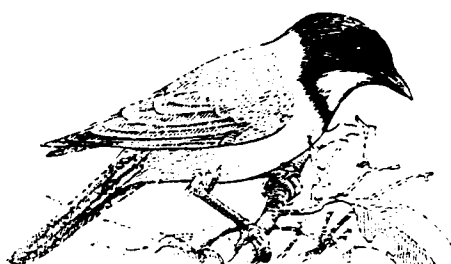


NEWSLETTER



Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc.

P.O. Box 24, New Lambton, N.S.W. 2305

Telephone: (049) 52 8569

President:
Secretary:
Newsletter Editor:

Ann Lindsey
Peter Phillips
Tom Clarke

The aims of the club are:

To encourage and further the study and conservation of Australian birds and their habitat.

To encourage bird observing as a leisure time activity.

● October Club Night

Oystercatcher obsession reveals grounds for concern.

Our October club night main feature was a presentation by HBOC member Mike Newman on the Pied Oystercatcher. Mike has just recently moved to Newcastle from Tasmania where he studied Pied Oystercatchers for about 16 years. His long term study project has enabled Mike to observe much of the life of this bird as well as aspects of behaviour both as individuals and as members of a family. The study is being continued by others now that Mike's work commitments have brought him to our area. Mike describes his interest in oystercatchers as a bit more than fascination; more like an obsession!

The Pied Oystercatcher can be found on beaches and estuaries anywhere around the Australian coast but they are more common in Tasmania. Mike's studies were mainly along the fragmented south east coastline with its many bays and inlets with Mortimer Bay being the main study site.

In that region an estimated 1500 birds exist including 250 breeding pairs. The population is described as fairly stable but aging and it is of concern to hear that the breeding successes remain very low. A replacement rate of 0.27 per pair per year suggests that a catastrophic crash in numbers could happen if the pressures of beach usage by people in vehicles etc are not well managed. The Pied Oystercatcher lays its eggs in a scrape well above the high water mark and it is the traffic in these areas of the beaches that require strict control.

Mike described some of the study methods which included banding and every year about 25-50 new birds are colour banded. Being able to

To all HBOC members and their families

We Wish You A Merry Christmas And A Happy New Year

and of course

Happy Bird Watching for 1995

recognise individuals from colour combinations is essential for field observations and Mike has been able to show that these birds are very faithful to nest sites. Other interesting observations of individuals and their relationships with each other make *Days of Our Lives* look like kindergarten stuff.

In the hand, Mike has determined some aging and sexing criteria. Aging can be ascertained by eye colouration which changes as the bird develops. While the two sexes are identical for most birdwatchers, Mike has found that the females bill can be larger than the males and have a pointed shape. The male's chisel shaped bill is shorter.

Our *Bird Call* segment proved to be a total mystery to most and a continued frustration to Peter MacLauchlan. At a recent camp at Badger Grounds, Peter recorded a night time mystery call best described as an "oom oom". A process of

elimination discounted Tawny Frogmouth and perhaps Common Bronzewing. Best solution on the night was the suggested Painted Button-quail but no one is absolutely certain.

Bird of the Evening was presented by Doug Biddle and the subject was the Willie Wagtail. Doug has recently rediscovered this adorable little fellow when a Japanese exchange student staying at Doug's place found it very attractive. Efforts by Doug to "show off" other more splendid examples of our birdlife impressed his friend but the memories of that energetic black and white performer are still mentioned in correspondence from Japan.

Doug has since that time found 20 pairs between Paterson and Woodville along the Paterson River. Willie Wagtails are found almost anywhere in Australia but nesting is more often than not carried out near water. Nest building is a busy time for these birds and quite often a Willie Wagtails nest can be found in the same tree as the nest of an Australian Magpie-lark

Crystal Creek Rainforest Retreat.

Breakfast with Wompoo Pigeons, Happy Hour with Brown Cuckoo-doves - sounds like paradise and it is!!

Caryl and I spent a marvellous couple of days at Crystal Creek during our holidays in October.

