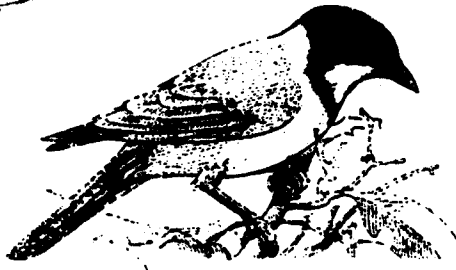


Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc.

P.O. Box 24, New Lambton, N.S.W. 2305
Telephone: (049) 52 8569



President:
Secretary:
Newsletter Editor:

Peter McLauchlan.
Peter Phillips.
Rosemary Waymark.

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 OCTOBER MEETING

The October Clubnight was held on Wednesday the 13th. For the Bird Call Alan Stuart presented the Tawny Grassbird, and Tom Clarke presented the Southern Emu-wren for the Bird of the Evening. The main feature was an interesting talk by Peter West from R.A.O.U. He spoke about a conservation programme aimed at saving and enlarging suitable habitat for the Regent Honeyeater within the Capertee Valley, near Rylstone.

Observation reports from October meeting

Sep. 27	Rufous Night Heron	1	Blackbutt Reserve	A. Stuart
Sep. 29	Mangrove Warbler		Fennell Bay	P.Lightfoot
" 29	Striped Honeyeater		" "	"
Oct. 29	Regent Bowerbird	4	New Lambton Hts.	"
" 1-13	Scarlet Honeyeater		" " "	"
" 1-13	Spangled Drongo	5	" " "	"
Oct. 1	Y.T.B.Cockatoo	8	Shortland Wetland Centre	W.Barden
" 1	Pallid Cuckoo	2	" " "	"
" 13	Dollarbird	2	" " "	"
Oct. 7	Emerald Dove	2	Blackbutt Reserve	G.Allbrecht
"	Spangled Drongo	5	New Lambton Hts.	"
Oct. 7	Hardhead	4	S.W.C.	M.Walker
" 7	Glossy Ibis	1	"	"
" 7	Wander.Whistle Duck	2	" [Bramble's pond]	"
Oct. 1	Spangled Drongo	2	Newcastle City	R. Parker
" 13	Ruddy Turnstone	8	N'cle Ocean Baths	"
" 13	Sooty Oystercatcher	2	" " "	"
Oct. 10	Regent Bowerbird	1	New Lambton Hts.	F. Thomson
Oct. 13	Variegated Wren	2	Belmont South	J.Cockerell
Oct. 13	White-head. Pigeon	3	Edgeworth	G.O'Connor
Oct. 13	Ruddy Turnstone	24	Speers Point	R.Walker
Oct. 13	Dollarbird	3	Buttaba	R.Waymark

NEW MEMBERS

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

Clive Meadows	Dee Why
Stewart and Graham Daish	Medowie
Rhonda and Roger Osborn	Raworth

Field Outing to Hawks Nest on 19th September, 1993.

On a pleasant morning, members of H.B.O.C. met with local environmentalists at Hawks Nest. The highlight of the morning was a visit to an Osprey nest just north of town in a big, old, dead tree. The Ospreys have been observed for maybe two years working on the nest but so far have failed to take up the challenge of nesting. Last year the female did sit for about two weeks before coming off the nest. No eggs seem to have been laid. It was suggested that the pair may be immature and working up to it.

A blue-tongued lizard made Imran's day (Imran is visiting Australia) and two paralysis ticks enlivened the morning. Habitats visited included heathlands (lovely wildflowers), open woodlands, sand dunes, beachfront, estuarine mudflats and marshlands, allowing good variety in bird life. We saw Little Wattle-birds, Red Wattle-birds and Olive-backed Orioles in good numbers among the timber. On the mudflats of Witts Island among other waders we spotted a solitary Whimbrel. Sightings of Tawny Grassbird and White-headed Pigeon rounded off the day. Altogether we spotted 93 species.

Max Blanch

Outing to Bayswater Power Station.

October 17 1993

Club members were invited by Jack Baker to participate in a survey of the birds at the power station for the day. Jack has been commissioned to do a series of such surveys over the period of one year which will lead to a report and management recommendation.

