



Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc.

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Peter McLauchlan

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The aims of the Club are: To encourage and further the study and conservation of Australian birds and their habitat and to encourage bird observing as a leisure time activity.

THE APRIL MEETING.

At the April Clubnight held on Wednesday the 8th, the evening commenced with the Bird Call of the Grey Currawong presented by Jeanette Stephenson, this was followed by Bird of the Evening and Max Blanch gave a talk on the Bush Thick-knee. The Main Feature was a most interesting talk given by Bridget Whitehead on her recent trip to the Antarctic.

The following observations were recorded:-

Black-necked Stork - 2 at Wyee and 1 at Wyong.

Glossy Ibis - 20+ at Woodberry Swamp.

Grey Goshawk - near Tickhole Tunnel and at East Maitland.

White-bellied Sea-Eagle - Several sightings including Warabrook and nesting at the BHP Golf Course.

Peregrine Falcon - at Minmi and Kooragang Island.

Glossy Black-Cockatoo - at Buttaba.

Albina Australian Magpie - at Yarrawong, Victoria.

Ed Hamonet gave members a very comprehensive briefing on the Newsletters and periodicals available in the Library.

Keith Laverick has sent the club another of his very interesting reports, this one on his return to Western Canada in January and February, 1992.

All of Keith's reports, mostly of his bird watching in Asia are in the Library and available to all members.

Three new books purchased for the Library are:-

Bush Quest by Robin Hill.

Cry of a Bird by Dorothy Uglesias.

A Territory of Birds by Michael Sharland.

New additions to the Audio/Video Library are:-

Sounds of the High Country - CD and Cassette.

Video on Rainforest.

Cassette No. 6 of BOCA Australian Bird Song Series.

NEW MEMBERS.

We extend a very warm welcome to the following new member:-

Stan Etheridge Glendale.

We welcome back as a member:-

Paul Huolohan North Lambton.

Easter Camp - "Carlton", Gunnedah - 17-20 April, 1992.

On Good Friday, seventeen keen bird observers set up camp on a pleasant hillside on the Shanley's property, "Carlton", with a lovely view of the surrounding countryside. As the area was very dry, there had been no rain for two months, no campfires could be lit and birdcall was held around the Hamonet's lantern! However, there was plenty of underground water pumped up by windmills for the stock and this provided an ideal observation point. Several of our members took advantage of this and could be seen sitting comfortably on their chairs in the heat of the day, watching the Peaceful and Bar-shouldered Doves, Red-capped Robins, Spiny-cheeked, Singing, White-plumed and Brown-headed Honey-eaters, Zebra and Double-barred Finches as they came to the water-trough near our camp.

There were several good habitats for birding; the open fields, with lots of burrs, road sides, farm dams, dry sclerophyll forest, shady gullies leading up to rocky hills and outcrops. It was here that we were lucky enough to see two Southern Boobooks who rose up from the ground as we approached.

The weather was good on the whole, though rather windy for the first two days and nights. Actually, it seemed we saw more birds on the windier days.

Thanks to the efforts of energetic birdos who ranged far and wide and to some unusual sightings, such as fifty pelicans gliding high over the property, a very satisfying count of 99 species, including 2 heard, was achieved. The last two added were Blue Bonnets and House Sparrows, seen on the Tuesday as the remaining campers left. There was a suggestion that we included 'feral chicken', a rooster heard crowing early one morning, but we resisted the temptation!

All in all, it was a very pleasant and friendly camp, where the birding and socialising were equally enjoyable.

Beth and John Cockerell.



Mist-netting provides invaluable information about bird populations (Photo: G. Tucker)

MIST-NET PROBLEMS

In the last *World Birdwatch* (13,4:5) we reported a ban on the sale or export of mist-nets in Japan. This was largely the result of pressure from the Wild Bird Society of Japan and other environmental groups, as well as an ICBP resolution passed at the 1991 World Conference. This resolution was based on an alarming increase of illegal trapping with mist-nets in Asia and Europe.