Ralph Kraemer is an ex Novocastrian and was for some years President of the Newcastle Branch of National Parks Association. In 1988 he and his partner, Judy, purchased a 262 acre property, bounded on three sides by the Numinbah Nature Reserve, under Mount Springbrook and the rock escarpment which is the NSW and Queensland border. Through the old banana plantation runs Crystal Creek, a tributary of the Tweed. The nearest town is Murwillumbah. Apart from the weeds, mainly a massive infestation of Lantana, the natural vegetation comprises wet sclerophyll and subtropical rainforest. Since taking over the property Ralph and Judy have undertaken a programme of rainforest regeneration planting over 2000 rainforest trees in areas cleared of weeds. Many of these trees have been propagated in their nursery. They have constructed three walks with handy interpretive signs, "The Rainforest Walk", "Birds Dawdle", and a tough 2hrs "Lookout Walk".

Accommodation is in six cabins nestled away from each other in among the trees (and birds) and away from cars - your luggage is trolleyed in from the car park. Each cabin makes the most of the spectacular scenery using glass walls on the north east side complemented by a covered verandah the length of the building. From the comfort of this verandah we breakfasted with the birds, viewed a fierce afternoon tropical storm and watched the full moon come up over the mountains after a barbeque cooked on the spot. Guests can self cater or have full board provided.

The bird list for Upper Crystal Creek and the surrounding National Park lists over 200 species of which Ralph has sighted 140 in the Retreat. Some of the rarities on the bird list are, Red Goshawk, Black-breasted Button-quail, Superb Fruit-dove, Glossy Black-cockatoo, Double-eyed Fig-parrot, Sooty Owl, Marbled Frogmouth (seen the week before our visit), Albert's Lyrebird, Rufous Scrub-bird, Yellow-eyed Cuckoo-shrike, Olive Whistler and White-eared Monarch (around while we were there).

Having read this your twitching blood will certainly be aroused and I guess you will be bursting to stay there on the next trip north. I have brochures for anyone interested.

Paddy Lightfoot.

● Club Outings

Wambo Colliery land near Warkworth, 23-10-94.

Fifteen members gathered at McDonald's, Cessnock and set off for a pleasant day's birdwatching. Although there had been recent good falls of rain towards the coast it hadn't penetrated this far inland. The sky was clear promising a warm dry day, usually considered ideal conditions for birdwatching. We reached our destination and set off down a dirt road on foot. For a time it appeared that the only species to be found in this area was the White-eared Honeyeater, however a little further on, we started to come across some other species including Scarlet Honeyeater and Sacred Kingfisher.

We went through the fence and turned away from the road and headed across country. The area was very dry offering little comfort for birds or observers and if it was not for an abundance of mistletoe in bloom I feel that birds would have been even scarcer. At this stage we came across Brown-headed Honeyeater as well as Superb and Variegated Fairy-wren. Shortly after we located our first of several sightings of one of the birds of the day, the Red-capped Robin. It stayed in the general area until all of the stragglers caught up and proceeded to display all of its finer points to one and all. I believe that this sighting was a first for some members. Also in this area were Speckled Warblers.

We carried on further and sighted Rainbow Bee-eaters, and

as we were admiring the plumage of these birds, Sue Hamonet got us all excited upon hearing what she believed to be Painted Honeyeaters (a bird found previously in this location). We set off expectantly in the direction of the call, but then Sue admitted that she may have been fooled and that the call was probably that of the Leaden Flycatcher. Sure enough three Leaden Flycatchers flew overhead to seal our disappointment.

Back to our vehicles and down the road to Warkworth for lunch and afterwards a stroll down to the river and along the bank. This area added a few species to our list including White-plumed Honeyeater and Double-barred Finches and for a lucky few White-winged Trillers. We set off home with a total bird count in the high sixties.

Doug Biddle

Footnote.

On the way home Alan Stuart, Peter MacLauchlan and I stopped at a spot where Alan had regularly sighted Fuscous and Yellow-tufted Honeyeaters and promised them within ten minutes. The Fuscous did not show up, however, we had several good sightings of the Yellow-tufted, which was a personal highlight, being a first for me.

