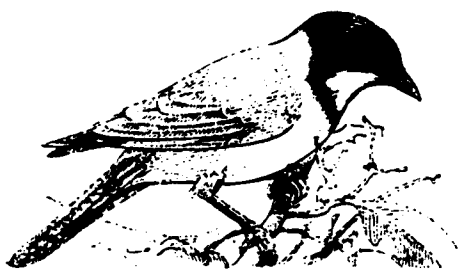


NEWSLETTER



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.

● Annual General Meeting

**And its Ann Lindsey again....
unopposed.**

This year's AGM was held on Wednesday 8th February and for the second year in a row Sue Hamonet declared Ann Lindsey, President of HBOC.

The election of officers for 1995 was underway and we had been given a target of 45 minutes duration (last year's record) to complete the task. With all positions of the Management Committee uncontested the team remains as it was for last year. The success of our many ventures is due to the diligence of this group and they are to be congratulated.

To other appointed positions most people were happy to remain at their tasks. Four major changes to the list of appointments stand out.

For the first time in the history of HBOC we now have a Conservation Committee. This has been created to service a growing need for the club to be more responsive to local issues concerning the interests of wild birds and also in response to a Club Survey carried out last year where members indicated that the Club ought to have a higher profile in conservation matters.

Ed Hamonet, our hard working Librarian for the last eight years has decided to resign from that position. We all thank Ed for his lasting contributions which include his Derivations of Scientific Names. Keith Woods and Pat Pountney have volunteered to take over the responsibilities.

Barabara Kelly and good friend Rosemary Waymark accepted the task of looking after Club Night suppers after some "gentle" persuasion from Max Blanch. The odd teaspoon is not the only thing that enjoys a stir it seems.

President
Vice President
Hon. Secretary
Hon. Treasurer
Management Committee

Conservation Committee

Activities Officer
Ass. Activities Officer
Librarian
Ass. Librarian
Slide Librarian
Audio/Video Librarian
Public Officer
Public Relations
Publicity Officer
Newsletter Editor, Production & Distribution.
Atlas Recorder
Records Officer
Garden Bird Survey Coord
Annual Bird Report Editor
Suppers

Assist. at clubnights

Appointment of Auditor

Ann Lindsey
Peter McLauchlan
Peter Phillips
Alan Stuart
Wilma Barden
Tom Clarke
David Geering
Graeme O'Connor
Max Blanch
David Kibble
John Moyse
Peter McLauchlan
Ray Walker
Graeme O'Connor
Stan Etheridge
Keith Woods
Pat Pountney
John Cockerell
Peter McLauchlan
Peter Phillips
Marian Walker
Judith Smith
Tom Clarke

Matthew Stephenson
Sue Hamonet
Peter McLauchlan
Alan Stuart
Barbara Kelly
Rosemary Waymark
Judith Smith
Adrian Ryan
Randall Watson

One other change was that of Public Relations Officer. This position will be serviced extremely well by Marian Walker who doesn't mind a chat with anyone especially about birds.

Capertee Capers

With the reading of the Annual Report, elections etc complete (48 minutes, bad luck, try again next year) we could all relax and enjoy our guest speaker.

AGM specialist, David Geering, spoke of the highs and lows of his recent attempts to study the biology of Regent Honeyeaters. David illustrated his talk with slides he had taken of the Capertee Valley and of course, Regent Honeyeaters.

Regent Honeyeaters occur mainly in box-ironbark open forests and a large proportion of their time is spent feeding on nectar from a few 'key' eucalypts. Capertee Valley, situated in the Great Dividing Range near Rylstone, provides some of the special habitat required by these endangered honeyeaters.

David's aim was to watch this season's breeding attempts but drought conditions which affected most of NSW and Queensland very quickly put paid to that. With little data available the program had to be abandoned.



However, the time was not totally wasted. David found that this area really can support a great variety of birdlife. During the first weeks of his stay, he witnessed thousands of woodswallows, often in large mixed flocks. It was not uncommon to see woodswallows continuously as he drove around to each study site. These

numbers gradually fell away over a few weeks.

