



NEWSLETTER NO. 8/88 SEPTEMBER 1988

Hunter Bird Observers Club

President: Jim Perry

Secretary: Rosemary Waymark

Correspondence: P.O. Box 24, New Lambton 2305.

Telephone enquiries: Alan Stuart 528569.

Newsletter Editor: Ruth Parker 295569.

* * * * *

1. NOTES FROM AUGUST MEETING.

a) ATTENDANCE: 34.

b) BIRD CALL presented by Jim Imrie: Mangrove Robin (Eopsaltria pulverulenta) is a grey and white robin found in tropical mangroves in Northern Australia. It is a quiet little bird and has a rather mournful, slow, tin-whistle like call, which sounds far away even though the bird may be quite close.

b) BIRD OF THE EVENING presented by Trent Bagnall: Diamond Firetail (Emblema guttatum) also called Spotted-sided Finch and Diamond Sparrow. A robust little finch with pale-grey head, black band across breast, joining white-spotted black flanks, with brilliant scarlet upper tail coverts. Its range is inland in open forests and grassland where it flocks in numbers up to 30. They feed entirely on the ground, jumping up to reach the seedheads. Trent gave us a very comprehensive description of this attractive little bird.

c) OBSERVATIONS: Notable sightings this month were an Asian Dowitcher, a rare visitor seen among Godwits at Kooragang, and an albinistic Superb Blue Wren seen at Tomago Water Treatment Works. (Anyone wishing to see or photograph this bird should 'phone Rowley Smith on 662708).

d) MAIN FEATURE: Talk and Slides presented by Arthur Williams.

It is always a pleasure to hear Arthur talking on the subject about which he knows more than most of us, sharing his bottomless fund of knowledge of birds and their little-known habits during nest building and foraging. Having lived around the Newcastle area all his life, Arthur can describe places now engulfed by industry and the urban sprawl where he photographed birds long since gone. Tonight he reminisced about his first sorties to Moon Island (off the entrance to Lake Macquarie), where Gulls, Crested Terns, Wedge-tailed Shearwaters and Fairy Penguins still nest in peace. Arthur is also a keen fisherman and is able to combine his two favourite occupations, always observant of Sea-eagles, Brahminy Kites and Ospreys that may be about whilst he is beach-fishing. Add to this his not inconsiderable skill with a camera and one is guaranteed an inspiring hour or three. What comes across is his life-long fascination for and deep appreciation of the beauty of all birds. Thanks, Arthur, for giving us the benefit of your years of lively interest and keen powers of observation.

2. FIELD OUTING TO GIRVAN 21/8/88.

Sixteen members comprised the party which travelled to Girvan on 21/8/88, where we were joined by John and Eve Moyse, who

guided us over their property in Nugra Lane. The weather was clear and mild with only a moderate breeze, so providing almost perfect birding conditions.

En route to Girvan two stops were made - at Grahamstown Dam where we found only very few birds using the area close to the road, however it was interesting to watch a male Musk Duck displaying. At the Wallaroo State Forest Rest Area large numbers of Rainbow and Scaly-breasted Lorikeets and Noisy Friarbirds were busily feeding on blossoming Eucalypts, and provided a symphonic concert of awful proportions. Here were also several Honeyeater species, including many well-coloured Scarlets. At Girvan the property consists of several differing vegetation types, from Dry Sclerophyll to a remnant of Rainforest, bordering the Branch River. A number of creeks and watercourses cross the property, and there is Paperbark and Wattle scrub, and cleared land bordering on two boundaries. Sixty species of birds were found here, including Green Catbird, Grey Goshawk and Forest Raven. With the return of the migrants from the north, this could be expected to increase considerably within weeks. Already some nesting activity was observed.

Our many thanks to John and Eve for allowing us to use the area, and for their time spent in making sure we found our way about without losing ourselves.

-- Sue Hamonet.

3. Vale Arnold McGill.

We were saddened to learn recently of the death in Sydney of Arnold McGill. A more knowledgeable "birdo" and gentleman would be hard to find. Some of the "older" members of H.B.O.C. will recall his guest appearances at the Garden Suburb venue and remember his historical slides. His anecdotes of birding in Sydney reached back into the forties when the only field guide was Cayley's "What Bird is that?" and there was no guide to the waders.

4. REGENT HONEYEATER STUDY - REQUEST FOR INFORMATION.

The Federal Government has made a States Assistance Grant to Victoria for a co-operative study of the endangered Regent Honeyeater in New South Wales and Victoria. The Victorian Dept. of Conservation, Forests & Lands has employed a consultant, Rick Webster, to undertake the field research. The study has been going for about four months with little success, because few birds have been located in their winter quarters. The Steering Committee (which includes representatives of N.S.W. and Victorian NPWS, ANPWS & N.S.W. Forestry Commission) is therefore appealing for people to advise of any observations of Regent Honeyeaters since 1985 but particularly current observations in order that Rick Webster can observe their feeding or nesting. Send details to or call Peter Menkhorst, DCF&L., P.O. Box 137 Heidelberg, Vic. 3084 tel. (03)4508600, or Alan Morris, 32 Cliff St., Watsons Bay, N.S.W. 2030 tel. (02)337-6772 (H) or 337-5355 (W), if you have any recent observations. (Note that after 10/10/88 I will be moving to 1 Wombat St., Berkeley Vale N.S.W. 2259 tel. (043)244911).

-- Alan K. Morris
Member of Steering Committee.

5. COMING EVENTS.

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(Private Property)
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.

19/20TH NOVEMBER

CAMP AT FERNDAL PARK NEAR
CHICHESTER DAM.
CONTACT & DETAILS: Kay Imrie 524524.
Camping fees payable to owner (to be
advised)

SUNDAY 20TH NOVEMBER

Day visitors to Campsite above
MEET: McDonalds Hexham
TIME: 6.30 a.m.
CONTACT: Alan Stuart 528569.

WEDNESDAY 12TH OCTOBER

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

WEEKDAY ACTIVITIES:

MONDAY 19th SEPTEMBER

QUARRYBOLONG. Meet Crossroads
7.30 a.m.

MONDAY 17th OCTOBER

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

MONDAY 31ST OCTOBER

MULBRING. Meet . Crossroads 7.30 a.m.

* * * * *