Letter From A Bird Camp Beginner

"Follow the map and the yellow HBOC signs to Badger Ground camping area, we'll all meet there on Friday 31st Sept, or Saturday 1st Oct". The instructions were clear and detailed, quite sufficient for all, except this pair of matured old chooks, who were waylaid at the third gate (an old farmhouse owned by members of the FOC). There were several unknown campers settled there, under the sign (FOC) but not one familiar face or call from HBOC. However, we were taken in, and bedded down at the enemy camp, but released very early on Saturday, when our captors realised how little we knew. Although the early morning wander did yield wonderful rewards...Red-capped and Hooded Robins in the disused orchard.

At last your beginners found their way to Badger Ground camping area, where we were greeted cheerfully by the eleven established adult campers and three children from HBOC (none of whom had had any difficulty finding the spot). What a beautiful area we were in; safe, spacious comfortable, and surrounded by bush-clad hills, granite boulders and sandstone cliffs.

The owners of Badger Ground are Mike and Sue Pridmore, whose generous hospitality allowed us to taste the wonderful beauty, peace and silence of their home. The Pridmore's circular home is interesting, all constructed with

golden coloured mud bricks and recycled timbers. the Pridmores maintain a flourishing native nursery, free of all manufactured chemicals and fertilisers. Water for house and nursery comes from a lovely natural spring. There has been a great effort made by these people to regenerate this formerly degraded area of farmland and to restore its natural beauty. The success of the replanting program is quite stunning. Their motto, "Think globally, plant locally", is effectively practised at Badger Ground.

Now, let me tell you of the main purpose of this weekend, the bird watching. It is difficult to know where to start. Overall, the group recorded a fine total of 78 species. There were some very exciting finds; a pair of Southern Whiteface feeding dependent young, Red-capped Robins, Eastern yellow Robins, one of whom unwittingly led Alan to her nest, Satin Bowerbirds, an Origma's nest in the loft of Mike's former house and a Superb Lyrebird's nest on a rock ledge. Many puzzles were raised, and some were solved. One of the puzzles was the strange yapping night call, which Peter tracked down to be, not an owl, but Sugar Gliders. Later on, a Tawny Frogmouth was spotted, perched silently nearby, observing the curious human activity below.

As novice participants in a HBOC camp, Ben and I had a great time. As a novice bird watcher, I learned a great deal from the more skilled group members who were unfailingly patient and encouraging. The whole experience was wonderful.

Pam Durie

● Queensland Holiday

Birds on the Townsville Common

On our recent trip to Townsville we spent a couple of hours on the Townville Common. This is an environmental park on the outskirts of the city. In the wet season it is full of swamps, and supports many kinds of waders and other water-loving birds. In the dry season, when we were there, the swamps had dried up and many of the birds had departed for more suitable surroundings. However, there were still some interesting birds to be seen there.

Perhaps the most obvious of these was a flock of Brolgas. We saw some twenty of them feeding on the water related vegetation. I imagine in the wet season there would be more. Occasionally one would stretch his wings, utter a harsh croak, and make a display.

Along with the Brolgas were some Banded Stilts, Sraw-necked Ibis, Yellow-billed Spoonbills, Masked Lapwings and a White-faced Heron. An Australian Bustard strolled majestically with his head held high. A group of Black-fronted Plovers foraged in the mud or flew around from one spot to another. Fairy Martins swooped around, hawking for insects, and a couple of Black Kites were busy with something they had evidently found on the ground. We also heard a Whistling Kite.

At the far end of the track was a hide from which water birds were supposed to be visible but they had all deserted the dried out mud. Only Fairy Martins and Welcome Swallows were left to clean up the insects.

