

R/m. Walker

NEWSLETTER No. 1/90, FEBRUARY 1990.



Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc.

President:	Peter M ^C Lauchlan
Secretary:	Rosemary Waymark
Correspondence:	P.O. Box 24 New Lambton 2305
Telephone enquiries:	Alan Stuart 528569
Newsletter Editor:	Paul Osborn 781151
	P.O. Box 83 Jesmond 2299

+++++

1. NOTES FROM DECEMBER MEETING:

a) ATTENDANCE: 48. Apologies from Wilma Barden, Charlie Mann and Barbara Kelly

b) OBSERVATIONS: Regent Honeyeaters have been sighted near Bulga, and Rainbow Bee-eaters nesting at Lostock. The Powerful Owl was reported again from Melbourne Botanical Gardens. A Silver Gull was seen in Sydney Botanical Gardens sporting a large green and orange wing tag with the number 992. The blue Pied Currawong reported in an earlier Newsletter has been seen again; this time closely enough to show that it has been dyed.

c) MARINA: Peter M^CLauchlan gave us an update on the situation regarding the proposed Newcastle Harbour Marina. An Environmental Impact Study is to be released in Feb/Mar 1990 and will go on public display. At this stage, Peter's information is that neither site has been ruled out. Anyone interested in helping to preserve the important wader habitat near Stockton Bridge should write to local, State and Federal politicians urging them to support the Throsby Creek site.

d) LOGBOOKS: The Club has acquired a small number of copies of Slater's 'BIRDWATCHERS NOTEBOOK'. These will be given to any junior members requesting them, as a way of encouraging an interest in observing birds.

e) BADGES: A small number of enamelled badges with the Club emblem are available from the Treasurer at a greatly reduced cost. These are the last of an old batch and have a few knocks and scratches but are going at bargain prices; make him an offer he can't refuse!

f) SLIDES: The Club was lucky enough to have recently been the recipient of a large collection of bird slides, donated by Dave Blagden. These were some of his 'seconds'. Mathew Stephenson showed us a selection of these slides, all of which have been added to our slide library. Most members agreed that Dave's first quality slides must be really superb as some of the ones Mathew showed us were exceptional.

Although this was a very hard act to follow, Peter M^CLauchlan showed us some shots he took of Scarlet Honeyeaters nesting in his garden. Peter gave a brief history of the progress of the breeding, including sad news of the untimely end of one of the

nestlings, during very hot weather. Peter's account illustrated the difficulties that birds have in raising progeny to independence and helped explain one reason there are not more birds in the world.

g) RAFFLE: The 'Cooee Koala' doll that was given to the club in recognition of our fundraising efforts for the fight against feral cats in National Parks was raffled at the meeting, along with a number of other prizes donated by members. The raffle raised a total of \$70.50; thanks to all who contributed.

2. FIELD OUTING TO SWANSEA - Sunday, December 10, 1989

Once again a club visit to Nesca Park on the shores of Lake Macquarie proved to be an enjoyable experience for the ten participants. It was particularly rewarding to have with us as a visitor, a very experienced local observer in Glen Aubin. A long-time resident of Swansea, Glen willingly shared his knowledge of the birds with us.

We saw the nest of the Mangrove Heron - so fragile that it was surprising that it managed to contain the single egg so far laid. Two Azure Kingfishers did not prove elusive as they fished the creek which had plenty of small fish evident.

Highlights included beautifully coloured Superb, Variegated Wren and Southern Emu-Wrens. Several Rufous Fantails performed their acrobatics for us. A Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo perched high in solitary splendour for all to see. Two Sea-Eagles gave us a good fly-past display.

It was particularly interesting for the writer to note that a small party of White-winged Choughs was again found in the dry woodland - (last observed on an outing two years ago). However, the Nankeen Night Herons seem to have disappeared.

After a relaxing lunch, en route to Swansea Heads, an unexpected stop was suddenly made. Two Pheasant Coucals were spotted enjoying insects on a grass verge between a front fence and roadway. Some people have Sparrows...