From the kitchen window of the house David was living in at "Rock View", he would watch the comings and goings of a nearby bird bath. This bird bath was visited by all and sundry including Diamond Firetail and Plum-headed Finch.

Other birds to be encountered include White-fronted Chat, Varied Sittella, Rock Warbler, Scarlet Robin and Turquoise Parrot. Many species of honeyeaters, thornbills and cuckoos added to the enjoyment of working in such a place. Worthy of note also was the high incidence of raptors; the sighting of a Square-tailed Kite would have been a highlight.

Sounds idyllic but as David was to discover, you can't always choose your sites to watch Regent Honeyeaters nests. One particular nest that promised to be a goer just happened to be located above the dusty Capertee River. At that same spot a cow had died, most likely of thirst, and took a couple of weeks to decompose. I guess when you're desperate you take what you can get.

Another low point eluded to by David was the amount of travelling involved. With a family at Fullerton Cove and work six hours away up some dusty old road, the drive to and from the place each week was always going to be a bit of a pain.

Despite all that though, David is keen to point out that Capertee Valley is really an excellent place to spend some time birdwatching.

● New members

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

Patricia & Geoff Firkin of Newcastle
Noreen Fleming of Newcastle East
Margaret Lance of Hamilton
Robert & Marie Langdown of Cundletown
Leslie & Ross Marshall of Woodberry
Peter Smith of Blaxland
John & Leone Storm of Clarencetown
Imre & Tunde Lengyel of Newcastle
David Turner of Foster

Got 'em a beaudy!

Birds frequently use alarm calls to warn other birds of impending danger. Even around backyard feeders, birds are known to signal the arrival of a Cooper's or Sharp-shinned Hawk to the area.

One keen eyed observer in Waterville, Ohio witnessed a White-breasted Nuthatch perform its version of an alarm call, using its "yank-yank" notes in rapid-fire fashion to alert the other birds, mostly House Finches, that were busily gorging themselves at a backyard feeder.

The twist in this story? There wasn't a hawk in sight. The sneaky Nuthatch used its alarm call to chase the other birds away from the feeder and immediately flew in to feast on the now readily available seed.

From Birder's World - February 1995.

Note: The Nuthatch is a small passerine of the Northern Hemisphere with close affinities to our own Varied Sittella, which it resembles in size and appearance, and in its habits.

Until recently these two species were classified in the same family (sittidae) but the Sittellas are now regarded as a separate and quite unrelated family.

HBOC Annual Report 1994

My first year as President has been exciting and more than rewarding as I have become better acquainted with the wonderful people in our club. Members have shown keen interest in the various activities offered, and there seems to be an increased awareness of birds as part of our daily lives.

* Some members have presented talks to other sectors of the community and been involved in school projects such as the Latham's Snipe Study being conducted by Jesmond Public School and its sister school in Japan.

* The Club entered a team for the second year in the RAOU Twitchathon. The team took out second place and increased their total bird count in the 24 hour period by seventeen species. Club members supported the team most generously and there was a marked increase in the amount of money raised.

* The HBOC sent four members to the Bird Interest Groups Network (BIGNET) which was held at the Shorland Wetlands Centre last year. The Club plans to continue an active interest in matters of conservation by participating in such meetings where wider issues are discussed.

* 1994 was an historic year for HBOC since it saw the culmination of several years work in two publications. Having an Annual Bird Report means that significant sightings of birds in the Hunter Region are not lost in fading memories or personal bird notes but can be shared by all members and are also available for use in future surveys. The Garden Bird Survey will map very closely the avian fauna in our backyards and quickly show up changes in populations.

* In 1994 one of our most respected members passed away. Alan Keating had been an active member since 1984. Alan made several valuable contributions to the Library during those years and now, he has left the

Club a legacy of \$5000. A committee has been set up to investigate how this money might be spent. I would like to express our appreciation of his generous regard for our Club.

* The club finished the year with a total membership of 183. Membership has increased by 42% since 1991.

* 11 monthly meeting nights were attended by an average of 42 people.

* 12 field outings were attended by an average of 13 people with an average of 56 species sightings.

* 6 camps were attended by an average of 14 people with an average of 72 species sightings.

