



Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc.

President: Peter McLauchlan
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The Annual General Meeting was held on the 13th February, 1991.

The following members were elected unopposed:-

President: Peter McLauchlan.
 Vice-President: Kay Imrie.
 Hon. Secretary: Peter Phillips.
 Hon. Treasurer: Allan Stuart.

The following members were nominated for the four committee positions:-

Sue Hamonet, Graeme O'Connor, Ruth Parker, Judith Smith, Jeanette Stephenson.

A ballot was held and the following members were elected to the Committee:-
 Sue Hamonet, Graeme O'Connor, Judith Smith and Jeanette Stephenson.

Other positions filled were:-

Activities Officer:	Graeme O'Connor
Assistant Activities Officer:	Jeanette Stephenson
Librarian:	Ed Hamonet
Assistant Librarian:	Bevan McGregor
Slide Librarian:	Matthew Stephenson
Audio/Video Librarian:	Peter McLauchlan
Public Officer:	Peter Phillips
Public Relations:	Allan Stuart
Suppers:	Beth Mullard/Judith Smith
Newsletter Editor:	Rosemary Waymark
Assistant Newsletter Editor:	Barbara Kelly
Newsletter Printer:	Bevan McGregor
Newsletter Distributor:	Jeanette Stephenson
Conservation Officer:	John Moyse
Assistant Conservation Officer:	Martha Hamilton
Atlas Recorder:	Matthew Stephenson
FOC Recorder:	Sue Hamonet

Messrs. Watson and Doherty were appointed Auditors.

23 members and 1 visitor attended the Annual General Meeting.

Clubnight activities followed the A.G.M., Graeme O'Connor presented extracts from the video - Land of Parrots.

The following observations were recorded:-

Silver Gull at Belmont (with a tag - Woolongong survey).
 Marsh Crake and Spotless Crake at Shortland Wetland Centre.
 5 Sooty Oystercatchers and Turnstone at Newcastle Baths (30/12/90 and since).
 5 Sooty Oystercatchers at Wangi.
 Glossy Ibis at Shortland Wetland Centre.
 4 Jabiru at Buchanan Galleries and at Thornton.
 Reports of Imm. Yellow Thornbills and Silvereyes caught in Spider Webs.
 2 Imm. Tawny Frogmouths at Valentine.
 Red-kneed Dotterel at Shortland Wetland Centre.
 Crimson Rosella at New Lambton Heights.
 Little Grassbirds at Shortland Wetland Centre (on the mud).
 Brown Goshawk at Elmore Vale.
 Skua in Newcastle Harbour. Marbled Frogmouth at Harrington (near death).

THE BRUNKERVILLE EXCURSION

At 7 o'clock on a clear Sunday morning (24th Feb) a party of about fifteen gathered at Freeman's Waterholes for a pleasant morning of bird watching. We followed the highway over the Gap, and down to Brunkerville, where we took a short side road ending in a private property owned by a photographer.

On a pond near his cabin were water birds such as swamphens, dusky moorhens and black ducks, while in the bushes nearby were blue wrens, red-browed firetails, yellow robins, and white-browed scrubwrens. One of our biggest thrills was the sighting of half a dozen wonga pigeons, feeding on the ground and also on the feeding tray. This was quickly followed by the sighting of as many scaly thrushes - birds which some of us had not even heard of before. Their feeding alternated with short quick runs to the next feeding spot. In the trees above were Lewin honeyeaters and yellow thornbills, while in the more open country we sighted a sacred kingfisher.

We split into two groups under the guidance of Alan and Kay. Alan's group went along the creek and up the hill into the bush. More Lewin honeyeaters were seen, along with brown warblers, rufous and grey fantails, a golden whistler, king parrots, and a few female satin bowerbirds. Some thought they saw a male bowerbird, but it appeared to be wishful thinking, as the only birds positively identified in that direction were eastern whipbirds, which were quite plentiful. There were plenty of bell miners around, but hardly one was seen. We heard a lyrebird, but could not see it. Another bird sighted, but difficult to see, was a female leaden flycatcher.

Meanwhile Kay's group heard a catbird calling, but it seemed to be as elusive as our bell miners and lyre bird. On the way out we sighted a white-faced heron.

We all look forward to another excursion in the same place. We thank Kay and Alan for their competent leadership on this occasion, and our photographer friend for allowing us to visit such a haven for birds.

Don and Daphne Halliday

(Total number of species observed - 51).

THE MARCH MEETING.

At the March Clubnight, held on Wednesday the 13th and attended by 36 members and visitors, the Bird Call was presented by Sue Hamonet, who gave us the beautiful song of the Grey Shrike-thrush.