The Japanese have moved with exemplary speed and thoroughness to address the problem. This has led to

the unfortunate side-effect of research institutions and scientists in Europe and America (including one of ICBP's own field projects) being unable to obtain mist-nets from Japan. Mist-nets are, of course, essential tools for a great number of field programmes.

ICBP has brought this serious problem to the attention of the Japanese government and asked for a simple mechanism whereby *bona fide* researchers and ornithologists can obtain the nets without undue problems. ICBP will keep interested parties informed of the outcome of these discussions.

World Birdwatch (14 No.1) March, 1992.

NEW SOUTH WALES WADER STUDY GROUP.

The articles on page 3 are taken from the Newsletter of the NSW Wader Study Group - April, 1992. Their meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of each month at the Australian Museum. The following dates for Field Outings may be of interest - July 18/19 - Kooragang Island, Cannon-netting. September 26/27 - Kooragang Island, Cannon-netting. December 12/13 - Kooragang Island, Cannon-netting. Contact - Phil Straw - 018-464189.

WADER COUNTS

Wader counts are being instigated on a regular basis and will be coordinated where possible to assess the importance of feeding and roosting sites throughout NSW. Members are invited to join groups visiting important sites on a regular basis, occasional field expeditions to remote wetland areas or to make regular counts at their favourite wader spot.

With the loss of a high percentage of wader habitats due to development and habitat degradation it is becoming more important to monitor wader populations and identify any threats to their habitat. Areas which will be visited on a regular basis at Kooragang Island, Hexham, Hunter Wetlands, Nelson Bay, Port Macquarie, Illawarra and the Sydney area. However, wader counts made at any time at any site are useful and will be added to our database. Where possible counts should be recorded on one of our count sheets which is designed to include information such as site description, weather conditions, time and date.

INTERESTING WADER RECOVERIES

We have recently had some good recoveries of waders caught at Kooragang Island as detailed below:

A Terek Sandpiper banded at Kooragang Island on 12th November 1977 was recaptured at the same location on 18th January 1992 over 14 years and 2 months after banding. We have also recently caught two other Terek Sandpipers that were over 10 years old. [the Terek banded in '77 has travelled about 200,000 km since banding Ed.]

A Curlew Sandpiper banded at Roebuck Bay, Broome, WA on the 30th August 1981 was recaptured at Kooragang Island on the 8th December 1991 over 10 years and 3 months after banding. This is one of only a handful of records of birds banded in NW Australia that have been recaptured on the east coast of Australia. It perhaps adds some support to the theory that many Palaearctic waders entering Australia in the Broome - 80 Mile Beach area and, after building up reserves, fly across Australia to the east coast for the summer. It is only with banding studies that this information can be gathered.

A Golden Plover banded on Kooragang Island on the 21st December 1984 was recaptured at the same location on the 17th November 1991 over 6 years and 2 months after banding. This may be the first recovery of an Australian banded Golden Plover. The only previous recovery was of an American bird recovered in Australia. This has inspired the NSWWSG to concentrate on this species, where possible, as there is very little data on movements, longevity, etc. on these birds. Also there are doubts regarding the status of some of the sub-species and we hope that data gathered from banding might be able to clarify this situation.

The above recoveries have raised our enthusiasm about the value of the banding studies. We therefore encourage other members who may be interested to come and join us on our banding excursions. There is nothing quite so humbling as holding a little bird weighing no more than 60 grams that has made 14 return flights across the world from Siberia to Australia.

Graham Fry

Birds of Ellalong.

Since coming to Ellalong from a different region nearly three years ago, I have kept a rough record of birds observed around the garden, at the bird bath and in the surrounding area.

Ellalong is mainly a 'new' village, with people building, empty blocks, trees being cut down and a few old places. The country is hard, mainly eucalypts and bursaria on surrounding mine land. We miss out on a lot of the coastal moisture, so the drought was hard going. I am trying to establish some bird attracting shrubs.