* Ten new titles have been added to the Library stock during 1994. Four were purchased by the Club, the remainder donated by members. The books published by the Australian Museum involving the National Photographic Index proved to be the most popular of the borrowings. Total Library items now stands at 262.

* The Audio-video Library now contains a total of 62 recordings which include the calls and songs of 595 species.

* And 155 slides were borrowed over 14 occasions from the Slide Library.

* A brochure advertising the aims and activities of the Hunter Bird Observers Club was widely distributed during 1994. Notices of coming events were circulated in community newspapers and broadcast on radio and television in the Lower Hunter.

* The Club had a stall for the first time at the Society for Growing Australian Plants, Wildflower Spectacular in September. Over the weekend, twelve members manned the stall where information about birds was displayed.

* The Club continued to involve

itself in several conservation issues. It has been decided to continue this work and to form a Conservation Committee so that, where appropriate, more issues can be addressed without all the work devolving onto one person.

My first year as President has been an enlightening experience for me personally. It is gratifying to see such a large increase in our membership and hopefully this will continue in 1995 as more people come to appreciate our birds and their environment.

I hope that each and every one of you will find something of particular interest in the Club program and I believe that we can all look forward to another year of fascinating birdwatching.

Ann Lindsey
HBOC President.

The Annual Report for 1994, in its entirety and along with all its appendices can be found in the Club Library and is available for inspection by any member of HBOC.

HBOC Fundraising Events for 1995.

Watch out for announcements soon concerning a couple of fund raising initiatives for our club.

Alan Stuart will be selling stationery packs with bird print designs. Items include blank message greetings cards, gift wraps etc.

Also coming up later this year, a Theatre Party organised by Keith Woods promises to be a bit of fun.

All at sea over Skuas and Jaegers.

Some recent sightings of Skuas or Jaegers near Newcastle by Richard Yank revived some old questions. How do you tell the difference between a Skua and a Jaeger? How do you know if you have even seen one?

Lucky for us, Richard has had some experience with Jaegers, mainly in Canada where he has seen them prior to their great flights into the Southern Hemisphere. So it was decided that Richard should present the Jaegers in a *Bird of the Evening* segment and to his credit, Richard graciously agreed.

Richard's presentation dealt briefly with what these birds are in the great scheme of things but then concentrated on field characteristics and keys to identification.

Skuas and Jaegers are robust, gull-like seabirds, mostly brown in plumage and have characteristic wedge-shaped tails with the central feathers elongated. Their habit of harassing gulls and terns to give up food earns them the tag of "pirate".

Three species regularly migrate here from the Arctic in summer and one visits during the winter from the Antarctic.

The Great Skua is the winter visitor and is a large heavy bird about the size of a Pacific Gull. The wings are rounded and hawk-like.

The three summer visitors are the Pomarine, Arctic and Long-tailed Jaegers. These birds are more falcon-like in appearance than the Great Skua and display a more graceful flight.

The three Jaegers each exist in two colour phases. The dark phase is almost entirely dark brown; the light phase has white underparts with a dark chest band. The juvenile birds are also brown with barred chest and tail.

Richard expertly offered all the variations available and it is obvious that experience must count for a great deal in positively identifying these birds as they fly by.



The most distinguishing feature of each species, the central tail feathers, was also described.

The slightly larger and stronger looking Pomarine Jaeger has projected tail feathers which are broad and twisted with round tips. The lighter and more graceful Arctic Jaeger has central tail feathers that taper to a point. In the Long-tailed Jaeger, the central tail feathers are greatly elongated and can project up to 300mm beyond the other tail feathers and look like streamers.

Unfortunately, these wonderful features are not always present. Moulting takes place in Australian waters in the early summer and the tail feathers are replaced by autumn before the return journey. With these feathers often missing the next best clue is the amount of white in the wing bar!

The seabird theme continued with guest speaker for the evening, Alan Rogers. Alan has a passion for the sea, seabirds in particular and all things pelagic in general.

Alan presented some magnificent slides taken by himself while on a "seabird holiday" in December 1990.

A voyage aboard the *M/S World Discoverer* from Christchurch to Hobart via such places as Chatham Island, Bounty Island, Campbell Island and Auckland Island presented great opportunities to look at penguins, albatross, skuas, seals and whales.