The first part of the Main Feature was presented by Kay Imrie and 7 volunteers, who each gave a short talk, illustrated with slides, on 12 Waders that were likely to be observed at Kooragang Island on the Field Outing of the 17th March.

The second part was presented by Paul Osborn. Paul presented 60 slides, supplied by Gordon Beruldsen of birds seen in the Cape York area.

During General Business it was moved by Allan Stuart and seconded by Peter Phillips that the Committee be allowed to accept paid advertisements for the Newsletter, provided that no endorsement of products or services was involved. The motion was carried.

The following observations were recorded at the March meeting:-

- 50 Ruddy Turnstones at Newcastle Baths.
- Pair of Shovellers at Shortland Wetland Centre.
- 50 + Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos at Seal Rocks (12/90).
- Blue-faced Honeyeater at Rankin Park and Elernore Vale.
- Pied Butcherbird at Kotara and Warners Bay.
- White-cheeked Honeyeater at East Maitland.
- Marsh Crane at Shortland Wetland Centre.
- Spotless Crane at Shortland Wetland Centre (Council side).
- 150 Little Corellas at Kotara.
- 4 Glossy Ibis at Shortland Wetland Centre.
- Gang-gang Cockatoos at Cooranbong.
- 2 Drongos at New Lambton.
- 4 Banded Lapwing at Kooragang Island.
- White-throated Nightjar at Brunkerville.

FREE-AS-A-BIRD HOLIDAYS
THE CAPE YORK BIRDING SPECIALISTS
GORDON R BERULDSSEN
 1991-1992 program

CAPE YORK BIRD WEEK

Our established traditional Bird Week
 Saturday 4/1/92 to Saturday 11/1/92
 Limit 30 persons

IRON RANGE

Fly in, full accommodation, no camping out
 Monday 30/9/91 to Saturday 5/10/91
 Monday 18/11/91 to Saturday 23/11/91
 Limit 10 persons

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Lady Elliott, Lady Musgrave, Heron and other islands
 Saturday 9/11/91 to Saturday 16/11/91
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CAPE YORK TRAVERSE

(In association with University of Qld - Travelearn Aust)

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 Tribulation, Cooktown, Lakefield NP, Edward River
 wetlands & Golden shouldered parrot habitats. Land
 travel.

Saturday 31/8/91 to Thursday 12/9/91

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Fly in, full accommodation, no camping out.
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SPECIAL

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HBOC Library.

The following books have been added to the library:-

"Private Lives of Some Australian Birds".

"Questions Kids Ask About Birds".

HBOC Audio/Video Library.

The first CD for the library - Kakadu Billabong.

All books, cassettes, videos and now a CD are available for loan on Clubnights.

Field Outing to Kooragang Island 17/3/91

This outing was to follow up the sessions on wader identification given at the club night a few days earlier. It was a clear, cloudless day, with very good light, and though a bit hot at times, was a very enjoyable and rewarding day.

23 observers took on this opportunity to sort out those brown mottled birds. We started at the BHP ponds, which were badly in need of some water. No reed warblers could be heard along the side of the road, but a few were eventually seen. After some debate it was decided that both tree and fairy martins were present. The sight of hundreds of these birds looking like fruit on the dead stems of trees was one I will long remember. Continuing towards the railway line we were given a good view of a greenshank flying past and calling, and then saw this bird along the shoreline. At the corner just before the railway we enjoyed a real bonus. A spotted crane, a new observation for quite a few of us, turned on a good display. For about ten minutes we pointed telescopes and binoculars at this bird while it showed us all angles in good light. This pond also gave us the opportunity to compare curlew and sharp-tailed sandpipers.

While walking back we saw a marsh harrier, and a whistling kite flew overhead. A few minutes later this kite was seen being buzzed by a smaller raptor, but positive identification could not be made.

Next stop was the Stockton sewage ponds where among other birds, shoveller ducks were seen.

Then, after a short wait for the tide to drop a little we found a good supply of waders both large and small at the Stockton sand spit, and with the help of the wader experts, lifted some of the veils of mystery. The big test is, will we be able to recognise them next time? Some of the bar-tailed godwits and eastern golden plovers here were displaying advanced breeding plumage.

The small spit to the east of the bridge afforded good views of some smaller waders, and several mongolian plovers with prominent breeding plumage were seen. There was some discussion about whether double-banded plovers were also among this group of birds.

In all, 85 species were recorded, with most being shore or water birds. The only significant waders we failed to find were the turnstones, which had possibly already migrated, and avocets, these birds having lost their usual feeding grounds at the fertiliser works and along cormorant drive.