Amongst the usual common sightings are Grey-crowned Babblers. Some of the less common species around are Australian Kestrel, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo - heard more than seen, Australian King-Parrot, Channel-billed Cuckoo, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Fuscous Honeyeater - 4 at the bird bath one day and Satin Bowerbird - a fully coloured male feeding at the back door for about a quarter of an hour on one occasion. The greatest number of sightings are in the non-everyday or once only sightings list, which includes; two probable escapees, a very vocal Cockatiel and a Mallee Ringneck feeding on the ground. Others are Rainbow Lorikeet, Crimson Rosella, Red-rumped Parrot, Common Koel, White-winged Triller, Restless Flycatcher, White-throated Gerygone, Varied Sittella, Striped Honeyeater, Regent Honeyeater, Olive-backed Oriole and Dusky Woodswallow.

The lists do not include the birds of the lagoon area, which completed dried up before all the rain of this summer. My list of observations to early this year is about 60, I am sure I have missed a lot and I was away for two months last spring.

Jenny Meynell.

Breeders fluffed with success

A Shortland Wetland Centre breeding program to replenish the Hunter's depleted magpie geese population had its first success last week with the appearance of 17 fluffy goslings.

Magpie geese were once plentiful in the region's waterways but hunting and habitat destruction by Europeans virtually wiped them out of the Hunter around the turn of the century. The birds are now very rare in Australia's southern States.

The Wetlands Centre started its magpie geese breeding program in 1987 with the introduction of birds from the Serendip Research Station, in Victoria.

The centre's adult flock now numbers about 100 but, until now, these relocated birds have never bred here.

The centre's assistant director, Geoff Winning, believes that the dry early summer followed by very wet conditions created the right environmental trigger to, at last, start the birds breeding.

Wetlands Centre staff were elated at the appearance during the week of a clutch of 14 goslings under the care of five adults. And another three babies were found, apparently deserted by their parents.

The Wetland's staff prefer not to interfere with the birds, which roam freely around the centre, but decided the three orphans' best chance at survival lay in human hands. The centre's magpie geese breeding program is the only one of its kind in the State. It is hoped the birds brought to the centre from Victoria and their offspring will eventually spread throughout the Hunter and perhaps even to other parts of NSW.

Some of the birds have already ventured to other parts of Hexham Swamp and north to wetlands at Seaham.

Sun Herald - 24 May, 1992.

Birdwatching on Lord Howe Island.

An opportunity to holiday on a Pacific island with a well-known ornithologist and a group of like-minded people being too good to pass up, we joined Richard Jordan and eleven other birdwatchers for Emu Tours' week on Lord Howe Island towards the beginning of February.

A spectacular low-level approach over the clear coral-bottomed lagoon ended a two hour flight from Sydney. Accommodation at Somerset Apartments was in comfortable self-contained units surrounded by lush tropical gardens. Breakfast and lunch were D.I.Y., with food provided by Richard, while dinner was taken at a different restaurant each evening, providing both variety and the opportunity for an evening walk or cycle. Our group was fortunate to have the services of Ian Hutton, author of several books on the island, who showed us many interesting phenomena related to the reef, the vegetation and the birds.

While relatively few species of birds are seen on Lord Howe, some of them comprise numerous individuals. The seabirds, in particular, made for spectacular viewing and we rapidly became fans of Red-tailed-Tropicbirds, Sooty Terns, White Terns, Black-winged Petrels, Common and Black Noddies and Masked Boobies. Hundreds of Fleshy-footed Shearwaters flew into their nests each evening, creating a din in the forest. Green-winged Pigeons were forever scurrying away from advancing feet or bicycle tyres. Some excellent sightings of the famous woodhen were also to be had.

Organisation of the tour was both good-humoured and competent and every effort was made to take us to points of maximum interest.

While we would hesitate to recommend Lord Howe as a destination for those with young children, it is a marvellous place for the nature lover who can choose activities ranging from the most relaxed to the most strenuous. For birdwatchers it offers unhurried observation of some magnificent seabirds from indecently close quarters - except that the Providence Petrel winters on top of Mount Gower, but that will have to be the subject of a future contribution.

Philippa Hodgins and Adrian Ryan.

Wetlands may get new lease of life

WETLANDS in the Maitland area may be turned into regional environmental parks for wildlife and recreation if a submission to the NSW Minister for the Environment, Mr Moore, gets the nod.