Entry onto these islands is heavily restricted (to the credit of the New Zealand managers) and so most inspection was carried out aboard small craft just off shore. This aspect

did not seem to detract from the experience and was well received by all of the "tourists".

Alan pointed out that the trip was entirely within the Sub-Antarctic and that life for early settlers that dared to live on these islands must have been extremely harsh. Regular bad weather as a result of the Roaring Forties was also eluded to.

So how come all his slides had blue sky and flat seas? The trip Alan was lucky enough to be part of had a dream run and virtually experienced fine weather all the way.

This meant that he had every chance to see Royal Albatross on nests, Erect-crested Penguin, Rockhopper Penguin, Fur Seals in moult and Sea Lions sorting themselves out for the breeding season.

Many of the seabirds spend most of the daylight hours out at sea in feeding grounds. At dusk they gather and return to their particular island. This was often the time that Alan's group would look forward to after a day of exploring and birdwatching as it could be relied on to offer a spectacular end to the day.

Alan's observant eye also found each island's version of the humble Pipit a fascination as well as the discovery of a parrot on Auckland Island.

Slides taken at the approach of each island looked so majestic and the romance of the sea looks like a pleasurable experience. Alan's descriptive account of the regular seabird trips out of Sydney and Wollongong puts a touch of reality on it. But as he points out, if you find you're suited to it, you will most likely go again and again.

● Observations from the February meeting

The **Powerful Owl** is an exciting breeding record for the Blackbutt Reserve.

Tawny Frogmouth at Blackbutt is another breeding record. Two young were fledged, but it seems that only one survived.

The **Barking Owls** recorded at Edgeworth and New Lambton Heights were identified by call alone.

The **Eastern Rosella** seen at New Lambton Heights was sporting an unusual amount of red from the undertail to within 5mm of the head. Also showing red on the back from base of tail to under wings. The **Eastern Rosella** has hybridised with several other species in aviary situations and the possibility exists that this is an escapee or a release from an aviary. The description fits other reports of oddly-coloured parrots seen from other suburban situations earlier in the year.

Wildlife Sound Recording Workshop

This workshop will run from 1/10/95 to 8/10/95 at Newholme Field Laboratory, University of NSW, Armidale, NSW.

Topics covered will include:

how to analyse and interpret sounds
acoustics & sensitivity of microphones
attenuation of mics between source and recorder
field recording techniques

Full accommodation at \$45/person/day is available. A \$50 deposit is required by 1/8/95.

For more information and Pre-enrolment forms, contact

Peter McLauchlan - 049 333224
or Fred Van Gessel - 043 431283

December '94

13	Baillon's Crake	2	S.W.C.	D.Biddle
18	Darter	2	S.W.C.	W.Barden
18	Whiskered Tern	9	Kooragang Island	T.Clarke
19	Baillon's Crake	15	S.W.C.	D.Biddle
19	Red-kneed Dotterel	10	S.W.C.	D.Biddle
19	Black-fronted Dotterel	13	S.W.C.	D.Biddle
26	White-winged Black Tern	2	S.W.C.	W.Barden
28	Wedge-tailed Shearwater	40	Off Bar Beach	A.Stuart
28	Common Tern	50+	Nobby's rock shelf	D.Biddle