A group of nine of us drove in two vehicles over the property stopping at intervals to count the birds. A total of about sixty-five species was seen including over fifty Great-crested Grebes which were on one of the deep lakes created by the power station. Several raptors were seen and identified, for instance, a Peregrine, Brown Falcons, a Brown Goshawk, 2 Wedge-tailed Eagles, many Kestrels and Jack showed us the nest of a White-breasted Sea-Eagle with a chick. Other highlights were Striped Honeyeaters and two Red-kneed Dotterels. I would like to thank Jack for the invitation on behalf of the club. We had a most interesting day.

A. Lindsey

The committee and members of the H.B.O.C. would like to thank the following newspapers, radio and TV stations for publicising, at no charge, the Club meetings during the year:-

MAITLAND HERALD
LAKE MACQUARIE NEWS
THE POST
THE ADVERTISER
NEWCASTLE STAR
STOCKTON MESSENGER
NEWCASTLE NEWSPAPERS PTY. LTD.

RADIO 2NC
RADIO 2HD
RADIO 2KO
RADIO 2NUR FM
RADIO 2NX

NBN CHANNEL 3
NRTV
PRIME TELEVISION

Field Outing to Cooranbong. 24th October.

Dora Creek at Cooranbong follows a stand of bushland on one side and close to the Seventh Day Adventist retirement village. The other side of the Creek is generally open farm/grazing land. Our observations were made from a walking track that meanders along the creek bank. The weather conditions were good and 15 members attended the morning session. In all 54 species were seen and heard and included the Rainbow Bee-eater, Crested Tern, Black-faced Monarch, Lewin's Honeyeater.

Flocks recorded were of Grey Fantail, White-winged Chough, Red-browed Firetail, Large-billed Scrubwren, Dollarbird, and Brown Gerygone. The Bell Miner was the most predominant species and it was a delight to hear their constant call. Close to the track and easy to observe was an excellent example of a Brown Gerygone nest with its tiny verandah roof. Breeding behavior was shown by the Large-billed Scrubwren, Brown Gerygone, Australian Magpie, Eastern Yellow Robin and White-winged Chough.

Birds heard were Sacred Kingfisher, Rufous Whistler, Spotted and Striated Pardalotes, Scarlet Honeyeater and Shining Bronze-Cuckoo.

Thanks to George Southwell who lives in the Adventist village and was most helpful with his local and bird knowledge.

Thanks must also be expressed to the Seventh Day Adventist Church for allowing access to their land.

Eight of the party went on to a site off Owens Road, Cooranbong where another 5 species were seen bringing an overall total of 59.

Observations of a non-bird nature were River Dragons sunning themselves, a possum having a good look at us from his man-made nest, and unfortunately a small herd of cattle free-range grazing in the bush near the creek.

A very pleasant day and good observing was enjoyed by all present.

Keith and Margaret Woods.

News Years Day Holiday Garden Bird Count.

The Garden Bird Count will take place on the New Years Day holiday of 1994. Because of fluctuations of timing, State by State, of the old Australia Day, the Wild Life Preservation Society has decided to change the day to one which is easy to remember.

The Society asks any interested person to walk around their garden between 7am and 8am, or any single hour between dawn and dark, recording not only the kinds of birds they see or hear, but also the numbers which are present or fly over during that time. If a bird cannot be identified, a description will allow WLPS to do this.

The Society is interested in lists only from people living in urban areas, no matter how large or small their town.

Post your list with your address and postcode to:-

WLPS of Australia, Box 3428 GPO, Sydney, NSW 2001.

Enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope if you would like to know the results of the 1994 Bird Count.

Facts obtained will help the WLPS study of urban birdlife.

Contributions from members of the HBOC to the newsletter are welcome and the deadline for the February/march 1994 newsletter is the 26th January.

THE NOVEMBER MEETING

The November Clubnight was held on Wednesday the 10th. The evening commenced with Bird Call, Ann Lindsey presenting the Regent Honeyeater, followed by Jim Perry discussing the Grey Goshawk for the Bird of the Evening. The main feature was an illustrated talk by club members, Bev and David Kibble, on birds seen in Bali and Java during their recent holiday.

Proceeds from the sale of native plants by Paddy Lightfoot at a recent meeting will enable the Club to donate a bird bath to the Wetland Centre.

Congratulations to our two teams in the 1993 Twitchathon for winning their respective categories!

