

## Hunter Bird Observers Club



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### 1. NOTES FROM DECEMBER MEETING 9/12/87.

a) Attendance: 56, and apologies from Margaret McLauchlan and Ted Felton.

b) Bird Call presented by Peter McLauchlan: Most of us know the often-heard 'chick-up' call of the Yellow-faced Honeyeater, so Peter gave us as well the less familiar territorial calls of nesting birds he had recorded outside his bedroom window, heard just on dawn.

c) Bird of the Evening presented by Jeanette Stephenson: Peaceful Dove (Geopelia striata), also known as Zebra or Turtle Dove. A small grey-brown dove with blue-grey head and neck with fine black and white scallops in a broad zone around neck and upper breast. Sexes similar, usually seen in pairs or small groups. They roost in trees or bushes but feed entirely on the ground, on a wide variety of seeds of grasses, herbs and shrubs. Their habitat is open scrubland and grassed woodland provided water is nearby. They were probably known to early settlers and their status is still strong as the greater part of their northern range has been little altered. The closest sighting to Newcastle of the Peaceful Dove was at the Botanical Gardens at Raymond Terrace in January last.

d) Observations: Shelduck seen at Stockton Borehole, flock of Fork-tailed Swifts at Woodberry, Osprey around Warners Bay, Port Lincoln Parrot (escapee) at Thornton.

e) An evening of varied entertainment followed:

Firstly, the winner of the (very difficult) Bird Quiz: a draw between Leslie Marshall and Alan Stuart (both had 39 right) resulted in Alan winning the prize.

The Slide Quiz was easier (for some), Arthur Williams won easily.

Next came our Christmas special raffle with lots of prizes and consequently lots of winners. Thanks to all those who supplied prizes; an amount of \$67 goes into Club coffers.

A showing of members' slides was next on the programme. John Cockerell, Greg Little and Brian Hare contributed interest and entertainment here. We look forward to more of Brian's candid camera shots next year.

A new tape of Australian bird calls, with classical music accompanying many birdsongs was played by Peter McLauchlin. We were then in the right mood for the scrumptious supper attractively laid out by the ladies. So ended our activities for the year.

### 2. FIELD DAY AT GRAHAMSTOWN SUNDAY 24TH JANUARY.

The red sunrise sky was paling as we made our early start for Grahamstown Dam. More people were waiting at the Water Board

gates (open thanks to Rowley Smith), and we drove to the water's edge. Here we were greeted by sounds of much splashing, flapping, and shrill whistling -- those 'decidedly strange' Musk Ducks were up to their antics. Also heard was the deep hollow booming call of the Pheasant Coucal, a sound which still gives me shivers -- as a child I believed it was a bunyip! The woodland was otherwise very quiet with not many birds yet moving, but a pleasant walk along the shore revealed more waterbirds, Little and Large Black Cormorants, White-breasted Woodswallows and Emu Wrens. After a quick coffee break we drove on a little further and walked along the channel. Luckily there were no mosquitoes, but not many ducks either. Reed Warblers sang clamourously and Little Grass-birds rewarded patient watchers with a brief view.

It was then back through Raymond Terrace to Finnan Park, but not before a stop at our customary viewing spot on the bridge where a Jabiru was spotted. After lunch we decided to call it a day, which was perhaps just as well. Before long a southerly storm struck, bearing out the old saw: "Red at dawning, shepherds' (or bird watchers') warning." Twenty-one people including two visitors came out for the day, and sixty-nine species of bird were recorded as having been seen and/or heard.

-- Ruth Parker.

2. COMING EVENTS:

SUNDAY 21ST FEBRUARY

FIELD DAY TO SOMERSBY.

MEET: Charlestown Square, lowest

TIME: 6 a.m. parking area.

CONTACT: Diane Rogers 761686.

SUNDAY 20TH MARCH

FIELD DAY TO SWANSEA SOUTH.

MEET: Swansea Park.

TIME: 7 a.m.

CONTACT: Rosemary Waymark 751819.

EASTER \* 1/2/3/4 APRIL  
WEEKEND

CAMP AT PILLAGA STATE FOREST.

DETAILS: Kay Imrie 524524

CONTACT: Jeanette Stephenson 575255

ANZAC WEEKEND  
23/24 APRIL

CAMP AT SMITHS LAKE (Bunkhouse accom-  
modation and facilities available).

CONTACT & DETAILS Kay Imrie 524524.

WEDNESDAY 9th MARCH

CLUBNIGHT. Wetlands Centre 7.30 p.m.

FEATURE: North-west Australia by  
Deborah Perry.

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