The submission, from Maitland Landcare group, seeks funding for a study defining the wetland boundaries, a concept plan for their development as parks and a land acquisition strategy.

If the Government approves the funding required to conduct the study, the six neglected wetlands may get a new lease of life.

The wetlands are in Telarah, Wentworth, Bolwarra, Woodberry/Thornton, Oakhampton and around Four Mile Creek from Morpeth to Ashtonfield.

It was proposed that if the State Government funded the initial studies and land acquisition program, the rehabilitation of the wet-

lands could be performed by community groups.

Potential existed to turn the areas into multi-purpose recreation parks incorporating horse, cycle and walking trails, bird observation points and playing fields.

Community groups, private business, the Hunter Catchment Management Trust and the National Soil Conservation program for the development would be asked for help and funding.

The president of Maitland Landcare, Ald Mark Maher, said Maitland's wetlands had suffered severe degradation caused by over-clearing of the natural environment.

He said the area's wetlands had been affected by the removal of original tree cover.

But, despite the degradation, the wetlands had remained a significant habitat for water birds and was frequented by migratory species from Japan.

In the submission, Maitland Landcare noted that since 1979 the Hunter Bird Observers Club had identified more than 140 species in the Bolwarra Wetlands alone.

Migratory waterfowl from Japan visited the wetlands and Australia was bound by an international agreement with Japan to preserve the habitat of water birds shared by the two nations.

The wetlands also provided a habitat for indigenous water birds.

Ald Maher said much of the land proposed to be turned into parks was already in public hands. This would lessen the need for a widespread and expensive land acquisition program.

Of the wetlands identified, the Morpeth/Four Mile Creek area was singled out as top priority. Most of the land belonged to the Hunter Water Corporation, had road and rail access, and was close to residential development.

THE MAY MEETING.

The May Clubnight was held on Wednesday 13th, the evening commenced with Bird Call and Judith Smith presented the Striped Honeyeater, this was followed by Bird of the Evening, the Large-tailed Nightjar was presented by Peter McLauchlan who based his talk on sightings at Julatten and Iron Range. Then the new segment of the Clubnight, a discussion on a previously chosen species. Many members contributed considerable information on the Spangled Drongo. The Main Feature was a talk on the Flying Behaviour and Mortality of major Waterbird Species, a paper commissioned by Pacific Power and given by Michael Murray, who is a Research Assistant at the Shortland Wetland Centre.

The following observations were recorded:-

Channel-billed Cuckoo - Tyrrell St. Newcastle.

Regent Honeyeater - Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve.

Black Bittern - Buttaba.

Mangrove Heron - Buttaba.

Additions to the April list:-

Black Bittern - Buttaba.

Mangrove Heron - Buttaba.

Rufous Night Heron - Buttaba.

Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo - Berowra.

Gang-Gang Cockatoo - Ellalong.

Mangrove Warbler - Stockton Sandspit.

Donation to the Library.

Margaret Pieske has very kindly donated a copy of "Birds of Lord Howe Island" by Ian Hutton. This is a very recent publication and is inscribed by the author, the book is more than a Field Guide, presenting much historical information about the island and its people and their use of birds etc.. Margaret is a former member of HBOC and has been a resident nursing sister on Lord Howe Island, she has now returned to NSW and is living in Sydney, we look forward to welcoming her back to Newcastle in the near future.

From the Desk of the Secretary.

Currently I hold pamphlets for the following birdwatching holidays and venues:-

Eyre Bird Observatory, West.Aust; Barren Grounds Bird Observatory, NSW; Gipsy Point Lodge, Vic; Cassowary House, Kuranda, FNQ; G.Beruldsen (Cape York, Iron Range); Emu Tours (in assoc. with RAOU) -Australia and Africa; and Northern Territory Tourist Commission (Aboriginal tours).

There is insufficient space for detail in the Newsletter so copies of these pamphlets are available from me at Club Nights or by telephone (547118).