January '95

1	Pacific Baza	1	East Maitland	P.McLauchlan
1	Fork-tailed Swift	30	Rathmines	M.Walker
1	Tawny Frogmouth	1	Rathmines	M.Walker
2	Wedge-tailed Shearwater	60	Off Bar Beach	A.Stuart
2	White-winged Black Tern	1	S.W.C.	W.Barden
2	Black-shouldered Kite	1	Merewether Beach	M.&K.Woods
4	Red-rumped Parrot	1	East Maitland	P.McLauchlan
4	Eastern Curlew	1	Warner's Bay	R.Walker
5	Sooty Oystercatcher	5	Newcastle Beach	G.Brosnie
6	Black-shouldered Kite	1	Jesmond	G.Brosni
11	Musk Duck	1	Myall Lakes N.P.	B.&D.Kibble
11	Common Tern	50+	Nobby's Rock Shelf	D.Biddle
11	Common Tern	30+	Ncle Ocean baths	D.Biddle
11	Wedge-tailed Shearwater	100+	Off Nobby's Beach	D.Biddle
15	Nankeen Kestrel	2	Bar Beach	M.&K.Woods
15	Australian Hobby	1	New Lambton	A.Stuart
15	Leaden Flycatcher	2	Blackbutt Reserve	A.Stuart
19	Masked Lapwing	30	Ellalong Lagoon	J.Meynell
20	Pacific Baza	1	Congewai	J.Meynell
20	Pacific Baza	3	Ncle University	P.McLauchlan
20	White-headed Pigeon	1	Warner's Bay	R.Walker
21	Little Tern	50+	Harrington	D.Biddle
22	Freckled Duck	1	Market Swamp	W.Barden
22	Tawny Frogmouth	1	Pasminco/Sulphide	R.Walker
22	Pheasant Coucal	1	Karuah/Bulahdelah	D.Biddle
22	Powerful Owl	2	Blackbutt Reserve	P.Lightfoot
24	Nankeen Night Heron	2	Cockle Creek	B.&D.Kibble
24	Striated Heron	4	Cockle Creek	B.&D.Kibble
24	Tawny Frogmouth	1	Buttaba	R.Waymark
27	Turquoise Parrot	1	East Maitland	P.McLauchlan
29	Laughing Kookaburra	1	New Lambton Hts	P.Lightfoot
29	Grey Goshawk	1	New Lambton Hts	P.Lightfoot
30	Little Egret	1	Warner's Bay	R.Walker

February '95

1	Rainbow Bee-eater	10	Lorn	J.Meynell
1	Common Tern	50+	Stockton Beach	D.Biddle
1	White-fronted Chat	6+	Stockton Beach	D.Biddle
1	Red-capped Plover	50+	Stockton Beach	D.Biddle
1	W/bellied Sea-eagle	1	Stockton Beach	D.Biddle
2	Wedge-tailed Shearwater	50+	Stockton Beach	D.Biddle
2	Sacred Kingfisher	2	Buttaba	R.Waymark
3	Channel-billed Cuckoo	2	New Lambton Hts	I.Hamilton
5	Darter	2	S.W.C.	W.Barden
7	Nankeen Night heron	1	Beresfield	D.Biddle
7	Common Koel	1	Newcastle TAFE	M.McLauchlan
8	Figbird	1	New Lambton	N.Fleming
8	Red-rumped Parrot	5	Warner's Bay	S.Hamomet
10	Powerful Owl	1+1dy	Blackbutt Reserve	P.Lightfoot
10	White-throated Nightjar	1	Mt Sugarloaf	R.Yank
11	Little Eagle	1	Abermain	R.Yank
11	Pacific Baza	1	Mirrabooka	G.McCulloch
11	Pacific Golden Plover	7	Stockton Beach	D.Biddle
11	Grey Goshawk	1	Blackbutt Reserve	S.Hamomet

Recommended English Names For Birds.

About the middle of last year, we had the opportunity to participate in the debate about recommended English names for birds (RAOU voting slips were included with one of our newsletters at that time). Recommended English Names represent an attempt to have just one name, Australia wide, for each of our bird species. Once

agreed, the name should never change, unlike the bird's scientific name which can undergo many revisions as ornithological knowledge is developed.

The original attempt at a list of names, many years ago, was controversial, with a number of unpopular bird names being recommended. The RAOU recognised this fact, and has now developed an amended list. Our votes were an important input, although other factors also came into it (for example, there is an

intention world-wide that no two species will have the same name and no species will have more than one name).

The HBOC policy is to use the recommended English names in all our publications. We support the principal of there being one name only for each species, even though the name might not be our preferred choice. Therefore, as a first step, we have revised our record sheet; a copy of the new sheet is attached with this newsletter.

The revised sheet also follows the new taxonomic list of Australian birds. Major changes have occurred, as a result of increased knowledge and understanding. Some examples: the Australian Magpie-lark is now considered to be allied with the flycatchers; treecreepers and sittellas are now considered to be only very distantly related.

