



Hunter Bird Observers Club

NEWSLETTER NO. 5/87 JUNE 1987

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1. NOTES FROM MAY MEETING 13/5/87:

a) Attendance: 58.

b) Bird Call presented by Jim Perry.

Owlet-nightjar (*Aegotheles cristatus*) roosts by day in hollow limbs or tree stumps. Its call, a high pitched "chirr, chirr" is often heard at night when the bird emerges to feed, mostly on insects. This bird is more often heard than seen.

c) Bird of the Evening presented by Bill Boyd.

Black-faced Monarch (*Monarcha melanopsis*) from the Greek - Monarchos = ruler; melas = black; opsis = appearance.

This migratory bird arrives in our area in Spring and is most active in October and November when it builds its cup-shaped nest usually in a horizontal fork 1 to 10 metres above the ground. The call "which-you" is distinctive and indicates the bird is around. Bill showed a video film, complete with calls, he had made of the Black-faced Monarch sitting on a nest. The bird made no attempt to fly off. It simply lowered itself deeper into the nest and just presented its beak pointing upwards.

d) Main Feature.

Club member Robert Edden opened his programme with a very interesting movie film he made about 1970. It contained historical footage on the Egret colony which lived on Kooragang Island before the area was "developed". It has been suggested that it was the Kooragang Island colony that moved to Marist Park and was subsequently the reason for the eventual establishment of the Shortland Wetlands Centre.

Also in the film was an interesting segment on the Rufous Fantail, filmed in Murdering Gully. Robert photographed the bird on the nest and while it was away, at different times, placed a worm, a grasshopper and a leaf on the nest. The bird did not appear to notice them and actually sat on the leaf and another time fed the young under the leaf.

Robert is a full-time bird artist and described how he gets his material together in order to produce his paintings. He uses slides taken in the wild and in aviaries, and museum specimens. He has occasionally painted birds he hasn't seen in the wild in order to fulfil requirements for his books. Two have been published: "The Heritage of Australian Birds" with text by Glen Holmes and "Birds of the Rain Forest", with Walter Boles. He indicated some of the problems one can have with publishing companies. He described his delight in being able to work on the White-tailed Kingfisher from a "bird in the hand" in Cairns. This injured bird was almost ready to be returned to the wild.

In the final segment Robert showed a selection of slides. Highlights included Regent Bowerbirds at Iluka, Mistletoebird and nest 6m. up a tree in his own backyard, a night shot of a beautiful Red-capped Dotterel with two young, and the Spotted and Spotless Crake together on Kooragang Island.

Our thanks to Robert for such an interesting programme.

2. Library Notes: The following publications have been added to our Library since the April Club night:

1. A Checklist of the Birds of Kakadu National Park.
2. " " " the McDonald Valley.
3. " " " the Hunter Region.
4. Frogmouths & Nightjars - notes published by N.S.W. Atlasers.
5. Owls by Lindsay Hyem - a reprint of an article published in the EMU - it deals with observations on Owls in the Upper Manning River area.
6. An early edition of Cayley's "What Bird is That".

We are pleased to advise that thanks to the generosity of Shirley Gray (widow of the late D.F. (Jim) Gray, the Club has been presented with one hundred and fourteen back copies of the EMU. (For the benefit of the uninitiated, the EMU is a quarterly journal issued by the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union.) These journals should be available to members in the next few months.

3. Congratulations to Michelle and Nigel Walker on the birth of a beautiful baby daughter - Hayley Eliza. At the age of one week Hayley attended her first Field Outing in company with her parents, and was much admired by all.

4. COMING EVENTS:

SUNDAY 21ST JUNE

FIELD DAY to Fern Bay, Williamtown,
Salt Ash.
MEET: Fern Bay side of Stockton Bridge.
TIME: 8 am.
CONTACT: Rosemary Waymark 75 1819.

SUNDAY 19TH JULY

FIELD DAY to Gresford/Mt. Rivers.
MEET: McDonalds Hexham. TIME: 7am.
CONTACT: Alan Stuart 52 8569.

SUNDAY 23RD AUGUST

FIELD DAY to Buttai, E. Maitland, Black Hill
MEET: Intersection of John Renshaw Drive
and Lenaghan's Drive.
TIME: 7 a.m.
CONTACT: Jim Imrie 52 4524

WEEKDAY OUTINGS:

15TH JUNE
29TH JUNE

Throsby Crk. Meet 8.30 Islington Park.
Blacksmiths. Meet 8.30 Awabakal Ave.
CONTACT: Wilma Barden 57 3928.

NOVEMBER 6/7/8TH

VISIT TO BARREN GROUNDS NATURE RESERVE.
Still Vacancies. Cost \$64.
CONTACT: Kay Imrie 524524.

WEDNESDAY 8TH JULY

CLUBNIGHT at Shortland Wetlands Centre.
7.30 p.m. Programme on Ibis.

COMMITTEE MEETING Wednesday 1st July 5.30 pm. at Garden Suburb School.