At the headland, Moon Island and its resident terns and gulls were observed. However, inspection through 'scopes was difficult due to strong wind. Two Nankeen Kestrels thoroughly enjoyed the strong breeze and probably had a nest in the cliff. Closer to shore, several Arctic Skuas were seen harassing Silver Gulls. They showed several variations in plumage.

The outing concluded with a visit to the Lands Dept. 'Black Ned's Bay Walking Track'.

A total of 83 species were recorded for the day and our thanks to the Cicadas for remaining reasonably quiet. Kay Imrie

3. GOULD LEAGUE JUBILEE BOOK. In 1937 the NSW Gould League of Bird Lovers agreed to sponsor a bird study camp on Kooba Station in the Leeton district. The experiment was successful and during the next 50 years camps were held in the spring school vacation at localities all over NSW. Many members of bird watching groups throughout the state have attended these camps. Until 1967 the camps were described in some detail, with photographs and bird list, in the annual "Gould League Notes". For the next few years a slightly briefer account was published in "The Gould League". By permission of the Gould League Council these accounts were collected and reproduced in the Jubilee Book. The book provides an illustrated account of 46 camps (there were none during the war years 42-46) and in most cases provides a comprehensive bird list detailing the ornithological highlights. The book has been published as a bi-centennial activity of the Gould League Bird Study Camp Club, the members of which are the descendants of earlier campers. The book contains 164 pages, 264 photographs of people, birds and camp activities and 32 bird lists. It can be

purchased for \$16 in soft cover or \$22 bound with gold lettering (choice of red, green, blue or brown cover) plus postage of \$6 per book. Please send cheque or money order to Alan K. Morris, 1 Wombat St., Berkely Vale, NSW 2559.

4. BIRD WATCHING IN KOREA, notes on the Royal Asiatic visit to Wando Island, Sat July 1-3, 1989. This three day visit to Wando Island on the south-western coast of Korea gave us the first opportunity to get right away from Seoul and see some of the countryside and wildlife.

The first day was generally taken up with the bus trip to Wando, some 500 kms from Seoul, the major part of the first 300 km being on expressway mainly through rice paddies, peach orchards and tobacco fields, with a back drop of steep wooded mountains, typical of the Korean landscape. The journey started at 6.30AM from the apartment, 7.30 from the Namsan Village flats where the first two birds were recorded, a Tree Sparrow and Marsh Tit. After leaving the city many Egrets were seen in the rice paddies, mainly Cattle and Large. Swallows were in evidence from time to time and small parties of Magpies crossed our path. The only other two species seen over the rice paddies were the Grey Heron and the Night Heron. Two stops were made for refreshments, the first being a bowl of noodles for breakfast. These wayside stops are very well appointed, all kinds of food, huge parking areas with tables inside and out, and very clean. We arrived at Kwangju at lunchtime where we visited the National Museum. After lunch we continued our journey to the Island of Wando, now travelling on roads through even more hilly country. On this section of road the colourful Black-capped Kingfisher was seen, the first new species for my Korean list.

After arriving at Wando we checked in to the best (??!) hotel in town, The Jae-il, where we slept on a Yo which is a mattress about 2 cms thick and single bed size with rice pillows on the floor - said to be "very good for you, gives you a good straight back". Next we boarded a charter boat which took us on a 50 minute voyage to the Island of Ko-Kum-do where we saw a small shrine built to commemorate Admiral Yi Sunshin. It was both surprising and disappointing not to see a single bird on this journey, although the Oriental Greenfinch was heard calling. On the way back to Wando we saw many tiny fishing villages and numerous kelp beds (the Wandon area is famous for its seaweed harvest). That evening we had a 'Happy Hour' with grog and nibblies brought with us from the U.S. base in Seoul, followed by Pulgogi (a beef dish).

On Sunday morning during an early morning walk along the harbour edge, Red-backed and Common Swallows were seen hawking low over the water, but still no sea birds.