ATLAS CAMP AT "ROCKLEY" -Via MURRURUNDI 14/16th April 1992

The planned camp date proved to be unpopular, due no doubt to the proximity of Easter, but nevertheless five Atlassers took the opportunity to spend a few nights en route to "Carlton".

We camped in the shadow of the Wallabadah Rock - an imposing presence, to say the least, with the gurgling Temi Creek at our front door. The weather was fine, clear and mild and there was evidence of some rain just prior to our stay. However, the country is really stressed, and has not yet recovered from the prolonged drought conditions.

We recorded a total of 61 species for the camp, which did not seem to reflect the perceived potential of the property, and a further visit, perhaps in Springtime would be well warranted. We did enjoy the interaction of Wedge-tailed Eagles (of which there were many) and Peregrine Falcons, vying for supremacy of the air-space around the top of the rock, and the nightly choral contribution of a large flock of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos as they settled down for the night close to our camp. By contrast, the morning's departure went entirely unnoticed, and unsung.

ATLAS CAMP AT WHITE BOX CLEARING -GOULBURN RIVER N.P. -9/10 May '92

Only three starters at this outing, which took place in delightful surroundings, matching the almost perfect Autumn weather.

White Box, a former logging camp, is lightly-timbered woodland, with Ironbark and White Box, Grey Gum, some heathland, and Casuarina. Sixty-eight species were recorded for the week-end, with highlights being eleven species of Honeyeaters, Weebills nesting rather late, but with young in the nest, Glossy-black Cockatoos, Chestnut-rumped Hylacola, Emus, who evidently checked out our camp closely during the night, and the presence of a flock of 20 -30 Turquoise Parrots.

Sue Hamonet

East becomes west, until a little bird gives the game away

THOSE eagle-eyed Hunter Valley TV addicts have done it again! But pity the poor moviemaker, as 'getting things right' must be a nightmare these days. Just after midnight last Monday, Newcastle's replica steamship the *William the Fourth* briefly hove into view on a TV historical epic as a Government gunship was trying to stop Irish rebels escaping to freedom at sea off Western Australia in 1876. Well, those scenes were mainly filmed off Kiama, near Wollongong, and a recent *Topics* column on the subject solved a problem for Mrs Sue

Hamonet, of Speers Point. You see, Sue's a birdwatcher and she knew it wasn't the Indian Ocean off Western Australia simply because the movie's soundtrack gave it away!

'YOU could hear the Eastern Whipbird in the background and that's in NSW,' Sue said in a gently chiding tone. 'It's annoying for birdwatchers when something like that's not right, not authentic. Sometimes movies just seem to throw in a birdcall for any reason. But it perturbs us bird-

watchers.' The inappropriate sound of the *Psophodes olivaceus* whipbird threw Sue, but long ago she was also peeved when she watched an episode of TV's *Patrol Boat* (much of which was filmed around the Hawkesbury River). 'One episode was set in the Northern Territory's Gulf Country but behind the sound of men rowing a whaleboat was a lyrebird,' she said. 'That's only found as far north as the coastal border ranges.' Moviemakers out there, take note.

Newcastle Herald - 3rd February, 1992.

EXCURSION TO DORA CREEK

Sunday, 24th May, dawned bright and sunny - a change after the cold winds and pouring rain of the day before. A party of 10 members met at the car park at Dora Creek and walked along the waterfront reserve towards the mouth of the creek.

Immediately we noticed a number of water birds: a royal spoonbill and some seagulls were feeding on the other bank, and wood ducks, black ducks, and chestnut teal were swimming in the creek. Later we noticed some mallards and a few grey teal. There were plenty of cormorants of all kinds - black, little black, pied and little pied. The little black cormorants were in large flocks of up to a hundred, sometimes perched in trees, at other times wheeling round overhead.

Other water birds and waders included several ibis, white-faced herons, a mangrove heron, large egrets, little egrets, a cattle egret, pied stilts, Caspian terns with their bright red bills, two flocks of black swans, and of course the pelicans - sometimes fishing, sometimes taking off, sometimes soaring round overhead. One darter was seen perched on the other side of the creek, and masked plovers made themselves obvious everywhere with their screeching.

