



NEWSLETTER No. 1/89 FEBRUARY 1989.

## Hunter Bird Observers Club

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### 1. NOTES FROM DECEMBER MEETING:

a) ATTENDANCE: 36. Apologies: R. & F. Heading, A. Royds, R. Parker, Bevan McGregor.

b) BIRD CALL: Wilma Barden played the call of the Yellow-nosed Albatross and managed to stump us all.

c) BIRD OF THE EVENING: Yellow-rumped Thornbill, presented by Paul Osborn. These small birds are widespread throughout two thirds of the continent and can be found almost anywhere excepting dense forest and desert regions. Often seen in suburban parks in small flocks. As the name implies, the Yellow-rumped Thornbill is distinguished from other thornbills by its bright yellow rump, and black forehead with white spots and prominent white eyebrow. Its tinkling song is not loud but quite beautiful. Nests are usually built in drooping foliage from 2-10 metres off the ground. Paul gave an account of nesting and hatching procedures of a pair of Yellow-rumped Thornbills nesting in a passionfruit vine in his garden over a two year period. He gave some observations on the controversy about the propensity of this bird to build a false nest on top of the main nest structure, and described endearing feeding habits of these sweet little birds.

### d) OBSERVATIONS:

Two Gull-billed Terns at Garden Suburb  
Cicadabird at Blackbutt Reserve  
Four Ruddy Turnstones at Stockton Sewerage Ponds  
A Scarlet Honeyeater trapped in a spider's web and  
rescued by Peter McLauchlan  
Rufous Songlark at S.W.C. (first record)  
Spotless Crane (N.W.R.) caught in mist net by banders  
Possible San Fernando Petrel found at Cessnock late  
Juan Fernandez October  
Young Musk Duck found in suburban duck yard -  
released S.W.C.

### e) MAIN FEATURE:

1. Members' slides. Thanks to John Cockerell who presented some shots taken recently in the dry west, including father Emu with nine dependents. Where were all the other members' slides?
2. Jim Imrie provided a selection of ten bird calls for identification, with answers being written down. The Brown Quail tricked most of us -- but not Arthur and Wilma.
3. Roger Heading selected 20 slides from the Club's slide library. There were some rather difficult ones. Who has ever seen a fledgling Black Honeyeater before? We probably won't get it right next time either. The Marsh Tern in breeding plumage and red bill was another teaser. Best score was 17/20. Guess who's that was.

4. A recently imported American Yellow-bird tried its wings out during the meeting. It was almost fatally attracted to Ted Felton.

5. Christmas Raffle: There were lots of prizes donated by members and lots of winners. Thanks to all who contributed. The Treasurer was delighted to add \$48 to the coffers. The evening concluded with a delicious supper.

(2) FIELD DAY TO KOORAGANG ISLAND 11TH DECEMBER.

Nine hardy members, some from far reaches of the Valley, met at 0630. The first stop at a rather smelly pond produced a large number of Avocets and a Marsh Sandpiper. Second stop, near the fig tree, we saw Woodswallows, Mangrove and Night Herons, a young brightly plumaged Cisticola, plus numerous Godwits. Thanks to Kay with her knowledge and a telescope, we were able to identify Bar-tailed and Black-tailed Godwits, Greenshanks and Turnstones. In spite of a diligent search by Kay, the elusive Hudsonian Godwit (*Limosa haemastica*) could not be found. A visit to the Stockton Treatment Works provided sightings of more Godwits, Turnstones, Golden Plover and the usual ducks. Stockton Beach had a few Terns and of course the poor old "Sigma".

Total species for the day was 67. Thank you leader and fellow members for a pleasant outing.

-- Alan Keating.

(3) A letter from the New South Wales Bird Atlassers is reprinted below. It should be noted that the Club is a financial member of the N.S.W. Bird Atlassers and records of the results of our field days and camps are regularly sent in. Copies of their quarterly newsletters are available from the Club library. However, for individuals who are interested in joining the Atlassers, read on:



## NEW SOUTH WALES BIRD ATLASERS

*A group established to monitor the distribution of Australian birds in New South Wales*

The New South Wales Bird Atlassers was formed to continue the accumulation of information on the distribution of birds occurring within the boundaries of New South Wales, and that includes the Australian Capital Territory, Norfolk Island and Lord Howe Island.

The Australian environment has undergone great changes since European settlement, and this, in turn, has placed enormous pressure on our wildlife. Any native species, unable to adapt has, in less than 150 years, had its population decreased, its range contracted and its potential to adapt to further alterations severely constrained. Factual information about distribution, habitat preferences, movements, conservation needs and other aspects central to effective species management is lacking. The members of NSWBA consider that atlas information can be used to provide a sound and effective foundation for conservation planning.

Anyone can become an atlasser and each member's level of participation is left to the individual to determine. Over a period of time members will build up a strong list for each area surveyed. About 500 people contribute to our records, either as members of the NSWBA or as members of participating groups.

Our data base already contains a significant level of information on the 540 species of birds reported in NSW, and it is being increased at a rate of about 60,000 records per annum. However much more needs to be done to obtain a complete coverage of the state. We are aiming at a minimum of 25 visits per 10' block. To do this we need many more supporting members. Perhaps you might like to join us!

Our present goal is to produce a loose-leaf "interum" atlas showing in detail the distribution of each species occurring in NSW. Distribution maps will be kept up-to-date with replacements as soon as any significant level of change is obvious. A revised list of the rare, endangered and threatened birds of NSW is also under-way, and our long-term aim is to produce an Atlas of the Distribution of Birds in New South Wales.

Regular activities include atlassing field trips to various parts of western NSW, and a camp based in the Wombeyan Caves area will be held from 27.12.1988 to 1.1.1989. Annual subscription of \$7.00 includes a quarterly newsletter.

For further information please contact: the publicity officer:-

Jennifer Southeron,

"Old Dromana", MOREE. 2400 'Phone 067 538822.

#### 4. COMING EVENTS:

SUNDAY 19TH FEBRUARY

FIELD DAY TO TEA GARDENS/HAWKS NEST  
MEET: McDonalds Hexham (Car Park)  
TIME: 6.30 a.m.  
CONTACT: Kay Imrie 524524.

SUNDAY 19TH MARCH

FIELD DAY TO AWABA  
MEET: Coles Car Park, Toronto  
TIME: 6.30 a.m.  
CONTACT: Rosemary Waymark 751819.

EASTER WEEKEND CAMP  
24/25/26/27TH MARCH

CAMP AT PILLIGA (Private Property)  
DETAILS: Kay Imrie 524524.

SUNDAY 23RD APRIL

FIELD DAY TO POKOLBIN.  
MEET: Cessnock Swimming Pool  
TIME: 7.30 a.m.  
CONTACT: Kay Imrie 524524.

WEDNESDAY 8TH MARCH

CLUBNIGHT at Shortland Wetlands Centre.  
TIME: 7.30 p.m.  
Special Guest Mr. Rex Buckingham,  
President, Australian Section of  
International Council for Bird  
Preservation.