Record sheets are the prime source of data for producing our annual bird reports. I urge you to use the attached sheet for sending us details of your sightings; we can send you replacement sheets if you want them.

Alan Stuart
ABR Editor

The Barking Owl reported from Rankin Park was identified by call only.

● Observations from the March meeting.

January '95

22	White-fronted Chat	1	Belmont Lagoon	J.Cockerell
22	Marsh Sandpiper	1	Belmont Lagoon	J.Cockerell
22	Black-fronted Dotterel	1	Belmont Lagoon	J.Cockerell
22	Brown Cuckoo-dove	1	Belmont Lagoon	J.Cockerell
22	Southern Emu-wren	2	Belmont Lagoon	J.Cockerell
29	Black-shouldered Kite	1	Belmont South	J.Cockerell

February '95

	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	3	John Hunter Hosp.	J.Stephenson
	Barking Owl	(h)	Rankin Park	J.Stephenson
4	Red-rumped Parrot	2	Fullerton Cove	T.Reynolds
	Straw-necked Ibis	300	Tarro	E.Brady
6	Sooty Oystercatcher	7	Cowrie Hole	G.O'Connor
	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	1	New Lambton	D.Pritchard
8	Little Eagle	1	Cardiff	J.Stephenson
12	Peregrine Falcon	1	Mt Sugarloaf	A.Stuart
13	Osprey	2	Belmont South	J.Cockerell
18	Crested Shrike-tit	1	New Lambton Hts	P.Lightfoot
19	Black-necked Stork	1	Glen Oak	A.Stuart
19	Little Corella	30+	Raymond Terrace	A.Stuart
21	White-headed Pigeon	2	Rankin Park	J.Stephenson
21	Pacific Baza	4	Bonnell's Bay	D.&D.Halliday
21	Channel-billed Cuckoo	4	Soldiers Point	T.Reynolds
22	Spangled Drongo	1	New Lambton Hts	I.Hamilton
22	Little Penguin	3	Port Stephens	D.&D.Halliday
27	Pacific Baza	2	Rankin Park	J.Stephenson

March '95

7	Osprey	1	Teralba	P.Pountney
7	Caspian Tern	8	Cockle Creek	P.Pountney

How Wet Can A Rainforest Get?

I only just managed to go on this outing as there were other events happening on the same weekend, but I did make it and now I'm very glad that I did. It had rained on and off most of the weekend and this morning was no different with patchy rain encountered on the way up to Barrington House. It was raining steadily as we arrived but what else can you expect in a rainforest!

Along with the wet we were greeted by our friends, the leeches, who have a wonderful attraction to the dawdling types like birdwatchers.

As you walk through the Barrington House complex quite a few birds are already in view. Superb Fairy-wrens abound along with Pied Currawong, Lewin's honeyeater, Brush Turkey, Crimson Rosella, King Parrot and Laughing Kookaburra.

A surprise was a Wonga Pigeon walking about as bold as brass in a horse paddock on the side of the hill.

There are a couple of different walks to go on which start at this point and our group chose the longest of the short walks. I can't remember the name of the track but basically it puts you immediately into rainforest.

First bird to be seen in the gloom was a Rufous Fantail which flitted about the bracken. I could hear tree-creeper and scrub-wren but a "squeek up" produced little in the way of birdlife. A movement in the undergrowth turned out to be a Potoroo! I'm not so sure that the squeaking had attracted it; more likely we just walked up on top of the poor thing.

I did hear a Shining Bronze-Cuckoo but it could be anywhere, and as we moved on, the sound of raindrops on bracken and the rush of swollen streams drowned out the bird calls.

Back away from the torrent and with the rain easing we finally really got in amongst it. This place is great

for Pale-yellow Robins which can be quickly recognised in a head on view as the white face is not complete and appears as a pair of "headlights". One particular adult was looking after a young dependent which lacked the head markings.

A bird that I'm not very familiar with is the Large-billed Scrubwren. Today was going to be my lucky day and good views of this bird were easy to come by. I had never noticed the colour (rufous) in the rump on previous occasions, however in these birds at least, the colour was significant. Two particular individuals interested me as they were very active and worked up and down the trunk of a tree-fern. Momentarily, one bird would disappear as it burrowed beneath the dying fronds that hung close to the trunk. I would like to think that it would be a good place to find insects seeking shelter.

