



# Hunter Bird Observers Club

NEWSLETTER NO. 9/86 OCTOBER 1986.

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## 1. NOTES FROM SEPTEMBER MEETING.

a) Attendance - 49 people, including ten visitors: John Brown, Lyn Rayward, Garth Cooksey, Janet Mitchell, Doug Thomson, Leonie and John Storm, Jill and Bill Knight, and Daniel Ghougassian. It's good to have so many visitors at our meeting.

b) Bird Call of the Evening - presented by Bill Cambridge.

Bill began this segment by saying he had decided to give us a bird call we all should know, of a bird whose habitat is wetlands, which indeed is often heard in Shortland Wetlands. He then proceeded to play a bird call nobody knew immediately, but after a few minutes it became clear that it was the cheerful song of the Reed-warbler, properly called the Clamorous Reed Warbler. It certainly clamours for attention as it sits upon a reed giving out its rich melodious song throughout the breeding season. Reed-warblers are found where ever there are swamps and reedy water holes throughout Australia.

c) Bird of the Evening - presented by Dot Bates.

The Lyrebird (family Menura) was the subject of Dot's dissertation, more particularly the Superb Lyrebird (*M. novaehollandiae*), which she has observed closely over a long period in the gullies and forest near Wollombi. The two species of Lyrebird are the largest of all passerines and their terrain is restricted to the east coast of Australia, from the Queensland border to Victoria. They are very shy birds and one is often only aware of their presence either by hearing their splendid loud clear song which is almost always intermingled with mimicked calls of other birds, or by seeing their display mounds. Dot has had the good fortune to have seen the mating display of the male Lyrebird, when it throws its lyre shaped tail forward over its head in a quivering silvery shower, meanwhile turning slowly and singing. The female Lyrebird sings and mimics too, but also does all the nest building, hatching and rearing the single young. The nest, a large bulky structure of sticks, bracken and fern fronds, and lined with the mother bird's own grey breast and flank feathers, merges into the surroundings. Lyrebirds inhabit damp gullies, temperate rain forests and rugged sandstone country. It is not easy to track them after hearing the song, but tell-tale signs are scratched up earth and leaf litter. They are ground feeders, raking over soil and humus with their large powerful feet in search of insects, worms and crustaceans. Although they are so elusive, they are intelligent and curious birds, and seem to grow used to one's presence after frequent visits to their territory. They will come quite close, more often than not peering keenly at the would-be watcher before he is aware of them! Thanks, Dot, for your word-sketch of this interesting bird.

d) Main Feature - Birds of New Guinea presented by Win Filewood.

In 1962 Win Filewood went to New Guinea to work as a biologist, and became greatly interested in the birds there. Tonight we saw part of the results of his observations and study.

When one remembers that New Guinea and Australia were once joined as one continent, it is logical that many of our birds are similar to those in New Guinea. In fact, New Guinea has almost as many species of birds as has Australia, although it is one-tenth the size. Win chose to show us birds we could identify with similar Australian families, and this enabled us to make interesting comparisons.

Beginning with some seabirds and waders, Win went on to show a few of the 48 species of pigeon found in New Guinea. The Pacific Imperial Pigeon was particularly regal. Parrots and lorikeets are also well represented in New Guinea; it was interesting to see the diversity of colour combinations. There are 59 species of Kingfishers in the world, 38 of these beautiful birds occur in New Guinea and adjacent islands. There are families of Flycatchers, Scrubwrens and Robins endemic to New Guinea and a Golden Whistler with differently marked plumage to ours. Win showed a charming picture of a long line of roosting Woodswallows which, when shown upside down, appeared to be a furry caterpillar!

A talk on birds of New Guinea would not be complete without mentioning the famous Birds of Paradise, of which it has 38 species, so the evening finished with slides of these spectacular birds. We are indebted to Win for his splendid resume of the birds of our near neighbour New Guinea.

2. WARKWORTH/BROKE OUTING Sunday 21/9/86.

In Springtime the Warkworth/Broke area usually presents a smorgasbord of birding experiences, but on this occasion I felt that things were decidedly quiet. The country is looking well, there has been recent rain, but perhaps the late arrival of the warm weather has delayed the nesting activity.

However, it was a glorious day - so good to be out - and a total list of 66 species doesn't seem too bad at all. The dominant species at Warkworth was surely the White-throated Warbler, calling lustily from every quarter - that surely indicates that Spring has arrived - and the Rufous Whistler was there to confirm it. Much Mistletoe hangs from the eucalypts and should perhaps soon be attracting the Painted Honeyeaters.

Fifteen members and five visitors including three from Sydney attended the outing, and some of the newer birdos had quite good sightings of dry Sclerophyll species, including Hooded and Red-capped Robins, White-throated Warbler, Brown-headed Honeyeater and Weebill.

