

late August 1988



Hunter Bird Observers Club

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1. NOTES FROM JULY MEETING.

- a) ATTENDANCE: 29. Apologies from Auriol Royds, Jim Perry, Wilma Barden, Imriès, Ed Hamonet, Ruth Parker.
- b) BIRD CALL presented by Sue Hamonet: Northern Chowchilla, also called Northern Logrunner, found in North Queensland in leafy floors of tropical rainforests. The name Chowchilla comes from its typical call of 'chòw-chow-chicky', a strong, musical call; it has other strange, raucous notes and can mimic other birds. The call of the Spinetailed Chowchilla or Southern Logrunner was also played, this was not as strong or attractive a call.
- c) BIRD OF THE EVENING presented by Alan Stuart: The Spangled Drongo (Dicrurus hottentottus), a glossy black bird with a large head, heavy dark bill with bristles, red eye and longish 'fishtail'. Immature bird is dull smoky black with white spots scattered over most of body. A migratory bird found from the Kimberleys, across northern N.T., Queensland and east coast to southern N.S.W., uncommon in Victoria. Little is known of this birds migratory habits. It has been recorded in the Hunter region all year, 5% of recordings in summer and 50% in May-June period.
- d) OBSERVATIONS: 33 Wandering Whistling Ducks at Newcastle Wetlands Rêservê, Pacific Baza at Shortland Wetlands Centre, 2 Little Eagles at Newcastle University, 2 Splangled Drongos at Merewether Golf Course and 2 at Blackalls Park taking nectar, unusual White-winged Choughs at Toronto, Rose Robin at Gwandalan, Emu Wrens at Booragul and Sooty Oystercatchers in the Port Stephens area.
- e) MAIN FEATURE: Two Videos presented by Peter McLauchlan. The first was "Birds of the Sun God" - Humming Birds of North and South America narrated by David Attenborough. Humming Birds evolved as nectar geeders and are responsible for pollinating half of the plants in the mountains of South America. They are known as "Servants of Plants". They range in size from about that of a starling to the Little Hermit, which weights 1.8 grams. The Sticklebill Humming Bird has a long curved bill and is responsible for pollinating one particular plant, and the Swordbill has a bill longer than its body, enabling it to feed from long tubular-shaped flowers. The wings are rigid and moved by the shoulder muscles, and the birds need to refuel their bodies every 10-15 minutes. Their plumage is diverse and usually quite brilliant.

The second video, "In Flight Movie" also narrated by David Attenborough, showed flight patterns of many birds. Grey-lag Geese fly at 45 m.p.h. and sometimes at 35,000 ft. Their wings are powered by the breast muscles and body fat helps fuel their flight. The Mute Swan at 12 k.g. is near the limit for flight. The Coot being a heavy bird, needs a lot of water space for take-off, as do Swans. Ducks can take-off very rapidly and smaller ducks can reach 75 m.p.h. A Peregrine can reach 100 m.p.h. in a dive. The flight patterns of Rooks, Buzzards, Jays, Wrens, Flycatchers, Swallows, Swifts, Starlings, and Goldfinch were shown. The White Stork uses thermals in its migration and cannot survive the long flight without them. Many perish without correct conditions.

We thank Peter for showing these videos of superb photography, and special thanks to him for very kindly donating these videos to the Club; members will now be able to borrow them.

2. FIELD DAY 24th JULY.

A brisk breeze was blowing across Walka Water Works as we set off around the lake's edge. The melodious sound of a family of Pied Butcherbirds at choir practice in the tall gum trees rang out, with a distant chorus of Magpies as incidental music. Excitement at seeing the Blue-billed Ducks made us ignore the cold wind. These ducks are not normally seen so close to the coast and are recorded as inhabiting inland river regions. The Walka Blue-bills have been under observation for the past month or so and appear to have raised a family of four young. Seven birds were seen today. As well as a good number of other water birds, four raptors, a Rose Robin and a Golden Whistler were spotted in the surrounding bush, altogether 64 sightings were recorded at Walka.

After a most welcome hot "cuppa" we visited Bolwarra Treatment Works, then drove across country to Morpeth. The Treatment Works here are generally well stocked with water-fowl and sure enough we were rewarded with Pink-eared Ducks, White-eyes, and Shovelers. Lunch in a sunny spot on Morpeth Common warmed us up, and the final count of 80 species seen was considered a good total for a winter's day.

Twelve Club members attended, plus visitors Frank and Heather Heazlewood from North Arm Cove.

-- Ruth Parker.