The bushland adjacent to the swamps was also full of birdlife. We saw a Forest Kingfisher, familiar to us from our days in New Guinea. Other birds which reminded us of the tropics were the Peaceful Doves, Yellow-breasted Sunbirds, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrikes, Helmeted Friarbirds and White-breasted Woodswallows. Zebra and Double-barred Finches flitted around in the bushes while Brown and Yellow Honeyeaters sipped nectar from the flowers. More familiar to us from the south were the Australian Magpie-larks, Laughing Kookaburra, Bar-shouldered Doves and Leaden Flycatcher. We also caught sight of a Pheasant Coucal. Finally on the way out we caught sight of a Great Bowerbird sitting on an electric light pole. He is common enough in the north but is not usually seen south of Mackay.

Don Halliday

Papua New Guinea A Bird Watcher's Paradise.

Club night was held on Wednesday 9th November 1994 and for *Bird of the Evening* Tom Clarke shared his knowledge and experiences of the Golden-headed Cisticola, *Cisticola exilis*. The scientific name is well chosen as it literally means "I inhabit a plant". This is particularly apt as the Golden-headed Cisticola spends much of its life in the dense grasses around swamps and other wet places. Also the nest is built in the grass and incorporates live plants which are woven into the structure. This means that the nest is always green and extremely difficult to locate.

Previous to nest building the male of the species carries out territorial displays which comprise a spiralling flight to great heights above the proposed territory. The flight ends in a spectacular plummet into the grass. A male may carry on with this display all during the breeding effort, in fact while ever it is necessary to maintain the territory.

Both male and female birds are identical during the non-breeding part of the year but at the start of spring the male loses the streaked crown and moults into a golden crown, nape and rump. Also the male gets a shorter tail which it keeps until after the breeding season. Spring and summer are the best times to observe this bird as males can be found calling from the top of grass stems or shrubs in open fields. The females remain quite secretive as they move about at ground level.

Main feature for the evening was a favorite of many members, Win Filewood. Win spent about 13 years in and around New Guinea as a marine biologist in the sixties to mid seventies. He takes delight in letting you know how many species of fish and other sea creatures he has eaten during his time in the tropical waters north of Australia but admits only to eating domestic fowl when it comes to birds.

Win points out that the faunas of the New Guinea region and tropical north Australia have as much in common as they are different. Many birds like Brahminy Kite, Buff-banded Rail, Yellow-bellied Sunbird and Helmeted Friarbird are common to both. The Sacred Kingfisher, Spangled Drongo, Dollarbird and Rainbow Bee-eater are

common to both areas but are migratory in southern Australia.

And Win makes it clear that as far as the birds of New Guinea are concerned, Australia is just another offshore island to invade during a population explosion.

Of course a session of slides of New Guinea birds cannot be complete without a look at the Birds of Paradise. These birds are indeed spectacular and some of the performances they are capable of would be very special occasions for any bird watcher.

One bird Win showed us was the Magnificent Bird of Paradise. This bird has bright blue legs and has a great repertoire of dances and displays including an unbelievable "pulsating chest shield" display. Also worth a trip to New Guinea is the Raggiana Bird of Paradise. The feathers of this bird is commonly used by natives for head dress decoration.

Results from Membership Survey.

Earlier this year, members were asked to complete a questionnaire about aspects of HBOC services and facilities. To those of you who took the time to respond - thank you. There were 20 respondents - more than enough to get a good picture of people's thoughts. The survey results were discussed at the Committee meeting in November, and some actions were taken in consequence.

90-95% of respondents were satisfied with Newsletter content/delivery and with the general arrangements for the club nights (start time/ date, venue). Some comments were made about the amount of time spent on certain aspects of Club night proceedings, and consequently we have decided to revise somewhat the future format for the meetings. We also received a number of useful suggestions for future speakers and articles, and will try to follow up on these.

There were some suggestions for outings other than on a Sunday - in response, we will attempt to organise a few mid-week outings in 1995. We will also consider how it might be possible to arrange for borrowing from our various libraries (books, tapes, CDs, videos, slides) for

Membership Survey cont.

those members who cannot attend club nights. Most people were unaware that HBOC has a slide library (we do - over 500 slides).

70% of respondents thought that the Club should be more active in conservation matters, with the majority indicating willingness to help out in this. We welcome this feedback, and decided to establish a Conservation Sub-committee at the 1995 AGM to support the Conservation Officer in an expanded role. If you would be able to participate on this sub-committee, please tell Ann Lindsey (President) or John Moyse (Conservation Officer).