Observations from November meeting

Oct.29	Brush Bronzewing	1	Avabakal N.R.	J.Perry
" 30	Glossy Black C'atoo	3	Woodberry	J.Smith
" 2	Eastern Spinebill	1	Belmont Sth.	J.Cockerell
" 5	Dollarbird	2	" "	"
" 7	White-eared H/E.	1	Edgeworth	G.O'Connor
" 9	White-headed Pigeon	2	"	"
" 9	Rufous Night Heron	2	Belmont Sth.	J.Cockerell
" 9	Channel-bill.Cuckoo	5	Cardiff North	T.Douglass
" 9	Pacific Baza	1	Cardiff	P.Phillips
" 9/10	Spangled Drongo	2	Belmont Sth.	J.Cockerell
" 10	Channel-bill.Cuckoo	2	The Junction	M.Blanch
Oct.30	Spotted Harrier	1	Miller's Forest	D.Geering

The Spotted Harrier sighted at Miller's Forest is a Category 3 bird, and will therefore require the filing of an unusual record report. This sighting is therefore unconfirmed at this point of time.

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Project Currawong - the results

Chris J. Chafer

In July 1993 the first project organised by the combined bird clubs of NSW & ACT committee (now functioning under the acronym BIGNet - Bird Interest Groups Network) was conducted. This project was aimed at gathering a basic data set on the Pied Currawong in NSW/ ACT, and using the results to gauge peoples enthusiasm for participating in such broad scale data collection. The preliminary results of the project are presented here. More formal analysis will appear elsewhere in due course.

As a reminder of the projects' aims; interested birdo's were asked to census an area of 100 m² from a particular location and record a number of variables. These included the number of birds, a general weather measure, a broad habitat measure and the birds' behaviour. The study was conducted over nine days, 17 to 25 July, and provides a snapshot of the Currawongs whereabouts during that time.

A total of 1892 Pied Currawongs were recorded from 368 locations by 124 observers. This equates 5.14 ± 0.58 SE currawongs per location. Predictably, the majority of records come from the Newcastle - Sydney - Wollongong area where most NSW birdo's live. Nevertheless there was a good scatter of observations from throughout the eastern half of NSW. The only regions not represented were the alpine area, the Riverina and the far north coast.

As can be observed from the graph (Figure 1) below 88% of observations were for less than 10 individuals per site, the only large congregations coming from near Bilpin, Armidale and Dorrigo (all montane regions). One comment worth noting from the returns was that many people (particularly on the coast) had apparently observed large numbers of Currawongs one to five weeks before the census period. This suggests that some autumn/early winter flocking may occur.

On to the finer points of the analysis. There was no statistically significant difference between weather and habitat in regard to the number of birds being observed. Nor was there any significance difference in the number of birds being recorded from any habitat on any day or in any weather condition. There was a slight difference in the number of people collecting data in relation to the day of the week, with week end days preferred marginally to week days. More urban areas were censused (208) compared to rural (75) and natural bush (85). Fine weather contributed to many counts (241) though overcast (95) and rainy (32) periods did not deter everyone.

Birds were recorded from all altitudes, as far west as Coonabarabran and from a wide range of micro-environments; garbage tips, forests, backyards, rocky headlands, playing fields and farms. Correctness was high with 95% of returns completed accurately and 71 % of returns were from women!

In terms of behaviour, there was little variability between birds observed flying or perched, whilst chasing other Currawongs appears to be a common pastime within the species. Food records vindicate their omnivorous reputation, with no particular preference from the birds observed.

To conclude, the BIGNet committee feel that it was a worthwhile exercise at obtaining a collective and useful data set from throughout the NSW/ACT area. To all those people who took part in this initial project I thank you on behalf of the BIGNet committee for your participation. Special thanks to John Duranti for organising a performer that I didn't think of, and to all the club newsletter editors for assisting in this cooperative project.

At the time of writing, the 5th BIGNet committee meeting has endorsed a follow up Currawong survey to be conducted in March 1994. Details of this event will appear early in the new year.