John Moyse

Sue Hamonet has been appointed as a representative for the Bird Observers Club of Australia in Newcastle.

Sue will be a contact for visiting bird watchers to the Hunter area and someone for interested bird observers to share their experiences with.

The Secretary has details of Gipsy Point Lodge in Victoria and Cassowary House in Queensland programmes for 1991 holidays - available at Clubnights or by telephone - 516223.

Coming Events.Sunday, 27th April.

Field Outing: Bulahdelah.
Meet: McDonalds, Hexham. 6.30 a.m.
Contact: Jeanette Stephenson. 575255. OR
 Graeme O'Connor. 531304

Wednesday, 8th May.

Clubnight at Shortland Wetland Centre. 7.30 p.m.
Main Feature: The Peaceful Gulf (Queensland).
 Peter McLauchlan.

Sunday, 19th May.

Field Outing: Martin's Creek.
Meet: McDonalds, Hexham. 6.30 a.m.
Contact: Allan Stuart. 528569.

8th to 10th June.
Queen's Birthday Weekend.

Camp. Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve.
 (Joint Camp with NSW FOC.
Contact: Graeme O'Connor. 531304.

Wednesday, 12th June.

Clubnight, Shortland Wetland Centre. 7.30 p.m.
Main Feature: Not yet finalised.

Sunday, 23rd June.

Field Outing: Wetlands Day.
Meet: Shortland Wetland Centre. 8 a.m.
Contact: Graeme O'Connor. 531304.

Above information whilst as accurate as possible should be checked nearer to Field Days etc., with the contact person.

On Clubnights where newsletters are not issued a verbal update of Field Days etc., will be given by either the Chairman or Activities Officer.

The following extract has been taken from the State of the Environment Newsletter, January, 1991.

New breed of Visitors.

Sydneysiders who enjoy the innovative picnic and recreational facilities of Homebush Bay's Bicentennial Park are increasingly sharing the green space with a different type of visitor. Despite its inner city location, over seventy species of birds regularly use Bicentennial Park's 60 hectares of wetlands while another seventy occasional visitors use it as a welcome rest, recreation and breeding ground. During the summer months, a large contingent of migratory birds, including godwits, sandpipers, plovers and dotterels wing in from the Northern Hemisphere while in winter, black swans and cormorants raise young in the wildlife refuge. Rangers placed two floating pontoons in the wildlife refuge in 1990 to improve the bird habitat.

New milk lid to save bowerbirds.

A new form of packaging might save the male satin bowerbird, the NSW Minister for the Environment, Mr. Moore, said yesterday. He said the Plastics Industry Association had agreed to change the blue sealing rings from milk container lids to clear plastic.

The blue colour of the rings was a magnet for male bowerbirds, which used them to decorate their nests. But when the birds picked up the rings they would flip over their heads and tighten, making it impossible for the birds to eat. Mr. Moore said birds in the Nowra area on the NSW south coast had been found with up to 20 blue rings on them.

Newcastle Morning Herald - 14/3/91.

ObituaryVALE GEORGE ROGERS

It is sad to record the loss of our late member and friend, George Rogers, who passed away on 28th January, 1991 after a short illness.

George, with wife Thelma and daughter Dianne joined Hunter Bird Observers Club back in the days at Garden Suburb and until failing health prevented it he was a regular attender at Club meeting nights and at field outings where he impressed us all with his great knowledge of things botanical; a knowledge which he shared freely with anybody interested.

George was a quiet, gentle man with a deep love of native things - the bush and George were one; and he was always seeking to extend his already vast knowledge.

He leaves behind a living monument in the grounds of the Shortland Wetlands Centre. His tireless efforts since 1985 in the establishment and maintenance of the gardens was recognized last year with the dedication of the Rogers Family garden.

To Thelma and Dianne we extend sincere sympathy from members of the Club. It has been our privilege to have known him.

Barren Grounds Bird Observatory

Programme of Special Courses
AUTUMN - WINTER 1991



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P.O. Box 3, Jamberoo, NSW 2533
PHONE — (042) 360195

SPECIAL COURSES - Are fully catered and commence on the evening of the first day (meal at 8.00 p.m.) and conclude the afternoon of the last.

WEEKEND GROUP BOOKINGS - \$100 per person, fully-inclusive for two days. (half tuition \$120, full tuition \$130) minimum 10, maximum 16 persons.

CASUAL VISITS: \$50 per day fully catered.

CHILDREN under 13 half price.

RAOU members receive a discount of \$5 per day.