The Club has in fact been involved in matters to do with conservation for many years, usually in response to issues of the day. However, much of this work has been done "behind the scenes", with most members unaware. A further decision we made is to have information on conservation activities reported from time to time in future Newsletters.

Thanks again to those members who responded to the questionnaire. A similar survey will probably be repeated at some future date.

HBOC Committee

The Hunter Thickheads and the Great Bird Race of 1994.

Well we didn't win this year but we came close!

After 900km we had "ticked" well over 200 birds but only 199 of these were in the twenty-four hour period. We improved our last year's count by 17 species, half of which were waiting here at the Shortland Wetlands Centre for us when we raced in for the last half hour. To find birds waiting for us was essential, but to find people as well was especially heartwarming and the team thanks you all for coming to cheer us in. Many stayed for the BBQ after and patiently listened to us bragging about what we had seen.

We were the same team as last year; David Geering, Peter MacLauchlan and Jill Warner, a member of our club from Sydney. Our special thanks to David for purchasing a new car with springs for the occasion!

David has the most remarkable ears. A notable moment was when we stopped at about 10:30pm in the middle of the forest in the middle of nowhere quite at random. Before we were out of the car David has heard a Noisy Pitta having nightmares and away in the distance, a Masked Owl.

Our best birds were probably Red-capped Robin, Glossy Black Cockatoo and Australian Crake. Other fantastic sights were two Osprey fishing, an Australian Kestrel and Brahminy Kite gliding along the cliffs so that we were looking down on them, a male Regent

Bowerbird sitting in the open with the rolling hills and mountains in the background, flocks of Fuscous Honeyeaters bathing in puddles after a storm, Little Lorikeets sitting cuddled up along the branches of a flowering eucalypt, two hundred White-browed Woodswallows together with another male Regent Bowerbird just behind the coast in some remnant rainforest - a strange place for these inland woodswallows. And I could go on.

For us, the point of the Race is to raise money for a honeyeater which is thought to be in great distress through habitat loss. We had the most generous support of Alcan, many Club members and people in the community and I thank you for making it all worthwhile.

The results were:

1st - The Grey Toilet Thrushes from CBOC with 201 species.

2nd - The Hunter Thickheads from HBOC with 199 species.

3rd - Incognito from COGS with 186 species.

4th - The Silly Coots from CBOC with 172 species.

Two Champagne teams came home with 100 and 93 species respectively.

Next year the Club is thinking of entering Champagne and Novelty teams as well as the Twenty-Four Hour team. If you think you might be interested mark off the last weekend in October for a

FUND RAISING
EXPERIENCE.

Ann Lindsey.

● Observations

Reports from September meeting

Aug. 1-12	Regent Bowerbird	5	New Lambton Heights	P.Lightfoot
	Satin Bowerbird	4	New Lambton Heights	P.Lightfoot
20	Southern Emu Wren	6	Redhead	G.Walker
20	Wedge-tailed Shearwater	7	Newcastle Beach	A.Stuart
21	Pacific Baza	2	Wangi Point	Waymark/Kelly
28	Grey Goshawk	2	Minmi	G.Walker
30	Maned Duck (14 young)	16	Mirrabooka	G.McCulloch
Sep. 1	Black-shouldered Kite	1	Mayfield	T.Clarke
2	White-faced Heron	1	Adamstown Heights	C.Wibberley
5	Bar-shouldered Dove	1	Ellalong	J.Meynell
6	Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoo	13	Ellalong	J.Meynell
6	Australian Hobby	1	Woodberry	J.Smith
6	Spotted Harrier	1	Birmingham Gardens	D.Geering
8	Eastern Shrike-tit	4	Buchanan	G.Walker
8	Little Cuckoo-shrike (nest)	4	Buchanan	G.Walker
9	Black-chinned Honeyeater	4	Buchanan	G.Walker
9	White-throated Warbler	1	Ellalong	J.Meynell
11	Spotted Harrier	1	Fern Bay	D.Geering
12	Red-browed Treecreeper	2	Seal Rocks	D.Geering
14	Grey Shrike-thrush	(many)	Buchanan	G.Walker
16	Osprey	2	Cockle Creek	G.O'Connor
16	Pied Oystercatcher	2	Nobby's	G.O'Connor
18	Little Lorikeet	2	Awaba State Forest	A.Stuart
18	Pallid Cuckoo	1	Awaba State Forest	A.Stuart
18	Galah	28	New Lambton	T.Clarke
23	Eastern Curlew	1	Throsby Creek	T.Clarke
23	Ruddy Turnstone	14	Throsby Creek	T.Clarke
28	Grey Butcherbird	1	Botanic Gardens	J.Smith

