come again on a better day. This was the first time in ten years that an outing had to be abandoned because of torrential rain (others, in the past, have been cancelled).

The number of observers almost outnumbered the feathered species. It appeared the birds were more wary of the weather (or more sensible?) Most notable among the sounds in the quiet bushland was the sombre-voiced raven. Other birds spotted along the way included Grey Fantail, Striped Honeyeater, Red-browed Firetails, Blue and Variegated Wrens, and several species of thornbills.

Those daring enough almost earned their "venturers" badge as we stepped gingerly from sleeper to sleeper over the deep gully crossing and through the puddles. Unfortunately the day finished for us at 9.50 beside the swamp. From the shelter of our cars we were able to see plovers, ducks and stilts feeding near the water's edge, and black swans floating sedately, quite unconcerned by the heavy rain which sent us hastily to our homes.

Janet Keegan.

3. NOTES FROM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 3rd MARCH:

- 1) The Club will be listed in the 1986 Telephone Directory.

2)

SPECIAL NOTICE - CHANGE OF VENUE FOR CLUB NIGHTS:  
BEGINNING IN JUNE, CLUB NIGHTS WILL BE HELD AT THE  
SHORTLAND WETLANDS CENTRE, SANDGATE RD., SHORTLAND.  
COMMITTEE MEETINGS WILL CONTINUE AT GARDEN SUBURB  
SCHOOL - ALL MEMBERS WELCOME TO ATTEND.

3) The Club will assist in a bird survey for the Hunter District Water Board at Grahamstown Dam.

4) In order to assist the Club's 1987 programme for Field Days and camps, members' suggestions are invited and may be presented to any committee member at camps or Field Days in 1986.

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW OVERDUE!  
IF A CROSS APPEARS ON THE FRONT  
PAGE, THIS IS YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER.

4. FOR SALE:

1. T. SHIRTS - Cumberland (Sydney) B.O.C. have produced a navy blue T. shirt featuring "BIRDLIFE BE IN IT". Price \$8.50. Orders and money to Kay Imrie.

2. TAPE - Fred van Gessel's tape is still available. Calls cover a variety of birds, 52 in all, and include warblers, pardalotes, robins, scrubwrens, flycatchers and thornbills. Price \$8 at Club night, \$9 posted.

5. BOOK NEWS:

a) Cumberland B.O.C. is offering 20% discounts on bird books imported from the U.K.: -

Titles available are:		Retail Price	Discount Price
BIRD ISLAND by Lars Johnsson		\$42.50	\$34
OCEAN BIRDS by Lars Lofgren		42.50	34
WILDFOWL by Eric Hosking		37.50	30
THE BIRDS OF THE WETLANDS by James Hancock		35.00	28
THE HERONS HANDBOOK by James Hancock & James Kushlan		42.50	34
JUST A LARK! by Jim Flegg, Norman Arlott, Eric and David Hosking		22.50	18

Please see Kay Imrie if you wish to obtain any of these books.

b) BIRD STUDENT by George Sutton - This is a fascinating autobiography which will appeal to all birdos. Set in the U.S.A., it is the story of a metamorphosis, from early childhood love and awareness of birds and animals to fully professional ornithologist and artist. Available from Lake Macquarie City Library.

6. THE N.S.W. BIRD ATLASERS - Easter Atlas Camp will be held this year in the Moree district. Anyone interested in having further details see Kay Imrie at Club night.

7. COMING EVENTS:

SUNDAY 23rd March

- Field day to POKOLBIN STATE FOREST. Meet Edgeworth Oasis car park 7 a.m. or Cessnock Swimming Pool 7.45 a.m. Contact - Nigel Walker 300138.

EASTER -  
28-31st March

- CAMP at MUNGHORN GAP. Contact - Kay Imrie 524524. (Camp fees: 50c. per person per camp, maximum \$2 family).

SUNDAY 20th APRIL

- Field Day to ELLALONG. Meet as for Pokolbin, 7.30 a.m. and 8.15 respectively. Contact Rosemary Waymark 751819.

ANZAC WEEK-END  
25-27th April

- CAMP at CURRICABARK/WOKO NATIONAL PARK. Contact - Kay Imrie 524524.

SUNDAY 25th May

- 10TH ANNIVERSARY - Field Day at NESCA PARK, SWANSEA STN. (BARGOED HOUSE) Barbeque Lunch - B.Y.O. + firewood. Meet 8 a.m. at locked gates. Latecomers may leave cars outside gates. Contact - Wilma Barden 573928.

MONDAY 7th April

- Management Committee Meeting - Garden Suburb Public School 5.30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY 9th April

- CLUB NIGHT - "Bahrein, Bermuda and Birds in Between" presented by member Al Gillies. Garden Suburb Public School 7.30 p.m.