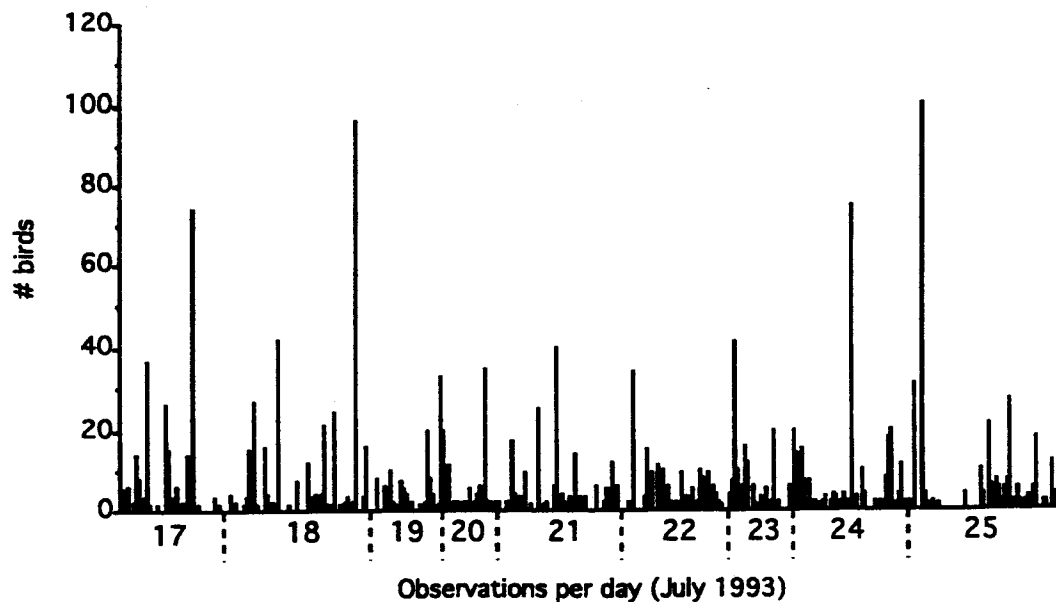


Figure 1. A histogram of the 368 censuses compiled during the study period. Data are separated into observations per day and show the number of Pied Currawongs recorded from each site. No bar indicates 0 birds.

Two teams from the Hunter Bird Observers' Club entered the Twitchathon for 1993. This is the first year the club has entered this great bird race which started in 1984 with only Victorian teams taking part. There are three categories, the Twenty-Four Hour, the Champagne and the Novelty. The aim of each one is the same, that is to see as many birds as possible within the rules of the category. Teams are expected to get sponsorship from people who promise so much per bird. The money will go to several projects, but in particular this year to the Regent Honeyeater habitat project. Our teams have approximately \$600 pledged from their sponsors. Team members were D. Geering, P. McLauchlan, J. Warner and A. Lindsey in the Twenty-Four Hour Race and S. Owen, R. Fox and T. Clarke in the Champagne section. The great news is that both of our teams won with 182 and 93 species respectively.

For the Twenty-Four Hour team the race started at 4.00pm at Attunga State Forest near Tamworth where our best species was Turquoise Parrot. We drove down over the Dividing Range during the night to Boorgana Nature Reserve near Comboyne where we had a few hours sleep. This excellent area produced many rainforest species including Logrunners, Wompoo Pigeons, Yellow-throated Scrubwrens. On to Laurieton for Osprey and Brahminy Kites and Crowdy Bay National Park to see Emu-wrens and Red-backed Wrens. At Harrington the Little Terns were nesting on a sand bank across the river and Red-capped Dotterels were running around on the tide line. We realized that we were starting to run short of time as we flew down the highway (but not speeding) to the Hunter and home territory for the waders and ducks which were "twitched" in great haste.

We arrived at the Wetlands Centre a few minutes before 5.00pm to join other teams who had finished there. After the official count some members were joined by their families for a barbecue and post mortem. I think I can say on behalf of other members of the teams that we all had a fantastically exciting weekend or day and I recommend the Twitchathon to other members of the club. Our thanks to David Geering who organised the Race for our area, to Andrew Isles Bookshop for donating the book prizes and to the RAOU for other prizes and organising the event as a whole.

A. Lindsey

How to win without really trying.

A Saturday evening at Blackbutt Reserve and a leisurely Sunday of birdwatching at some other notable spots around town produced a winning effort by Twitchathon champions the **Belford Babblers**. The Twitchathon I refer to was of course that event staged by the RAOU to raise money to help in the conservation of a declining species, the **Regent Honeyeater**. The idea was to get sponsors to pledge an amount of money for every species identified by your team on the day. The Belford Babblers by the way consisted of Sue Owen, Richard Fox and Tom Clarke.