Reports from October meeting.

Aug. 9	Black-shouldered Kite	1	Throsby Creek	T.Clarke
10	Eastern Curlew	1	Throsby Creek	T.Clarke
10	Brown Cuckoo-dove	1	Rankin Park	J.Stephenson
25	Australian Hobby	1	Morisset	J.Stephenson
26	Brown Honeyeater	2	Mayfield	T.Clarke
27	Brown Goshawk	1	Mayfield	T.Clarke
29	White-bellied Sea Eagle	1	Mayfield	T.Clarke
Sep.	Barn Owl	1	Jesmond	R.Farrell
	Tawney Frogmouth	1	Rankin Park	J.Stephenson
8	Clamorous Reed Warbler	10+	Paterson	D.Biddle
8	Willie Wagtail (nest)	24pr	Woodville	D.Biddle
15	Double-barred Finch	8	Woodville	D.Biddle
15	Clamorous Reed Warbler	1	Metford	D.Biddle
17	Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoo	5	Cardiff	P.Phillips
22	European Goldfinch	1	Metford	D.Biddle
19	Grey Goshawk	1	Morisset	J.Stephenson
26	Little Friarbird	1	Ellalong	J.Meynell
28	Regent Honeyeater	100	Howe's Valley	G.Walker
Oct.	Southern Boobook	1	Rankin Park	J.Stephenson
	Southern Emu Wren	2	Wybung Head	M.Walker
	Tawney-crowned Honeyeater	1	Wybung Head	M.Walker
	Variegated Fairy-wren	1	Wybung head	M.Walker
1	Common Koel	1	Woodberry	J.Smith

Oct.	1	Common Koel	1	Buttaba	B.Kelly
	2	Channel-billed Cuckoo	2	West Wallsend	G.Walker
	2	Spotted Pardalote	1	Stanhope Creek	D.Biddle
	2	Rainbow Bee-eater	15+	Stanhope Creek	D.Biddle
	3-10	Dollarbird	2	Mirrabooka	G.McCulloch
	3	Emu	2	Wollar	A.Stuart
	3	Emu	1	Cassilis	S.Hamonet
	4	Whiskered Tern	4	S.W.C.	M.Walker
	4	Common Koel	H	New Lambton	A.Stuart
	4	Pallid Cuckoo	2	Woodberry	J.Smith
	4	Dollarbird	H	New Lambton	A.Stuart
	5	Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	New Lambton	A.Stuart
	5	Topknot Pigeon	21	Garden Suburb	J.Perry
	5	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	dozens	Ellalong	J.Meynell
	5	European Goldfinch	1	Ellalong	J.Meynell
	5	Rufous Whistler	1	Woodberry	J.Smith
	5	Dollarbird	6+	Paterson River	D.Biddle
	5	Rainbow Bee-eater	6+	Paterson River	D.Biddle
	5	Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	Cardiff	P.Phillips
	6	Pacific Baza	1	Rankin Park	J.Stephenson
	8	Regent Honeyeater	50	Howe's Valley	G.Walker
	8	Black-faced Monarch	1	Rankin Park	J.Stephenson
	9	Pallid Cuckoo	2	West Wallsend	J.Stephenson
	9	Pacific Baza	1	Ellermore Vale	J.Stephenson
	9	Dollarbird	2	Buttaba	B.Kelly
	10	White-bellied Sea Eagle	1	Mayfield	T.Clarke
	11	Australian Hobby	1	Mayfield	T.Clarke
	11	Australian King Parrot	2	Mirrabooka	G.McCulloch
	11	Crested Tern	1	S.W.C.	M.Walker
	12	Scarlet Honeyeater	5	Buttaba	B.Kelly
	12	Greenshank	20	Minmi	G.O'Connor
	12	Clamorous Reed Warbler	1	Woodberry	J.Smith
	18	Barn Owl (road kill)	1	New England Highway	P.McLauchlan