In the trees were noisy miners, magpies, currawongs, magpie-larks, willie wagtails, a grey butcher-bird, and one grey fantail. Crested pigeons were commonly seen perched on electric wiring, and in the distance we could see a flock of domestic pigeons wheeling round. The white-faced pigeons seen in a paper-bark tree were a first for many members, as were also the bar-shouldered doves, one of which obliged us by sitting on a clothes line near the far end of our walk. On the way back we saw a flock of common mynahs and a starling, as well as a good view of a pair of black-faced cuckoo-shrikes. A few kookaburras were seen, and unexpectedly a pair of sacred kingfishers.

Several galahs were sighted feeding on the nuts on a maple (or plane?) tree. Eastern rosellas were seen several times, and there was one sighting of rainbow lorikeets.

The raptors were represented by a whistling kite, and small birds by a few yellow thornbills and a family of blue wrens; the latter were feeding among the mangrove roots, which is not where one usually expects to see them.

Birds which were heard but not seen included a whip-bird, a grey shrike-thrush, a fan-tailed cuckoo, a little wattle-bird, and a yellow-faced honeyeater. Altogether we either saw or heard more than fifty birds; a good count for an area where we were always close to houses.

Don Halliday

Number of species recorded 58.

Myuna Bay.

After morning tea 8 members proceeded to Myuna Bay, where the most interesting observations were a Shining Bronze-cuckoo and the nest of a Whistling Kite, with one adult feeding young. The adult was seen leaving the nest with the remains of a fish in its talons. 11 species were recorded giving a total for the morning of 69.

COMING EVENTS.

<u>Sunday 21 June.</u>	<u>Field Day:</u> <u>Meet:</u> <u>Contact:</u>	Walka/Morpeth/Tenanbit. MacDonalds, <u>Greenhills Shopping Centre</u> - 7.30 a.m. Peter McLauchlan - 333224.
<u>Weekend 4/5 July.</u>	<u>Atlas Outing:</u> <u>Contact:</u>	Wallingat State Forest. Sue Hamonet - 581023.
<u>Wednesday 8 July.</u>	<u>Clubnight:</u> <u>Main Feature:</u> <u>Discussion:</u>	Shortland Wetland Centre - 7.30. Gary Weber - a World famous Bird Photographer - Slides. Superb Lyrebird.
<u>Sunday 19 July.</u>	<u>Field Day:</u> <u>Meet:</u> <u>Contact:</u>	Taronga Park Zoo, Sydney. Inside top entrance of Zoo - 1 p.m. For a look behind the scenes. Alan Stuart - 528569.
		Alan needs some indication of numbers, please ring him if possible members to make their own way to Zoo - the Zoolink ticket from the SRA is worth considering.
<u>Weekend 8/9 August.</u>	<u>Atlas Outing:</u> <u>Contact:</u>	Bretti. Sue Hamonet - 581023.
<u>Wednesday 12 August.</u>	<u>Clubnight:</u> <u>Main Feature:</u> <u>Discussion:</u>	Shortland Wetland Centre - 7.30. Ann Hatton - Birds of Gt. Britain. Figbird.
<u>Sunday 23 August.</u>	<u>Field Day:</u> <u>Meet:</u> <u>Contact:</u>	Point Wolstonecraft/Munmorah. Coles Car Park, Swansea - 7.30 am.* Diane Rogers - 761686. *alternate meeting place - entrance to Munmorah SRA at 7.45 am.

Please note - there is an entrance fee to Munmorah SRA

The above information whilst as accurate as possible should be checked nearer to Field Days etc., with the contact person. An update of activities will be given at Clubnights.

Members are reminded of the distinction between Atlas and Field trips. All members are welcome to both categories of outings, however the Field Day may be the best for beginners, in that it usually consists of a larger group and a venue closer to Newcastle. Experienced members are available to assist the less experienced. Relative beginners may also find the Atlas outings interesting but numbers will be fewer and experienced 'guidance' less likely.