Another new sound for the outing and an invisible Brush Cuckoo calls from any distance away. Good thing we had stopped to listen for bird calls as we might have disturbed our next sighting.

On the ground in the middle of the track we found a White's Thrush. I'll call it by that name as I (or anyone else in the group) do not have the skill to split the newly declared species, Bassian and Russet-tailed. This bird did appear to have good colour but it remained silent, so no clues there. The bird was seen to capture an insect of some description and then fly off. As it took flight, the pattern of its flanks and the wing span were a feature.

After a stand up lunch in a muddy car park, we went for a casual walk down the road. Almost immediately we were in Bell Miner country and I must admit, I recorded their presence but did not pursue them. I can't remember actually spotting one and I really should have taken the time.

What had taken my attention was a Laughing Kookaburra. This particular individual was uttering a wheezy, three note, half call. A peculiar sound from a peculiar bird

which lacked the usual strong head markings. Another youngster following a parent around from tree to tree.

Now a Grey Shrike-thrush had called and as we all strained to find the singer high in the top of a tall tree another great discovery!

A Paradise Rifle Bird in the same tree! It was a female and its head stripe was a stand out key. This bird was working the branches (for insects?) with its large and heavy sickle bill. A brilliant find and it just about made the day.

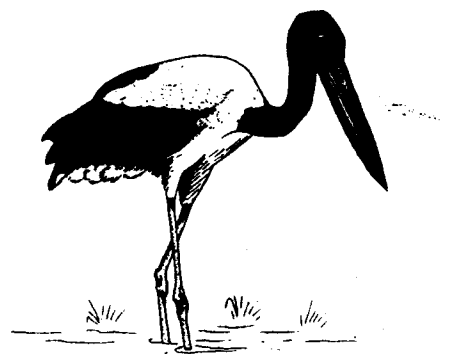
Further on down the road the forest stops abruptly and like that you are looking across cleared pastures. A Brown Cuckoo-dove sits quietly in a bush enjoying the break in the weather while Crimson Rosellas, Pacific Black Duck and Silvereyes are all moving about.

Now the journey home was enjoyable enough, just talking birds with Jim Perry and Alan Stuart, but the highlight was a Black-necked Stork. Found walking about some swampy ground near the Williams River and just upstream from Seaham.

This bird looked magnificent, its black and white plumage contrasting strongly with its long bright red legs. A huge bird with a huge bill poking about the flooded vegetation with graceful movement.

When I got home I dragged out a map of the area hoping to find out the name of the swamp. Well it is part of Chambers Creek but the hill overlooking it and the bend in the river is named Stork's Hill. Wonderfully appropriate in my estimation.

Tom Clarke.



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. Please note: Date for the camp at Coopernook is June long weekend.

Tuesday 2nd May	Midweek Outing Contact:	Bob's Farm Jeanette Stephenson 575255
Sunday 7th May	Regent Honeyeater Survey - Howes Valley Contact:	Ann Lindsey 733519
Wednesday 10th May	Clubnight: Main feature:	Shortland Wetlands Centre 7:30pm Micheal Todd - The Biology of the Red-browed Finch
Sunday 21nd May	Field Day: Meet: Contact:	Hawks Nest/Tea Gardens MacDonald's at Raymond Terrace 7:00am Tom Clarke 671396
Tuesday 6th June	Midweek Outing: Contact:	Walka Water Works Jeanette Stephenson 575255
Queen's Birthday Weekend 10th, 11th & 12th June	Camp: Contact:	Coopernook State Forest Graeme O Connor 58 1304
Wednesday 14th June	Clubnight: Main feature:	Shortland Wetlands Centre 7:30pm David Bishop - Bird Watching in Southern Africa
Sunday 25th June	Field Day: Meet: Contact:	Wetlands Day Shortland Wetlands Centre 8:00am Ann Lindsey 73 3519

Articles for our Newsletter are always welcomed.

Closing date for the next issue is 2nd June, 1995.

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