Reports from November meeting

Sep.	28	Brown Cuckoo-dove	(nest) 2	New Lambton	A. & D.Sullivan
	28	Australian Raven	200+	Fullerton Cove	M.Blanch
	28	Black Swan	300+	Oyster Cove	M.Blanch
Oct.		Sacred Kingfisher	1	Buttaba	R.Waymark
		Channel-billed Cuckoo	4	Buttaba	R.Waymark
		Scaley-breasted Lorikeet	20+	Buttaba	R.Waymark
	14	Bell Miner	1	Ellalong	J.Meynell
	15	Collared Sparrowhawk	1	Ellalong	J.Meynell
	15	White-browed Woodswallow	8	Bonnell's Bay	D.Halliday
	15	Scarlet Honeyeater	2	Belmont South	J.Cockerell
	16	Shining Bronze-cuckoo	1	Belmont south	J.Cockerell
	16	White-browed Scrubwren	1	Ellalong	J.Meynell
	17	Brown Thornbill	2	Ellalong	J.Meynell
	19	Eastern Whipbird	1	Ellalong	J.Meynell
	20	Yellow-tailed Black-cockatoo	34	Ellalong	J.Meynell
	20	Rufous Night Heron	1	Ellalong	J.Meynell
	20	Topknot Pigeon	62	Garden Suburb	J.Perry
	22	Olive-backed Oriole	2	Bonnell's Bay	D.Halliday
	22	Rainbow Bee-eater	100+	Hunter & Paterson R.	M.Blanch
	23	Scarlet Honeyeater	2	Belmont South	J.Cockerell
	24/26	Black Swan	600+	Myall Lakes	M.Blanch
	29	Satin Flycatcher	1	Garden Suburb	J.Perry
	30	Black-chinned Honeyeater	3	Ellalong	J.Meynell
	30	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	20	Ellalong	J.Meynell
	31	Pacific Baza	1	New Lambton Heights	P.Lightfoot

Reports from November meeting

Nov. 1	Galah	40	Ellalong	J.Meynell
3	Lewin's Honeyeater	1	Ellalong	J.Meynell
5	Black-faced Monarch	1	Bonnell's Bay	D.Halliday
6	Freckled Duck	1	S.W.C.	R.Walker
6	Rose Robin	2pr	Gloucester Tops	G.Walker
6	Flame Robin	2pr	Gloucester Tops	G.Walker
6	Red-browed Treecreeper	3	Barrington Tops	G.Walker
7	White-bellied Sea Eagle	2	Speers Point	R.Walker
9	Pacific Baza	1	Bonnell's Bay	D.Halliday
9	Baillon's Crake	6	S.W.C.	A.Lindsey
9	Australian Crake	1	S.W.C.	A.Lindsey
9	Glossy Ibis	4	S.W.C.	A.Lindsey

Anyone heading for Perth?

The following story comes from Frank Hamilton of Nelson Bay, whose son Neil is Curator of Birds at Perth Zoo.

Following up a phone call from a resident of Port Hedland, who reported having a strange bird with a damaged wing which was found on the wharf of that busy port town, Neil believed that the man may have found a Rainbow Pitta.

He was invited to despatch the bird to the zoo, where it was identified as a Blue-winged Pitta (*Pitta brachyura*), sometimes called Fairy Pitta. The range of the species extends from Japan, across southern China as far as northern India, and south as far as the Phillipines, where it occurs in several geographical races.