After breakfast a longer boat trip was taken to the outlying island of Pogil-do where we disembarked after 1 hr 40 mins and walked a few kms to the remains of a well known garden established some 300 yrs ago by a famous poet. Although it had fallen into disuse it was extremely pleasant and proved to be an ideal spot for our picnic lunch. In the garden were many small ornamental ponds and on some waterlilies in one was a Grey Wagtail searching for food. Later during lunch a Common Kingfisher was seen preening itself on a branch above the pool. On the way back to the boat, other birds were added to the growing list (together with a snake - they aren't all in Oz) including White Wagtail, Brown-eared Bulbul and Bullheaded Shrike.

After the boat trip back to Wando, which was extremely rough, the area was again almost devoid of birdlife, we boarded the bus to visit a noted pebble beach. On the walk to the beach Oriental Greenfinches were again heard and eventually seen, perched on power lines. Also on the power lines were some Chinese Grossbeaks and a lone Daurian

Redstart. On returning to the hotel we had time to quickly freshen up before Happy Hour, as for last night, followed by seafood, fortunately cooked!!

Monday we left our hotel at 9AM on the start of our return journey to Seoul. First stop was at a dried seafood market where many of us purchased dried seaweed, dried squid and dried Anchovy, known as "Delights of the Sea". One Korean lady on our bus bought \$180 worth of these delights, we spent a modest \$5 to make Kimpo. We travelled a little further to the seaweed processing factory and saw how it was washed, dried and packed. This factory had been set up to process the seaweed cultivated in the Wando region for export to Japan. Before leaving the island we made one more stop at a wayside park where a Brown Shrike was added to the list.

Soon after crossing a road bridge to the mainland, we made a call at a very old Korean homestead with a small museum attached. During the walk up to the museum a Black-naped Oriole was sighted. When we reached the museum the noise of Grey Starlings feeding babies in a nest in a Gingko tree announced their presence. A Cuckoo and a Pheasant were both heard calling and soon after returning to the bus a Cuckoo flew across in front of us.

Our final stop, other than for refreshments, was at Haenam where we visited the Taehung-sa Temple, one of the largest and most important in the country. From the temple carpark we took our picnic lunch and walked up the inevitable climb to the Temple itself. There was a pleasant stream alongside and the surroundings were heavily wooded. At the temple we found a small decorative pond with many coloured large goldfish, who shared some of our lunch. A bird entered a nest box above the pond after patient watching we saw it re-emerge. It was a small bird with a bright yellow rump and distinctive white markings in the wings. The field guide identified it as a female Tricolor Flycatcher, the second new bird for my world list. The walk back to the bus proved to be the most exciting from a birding point of view because Jean spotted a bird perched on a rock and as I focussed my binoculars I realised it was a Fairy Pitta, the first Pitta I had ever seen. Its very brilliant colours were unmistakable with light olive-green back and even brighter aquamarine wing bar. The black facial stripe and cinnamon crown made this a remarkably coloured bird. Whilst I was watching the Pitta, Jean pointed my attention to a bird scratching about on the ground, which turned out to be a Ground Thrush. The Pitta flew from its perch up into the low scrub before again returning to the clear ground in front of us. It then vanished into the bush. I told a couple of other birdwatchers about the Pitta and this caused some excitement as they had not seen one after three years in Korea, so we went around to the other side of the woodland where the bird had flown. To our delight it was again seen, this time by three of us. While watching the Pitta another Thrush was seen, this time a Pale Thrush. No additional birds were added to the list on the way home but during the journey two Doves were seen but not identified as was a small Hawk, probably a Sparrowhawk. Altogether 27 species of bird were seen on the trip, with 4 of them being new for my World Bird List. Keith Laverick

5. FIELD OUTING TO BOTANICAL GARDENS Sunday 21st January

The first outing on the 1990 calendar. The weather was humid and overcast. 14 members, with a million mosquitoes as company, started

walking through the gardens. The light at this stage was not good and only a few birds out of bed. So this was a good time to catch up on all the news of trips away and other holiday activity. As the light improved the business of bird watching started.