-- Sue Hamonet.

3. NOTES FROM THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 29/9/86.

1. The budget estimates for 1987 were presented. It was decided that membership fees for 1987 would be \$7 single and \$8 family with junior remaining unchanged at \$2.

2. The Secretary has written on behalf of members to the Minister for Planning & Environment, the Minister for Mineral Resources and local M.P., J. Richard Face opposing any sand mining in the Burwood Beach area of the proposed Glenrock State Recreation Area.

3. It was approved that the Slide Librarian purchase wooden storage boxes to house the slide collection.

4. Additions to the Library - The Club has purchased "Water Birds" published by The National Photographic Index of Australian Wildlife and has received with thanks A Field Guide to the Birds of Japan from Alan Stuart.
5. Wilma Barden reported that she had been approached by a Newcastle Herald journalist who wished to prepare an article on "Birdwatchers". Several members will take to the bush to demonstrate their techniques for her!
6. National Bird Week - Sunday 19th October to Sunday 26th October. It was decided to advertise at the Hunter Wetlands Centre that members of the Club would assist the general public by inviting them to participate in our Club field day(19th) to Ourimbah, on Tuesday morning 21st in Blackbutt and on Sunday 26th at the Wetlands Centre. Wilma Barden to co-ordinate.
7. Management Committee Meetings for November and December will be held on the second Monday of the month.
8. It is proposed that Hunter Natural History journal will be resurrected on an annual basis. The Newcastle Flora & Fauna Society invites contributions on any aspects of the natural history of the Hunter Region.
9. The N.S.W. F.O.C. is currently offering at bargain prices the three volumes so far produced by the National Photographic Index:

Wrens and Warblers	\$45.00
Waterbirds	\$45.00
Seabirds	\$49.00

These prices include postage. Orders and money to Kay Imrie.

#### 4. NEWS FROM THE SLIDE LIBRARY.

Following recent correspondence with Mr. Frank Stephens, Slide Librarian for the Bird Observers Club in Melbourne we have received a donation of approximately 150 slides. Preliminary sorting indicates that a large number of the slides will fill gaps in our collection. We are very grateful to the B.O.C. for this most generous donation.

In an effort to return the favour we are listing four birds of which the B.O.C. would like slide copies:

Tawny Grassbird  
Cicadabird  
Brush Cuckoo  
Mangrove Kingfisher (also called Collared Kingfisher)

If anyone can help please contact Michael Noonan.

#### 5. ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS UNION 1987 CALENDARS.

Twelve magnificent bird photographs 36 cm. X 24 cm. Cost \$10. Orders with money to Kay Imrie.

#### 6. BUSHNELL BINOCULARS.

Need new binocs.? Enter the competition being run by the Binocular and Telescope Shop (310 George St., Sydney). Application forms from Kay Imrie. Offer closes 31st October.

7. REQUEST FOR DONATIONS FOR RAFFLE: Articles suitable for our end-of-year Clubnight raffle will be gladly received. Contact Kay Imrie.

8. COMING EVENTS.

- SUNDAY 19TH OCTOBER \* FIELD DAY TO OURIMBAH STATE FOREST.  
Meet at Coles Car Park, Toronto, 7 a.m.  
(Suggest city members organise car pool  
before Toronto.) Contact: Kay Imrie  
524524.  
Optional extra: visit to Askania Park  
situated 4 km. down Ourimbah Crk. Road  
(adults \$4, groups of 20 \$2).
- MID-WEEK CAMP \* CAMP AT CROWDY BAY NATIONAL PARK.  
27/29TH OCTOBER Those interested contact Kay Imrie.
- WEDNESDAY 12TH NOVEMBER \* CLUBNIGHT at Shortland Wetlands Cent .  
Film Evening. 7.30 p.m.
- WEEK-END CAMP \* CAMP AT KERRAPIT, GLOUCESTER TOPS  
22/23 NOVEMBER NATIONAL PARK. Contact Wilma Barden  
573928
- 22/23RD NOVEMBER \* WEEK-END AT BARREN GROUNDS NATURE  
RESERVE. Contact - Kay Imrie.
- SUNDAY 7TH DECEMBER \* FIELD DAY TO KOORAGANG ISLAND.  
Meet 7 a.m. at Information Notice  
just past Tourle St. Bridge.  
Contact - Nigel Walker 300138.
- WEDNESDAY \* END OF YEAR CLUBNIGHT.  
10TH DECEMBER Showing of members' slides & supper -  
bring plate. 7.30 p.m.
- MONDAY 10th NOVEMBER \* MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING  
(N.B. not usual date) 5.30 p.m. Garden Suburb Public School.
- MONDAY 8th DECEMBER \* MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING  
(N.B. not usual date) 5.30 p.m. Garden Suburb Public School.

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