Only one other record of this species is known for Australia (1931) so there was much interest and excitement at the discovery.

It has been positively identified by the Western Australia Museum, the damaged wing has been strapped and the bird has been added to the zoo's collection where it is now doing quite nicely under Neil's tender loving care. A prized addition.

One can only speculate on the manner of its arrival at Port Hedland. An off-course migrant caught up with other flocks? Maybe, more likely, a stowaway on one of the many large ships that use the port? If only pittas could talk!

Sue Hamonet

Woodswallow phenomenon.

Large mixed flocks of woodswallows in early October were reported from the following locations:

Howe's Valley, West Wallsend, East Maitland, Lorne, Duckenfield, Buchanan, Woodville, Mayfield, Garden Suburb, Speers Point, Rankin Park and Ellalong.

Weather: very strong and gusty north west winds, extreme dry conditions, with heavy dust and smoke from bushfires.

Sue Hamonet

Australian Bird Studies Association Ornithological Talks.

The ABSA is holding a day of ornithological talks at Lecture Theatre 1, WSA, Macquarie University, on Saturday 4th February 1995. Registration will be \$10. Keynote speaker is Geoff Ross (NPWS) on status and management of Little Terns in Botany Bay.

Information: Alan Leishman
7 Belford St,
Ingleburn, 2565.
Phone (02) 605 1426.

NEW MEMBERS

The HBOC extends a very warm welcome to the following new members:

Andrew Burton and Family of Willoughby
Rex and Vera Morris of Clarencetown
Susan and Christopher Morris of Shortland
Edwina Brady of Tarro
Trevor Fing of Belmont North
Neville Foster of Tenambit
Peter Alexander of Singleton
Jill Warner of Mosman
Bruce and Marian Roxburgh of Tea Gardens
Matthew Hamonet (Junior Member) of Toronto
Alan Bewsher and Family of Newcastle
Vivien Todd of Newcastle

Coming Events

Please check with the contact person for each outing in case of changed details or suitability of site for the camp or field day.

Sunday 22nd January	Field Day:	Kooragang Island / Stockton
	Meet:	Stockton turn off, on Stockton end of Stockton Bridge. 7:00am.
	Contact:	Graeme O'Connor 531304
<hr/>		
Tuesday 7th February	Mid Week Field Day:	Blackbutt Reserve
	Meet:	Wishing Well Car Park 9:00am
	Contact:	Jeanette Stephenson 575255
<hr/>		
Wednesday 8th February	Clubnight:	Shortland Wetlands Centre 7:30pm
	Main feature:	AGM

OUTINGS & CAMPS 1995

January 22	Kooragang Is./ Stockton
February 19	Barrington House
March 19	Wentworth Swamp
April 14-17	Widden Valley (Easter)
April 23	Dunn's Creek
May 21	Hawkes Nest / Tea Gardens
June 3-5	Coopernook State Forest
June 25	Wetlands Day
July 23	Buttai
August 20	Botanic Gardens
September 24	Howes Valley (possible camp)
Sep 30-Oct 2	Rowleys River
October 22	Wollombi
October 29	Twitchathon BBQ - S.W.C.
November 19	Grahamstown Dam
December 10	Glenrock Lagoon

PLEASE NOTE:

Specific details for Field Days and Camps will be provided in the Club Newsletter and at Club Nights.

MID WEEK OUTINGS:

Extra mid week outings are planned for the year. These will take place on the first Tuesday of each month and generally in close range from Newcastle.

CAMP FEES:

A fee of \$1 per member per Camp with \$3 being the maximum for a family will generally be levied. Non members will be charged the current annual membership fee. Occasionally private property owners have their own charges.

REGENT HONEYEATER SURVEY:

Regular monthly visits to Howes Valley to survey Regent Honeyeater numbers are on going. Contact is Ann Lindsey 733519.

Articles for our Newsletter are always welcomed.

Closing date for the next issue is
27th January, 1995

Mail to: Tom Clarke
24 Ackerson St, Mayfield 2304

Phone: 671396 (h) 686316 (w)
Fax: 686390