Discussion BirDs. This is a new segment of the Clubnight agenda. Members are invited to contribute their personal comments, observations and experiences with the designated bird. We hope to distil some of the collective HBOC wisdom on specific birds - questions are also welcome.

Contributions from members of HBOC are welcome and the deadline for the August/September newsletter is 30th July.

The statements and opinions expressed in this newsletter are the responsibility of the authors concerned.

The HBOC relies on the reputation and integrity of advertisers for the quality and nature of their products and services.

Editor.

Why?

To see the Chestnut-breasted Whiteface or the Glibber Chet, or any of the other special arid region birds you would go to the Strzelecki in late winter.

Why? The countryside is at its best regenerating with the winter rains and before the heat parches the flora. And this is the nesting season there when the birds are most active.

To see the Red-fored Whistler or the Mallee Emu-uren or any of the other special Mallee birds you would go to the Little Desert in spring.

Why? Again this is the time of flora regeneration after the winter rains and before the heat makes the Mallee uncomfortable. Again this is the nesting season when the birds are most active.

If you want to look for birds in the alpine country you would go in the early summer.

Why? Earlier than that there is too much snow around and by the end of summer most of the birds have finished their breeding cycle and are thus more difficult to find.

To see the Red-bellied Pitta, the Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo, the Yellow-legged Flycatcher, and all of those other special Cape York birds you go in January.

Why? Its 'spring time' for the flora. Lush and green with the Cape York lillies and other wild flowers in full bloom.

And its 'spring time' and nesting time for the birds, the period of greatest activity.

And with the arrival of the first showers leading up to the wet season, (February/March) the migrants arrive to breed.

And when it rains it usually rains at night.

And its NOT HOT, (the cloud cover keeps the temperature down), rarely over 30°C; cooler than many summer days in Melbourne. The hot months are the late dry season months of October to December.

Earlier than January and its too hot and dry and everything is listless and hard to find.

Later than January and it gets a little wet underfoot.

And - the top of the Cape is outside the cyclone region.

CAPE YORK BIRD WEEK

JANUARY 1993

If you want to see the best of the birds on Cape York and be comfortable, January and Cape York Bird Week is the time to go.

This year Cape York Bird Week will include a stopover at Iron Range so you won't miss out on the Eclectus Parrot, Red-cheked Parrot, Fig Parrot, Black-winged Monarch and Green-backed Honeyeater.

A PELAGIC trip into the CORAL SEA.

July 1992

CAPE YORK TRAVERSE

JUNE/JULY 1992

Cairns to Lakefield National Park via Cooktown, then across the Cape to the west coast, then back to Chillago, Mt Surprise and the Atherton Tableland.

Perhaps 250 species of birds, a wide variety of habitats plus the Undara Lava Tube Caves.

IRON RANGE

November 1992

Fly-in/Fly-out
fully accommodated
(or drive out and see the Golden-shouldered Parrot)

For information write:
phone (07) 374 1253

Gordon Beruldsen,
Free as a Bird Holidays,
PO Box 387, KENMORE QLD
4069

AN EVENING WITH BILL ODDIE

All RAOU members, families and friends are invited to hear English comedian Bill Oddie, best known as a star of *The Goodies*, talk about his birdwatching adventures around the world.

Bill is a man of many talents. Apart from *The Goodies*, he has appeared in many hours of TV and radio comedy, composed half a dozen top-ten hits, presented fairly serious TV programs, provided silly voices for many commercials and even sung for the English National Opera!

However, birdwatching remains Bill's great passion and his hobby has taken him all over the world - from Thailand to New Guinea and East Africa to Eire. He has written birdwatching and travel articles for magazines, usually illustrated with his own photos, written books on birdwatching (including the notorious Little Black Bird Book) and taken part in Twitchathons in Kenya, Hong Kong, the USA and Australia.

WHEN: Thursday 18 June 7:30 PM

WHERE: Northern Function Room; Sydney Town Hall

COST: \$8 RAOU members, \$10 non-members (RAOU members are invited to supper afterwards)

PLEASE NOTE THAT SEATING IS STRICTLY LIMITED AND ENTRY IS BY BOOKING ONLY