3. BIRD WEEK 22nd to 29th OCTOBER.

The programme for Bird Week is: 23rd - a field outing and activities at the Shortland Wetlands Centre; 26th and 29th - bird watching at S.W.C. It is hoped that as many H.B.O.C. members as possible with help the organisers with these activities.

4. PROGRAMME FOR FIELD OUTINGS AND CAMPS FOR 1989.

A committee comprising Sue Hamonet, Wilma Barden, Kay Imrie Roger Heading and Rosemary Waymark has been formed to prepare next year's programme, and seeks your suggestions as soon as possible.

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5. COMING EVENTS.

SUNDAY 21ST AUGUST

FIELD DAY TO GIRVAN AND STROUD.
MEET: McDonalds Hexham
TIME 7 a.m.
CONTACT: Sue Hamonet 581023.

SUNDAY 25TH SEPTEMBER

FIELD DAY TO MARTIN'S CREEK.
MEET: McDonalds Hexham
TIME: 6.30 a.m.
CONTACT: Alan Stuart 528569.

OCTOBER LONG WEEKEND
1-3RD OCTOBER

CAMP AT WIDDEN VALLEY
CONTACT & DETAILS: Peter McLauchlan
333224.

SUNDAY 23rd OCTOBER

FIELD DAY TO COORANBONG
MEET: Coles Car Park, Toronto
TIME: 6.30 a.m.
CONTACT: Paul Osborn 781151

WEDNESDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER

CLUBNIGHT AT SHORTLAND WETLANDS CENTR.
TIME: 7.30 p.m.

WEEKDAY ACTIVITIES:

MONDAY 22nd AUGUST

MT. VINCENT.. Meet Mt. Sugarloaf
8 a.m.

MONDAY 19th SEPTEMBER

QUARRYBOLONG. Meet Crossroads
7.30 a.m.

MONDAY 17th OCTOBER

WARKWORTH. Meet S.W.C. 7.30 a.m.

At Shortland Wetlands Centre:

Monday 5th September
Thursday 6th October.

BIRD SLIDES - ANY SPARES ?

SEE OVER FOR A LIST OF BIRDS NOT REPRESENTED

IN OUR SLIDE LIBRARY. PAGE 1 OVER, PAGES 2 & 3 WILL
BE PRINTED IN SUBSEQUENT NEWSLETTERS

The HBOC slide library contains just over 1200 slides. Of these about 800 are of good quality or better. Surprisingly many species (some quite common) are not represented. Below is a list of such birds.

Penguins King, Gentoo, Chinstrap, Adelic, Rockhopper, Fiordland crested
Snarers crested, Erect Crested, Royal

Albatrosses Wandreing, Royal, Bullers, Grey Headed, Sooty, Light
Mantled sooty,

Petrels Northern giant, Antarctic, Fulmar, Winged, White headed,
Providence, Kermadec, Trinidad Island, Tahiti, Kerguelen, Soft plumaged,
Mottled, Cook's, Blue, Broad billed, Medium billed, Grey, Black,
Westlake Black, White chinned,
Prions Antarctic, Slender billed, Fulmar, Fairy,

Shearwaters Grey backed, sooty, short tailed, Manx, Fluttering,
Little, Audubon's,

Storm Petrels Wilson's, Grey backed, White faced, Black bellied,
White bellied, Leach's, Matsudaira's

Diving Petrels Common, South Georgian

Booby Masked, Brown,

Black faced cormorant
lesser frigatebird
Christmas Island Frigatebird
White tailed tropicbird
great billed heron
reef heron

Bitterns Little
Yellow
Black
Australian

Mute swan
Mallard Duck
Southern shoveller
Garganey
White pygmy goose
Red goshawk
Grey falcon
Quail Stubble
Brown
King

Peafowl
Ring-necked pheasant
Button Quail Red backed
Chestnut backed
black breasted
Little
Red chested

Plains wanderer
Crakes Red legged
corn

Beach stone curlew
Painted snipe
Pied oystercatcher
Grey plover
Hodded dotterel
Ringed plover
Caspian "
Oriental

Inland dotterel
Banded stilt
European Curlew
Upland sandpiper
Wood sandpiper
Wandering tattler
Greenshank
Redshank
Marsh sandpiper
Asian dowitcher
Red knot
Baird's sandpiper
Long toed stint
Dunlin
Sanderling
Buff breasted sandpiper
Broad billed sandpiper
Ruff
Phalaropes Red necked
Wilson's
red

Oriental pratincole
Skuas Great

Pomarine
Long tailed

Terns White winged
Black
Arctic
Roseate
Black Naped
Bridled
Lesser crested

Noddy Lesser
Grey
White

Pigeons Black banded
Purple crowned
Torres Straight
Brown
Squatter
Partridge
Rock