With morning tea and an early finish a total of 38 species plus one Koala were recorded. Congratulations to all concerned for the hard work they have put into the gardens, and thanks to Sue (?) for getting up early to open the gates for us. Brian Hare

6. ATLAS AND SLIDE LIBRARY ---1989

During the year 1989, a total of 16 HBOC outings were held, either in the form of field days or camps. A grand total of 241 bird species were recorded in these outings, including 118 non-passerines and 123 passerines. Due to the wide variety of habitats covered, many unusual bird species were recorded. On this note, it is requested that in future a brief description of the habitat on outings should be written on the 'list' used for Bird-Call. This would be of great assistance to whoever holds the position of Atlas Officer at the time.

Highlights of the year include : Crested Hawk, Blue-billed Duck, Brush Turkey, Grey Goshawk, Arctic Skua, Red-winged Parrot, Pheasant Coucal, Spotted Nightjar, Crested Bellbird, Spotted Quail-Thrush, Red-backed Fairy-Wren, Southern Emu-Wren, Regent Bowerbird and Little Woodswallow. However, species conspicuous by their absence were : Hoary-headed Grebe, Darter, Black-shouldered Kite, Shoveller, Black Kite, Stubble Quail, Banded Plover, Turquoise Parrot, Barn Owl and Fuscous Honeyeater. Here's to another good year's birding in 1990.

Slides: Special thanks must be directed to Mr. David Blagden, a HBOC member, who during 1989, was generous enough to donate to the club library a total of 144 magnificent bird slides.

The HBOC Slide Library now has a total of just on 1200 bird slides; however, only about 30% of these are of above good quality. Donations of good bird slides by members or others would be greatly appreciated.

Mathew Stephenson

7. COMING EVENTS

Sunday 25th February

Field Outing Morisset

Meet : Coles Carpark, Toronto 6 AM
or Morisset P.O. 6.20 AM

Contact : Kay Imrie 524524

Wednesday 14th March

Clubnight, Shortland Wetlands Cntr. 7.30 PM

Study night on ducks.

Sunday 25th March

Field Outing Allworth

Meet: M^CDonalds, Hexham 6.30 AM

Contact: Alan Stuart, 528569

Anyone interested in camping on the Saturday night of the 24th should contact Kay Imrie, 524524. Details are yet to be finalised.

Wednesday 11th April

Clubnight, Shortland Wetlands Cntr. 7.30 PM

Easter Weekend 13-16 April

Camp, Widden Valley (pvte property)
Details: Kay Imrie 524524

Sunday 22nd April

Field Outing Swan Bay

Meet: M^CDonalds Hexham 7AM

Contact: Jim Imrie 524524

AUSTRALIAN BIRD STUDY ASSOCIATION

QUESTIONNAIRE - Australian Bird Study Association Campout at Iron Range, Cape York, Queensland

The ABSA is presently arranging a bird banding campout at Iron Range National Park for the week commencing 17th November, 1990 to establish a co-operative bird banding station to study the birds of the area and hopefully Torres Straight migrants. Access to Iron range is restricted to FWD vehicles or light aircraft from Cairns. Vehicle pools will be arranged if possible. Some intending participants plan to drive to Cairns and hire FWD vehicles and some may wish to fly all or part of the way. Intending participants will have to provide their own camping equipment and food and banding equipment. Those wishing to hitch a ride will be expected to share the fuel and other vehicle running costs.

Because of possible restrictions on the number of camp sites and therefore the number of persons who may attend, it is imperative that intending participants advise the Association as soon as possible. If you wish to attend, please complete the Questionnaire below and return it to Fred van Gessel, 1/38 Priestman Ave., Umina NSW 2257 (Phone at home after 7.00 pm (043) 43-1283). *WK 02-5623151*

Intending participants will be kept informed of developments in the planning of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

I/we No. of persons
of Postcode

Phone (home) (business)
wish to attend the campout at Iron Range National Park during the week commencing 17th November, 1990.

Please tick the following appropriate boxes and provide information as required:-

- I have my own FWD vehicle
- I will have room for passengers from
- I do not have a FWD and seek transport in a private FWD vehicle from
- I wish to hire/share a hired FWD from Cairns. Please provide me with details of hire costs.
- I will arrange another means of transport. Please provide details