Now before you get any ideas of mad tickers racing around like maniacs I would like to point out that the Babblers were competing (?) in the champagne teams section of the Twitchathon, where staying calm and relaxed is the name of the game. In fact, and according to the rules, tea breaks and lunch were spent seated in fold up chairs enjoying the tranquility of the bush and engaging in absolutely no birdwatching at all. The lunchtime conversation covered such diverse topics as the hazards of ill conceived canoe trips to the insidious invasion of computers into our daily lives.

Now that I think about it, the exercise was just like an extended bird club field day and I would feel that most bird watchers would be well and truly up to it. Thoughts of actually winning the contest were hardly entered into. The idea that by spending a whole day bird watching was in some way helping the Regent Honeyeater was enough to motivate the team; the easiest task to my mind. Perhaps gathering the sponsor's money will be the challenge.

Tom Clarke



BARREN GROUNDS BIRD OBSERVATORY

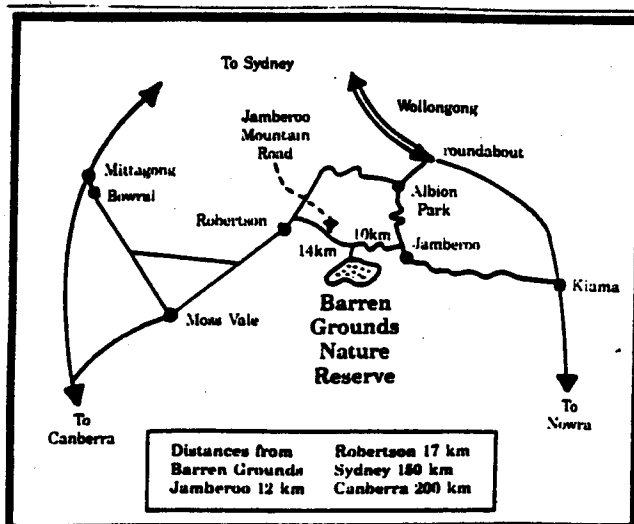
PO Box 3, Jamberoo NSW 2533
Phone: (042) 360195

Ground Parrots & Christmas Bells

30 Dec.- 2 Jan.94 2dys \$140, 3dys \$180
(RAOU 2dys \$130, 3dys \$165)
Leaders: Jenni & Patrick.

Birding for Business.

21-23 Jan.94 \$140 (RAOU \$130)
Leader: Richard Jordan.



For details of other holidays at Barren Grounds in 1994 see the Secretary, Peter Phillips, who has pamphlets.

Annual General Meeting.

Notice is given of the Annual General Meeting of Hunter Bird Observers Club Incorporated to be held at the Shortland Wetlands Centre on 9th February 1994 commencing 7.30pm.

Business of the Meeting:

- . Confirmation of minutes of 1993 AGM
- . Annual Report (Inc. Financial Report)
- . Election of Office Bearers (see separate notice)
- . Filling of other positions.
- . General Business

The AGM will be followed by the February Club Night.

Peter Phillips. Public Officer

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Nominations are called for the following positions for 1994:

President.

Vice President.

Secretary

Treasurer.

Four (4) Ordinary members of the management committee.

Nominations shall be made in writing and signed by two members of the Club and accompanied by the written consent of the candidate, Nominations shall be delivered to the Secretary by 2/2/94.

If insufficient nominations are received the candidates nominated shall be deemed to be elected. Further nominations shall then be received at the AGM.

Peter Phillips. Public Officer.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Phone No.....

Please Tick the appropriate box:-

- Family \$15
- Single \$13
- Junior \$2

Fees are due on the 1st January 1994 and may be paid at Club nights or by mail to the Hon.Treasurer. PO Box 24, New Lambton, NSW 2305. Please return this completed form with your renewal, whether renewing in person or by mail.

cut here.....

FORM OF APPOINTMENT OF PROXY

Hunter Bird Observers Club Incorporated.

(incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act 1984)

I,.....(full name)

of.....(address)

being a member of the Hunter Bird Observers Club Incorporated

hereby appoint(full name of proxy)

of.....(address)

being a member of that Club, as my proxy to vote for me on my behalf at the general meeting of the Club to be held on the 9th February, 1994 and at any adjournment of that meeting.

Signature of member.....

Date.....