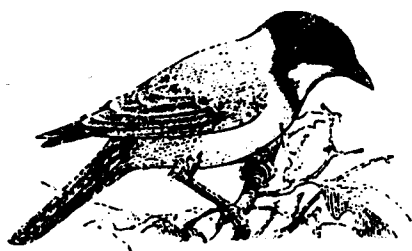


# NEWSLETTER



## Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc.

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

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President:

Ann Lindsey

Secretary:

Peter Phillips

Newsletter Editor:

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.*

## The Return Of The Thickheads.

The 1997 Twitchathon was a successful one for the Hunter Bird Observers Club with both the *Hunter Thickheads* (main race) and *Lesticum phoradae* (champagne team) taking out second place in their respective events.

This year saw the original Thickheads (David Geering, Ann Lindsay, Peter McLauchlan and Jill Warner) reunited again after both Ann and Jill were unable to participate last year. This year also saw a change of route to that used for the past four attempts. This resulted in less "dead time" travelling on the Sunday afternoon as well as avoiding what had become a rather hazardous starting point with the development of Attunga State Forest, near Tamworth, as a sports archery range. The reuniting of the old tried and thoroughly tested team meant that the gruelling 24 hours of twitching was able to be run on a regime of extreme discipline. A quick "there's a Regent Honeyeater, let's move on" or "Plum-headed Finch, back in the car" had the desired effect of

keeping the team alert and moving with barely a grumble.

Our start in the Capertee Valley was one of our best yet with 85 species including all the usual goodies - Regent Honeyeater, Plum-headed Finch, Southern Whiteface, Hooded Robin, White-browed Woodswallow, Barking Owl etc. plus a couple of specials like Turquoise Parrot and White-backed Swallow.

After a pre-ordered a-la-carte meal at the Carlton Cafe in Rylstone it was off to our overnight destination ticking off a very cooperative Barn Owl on the way. Arriving at Barrington House at midnight we were warmly greeted by a Southern Boobook and the very friendly staff apparently waiting on our arrival.

The next morning yielded all the expected rainforest gems except Pale-yellow Robin and Paradise Riflebird but did include Noisy Pitta and the obligatory Brush Turkeys. Travelling through the Patterson Valley resulted in the tally gradually increasing with species such as Speckled Warbler, Weebill, Sittella and Grey-crowned Babbler. The wetlands of the lower Hunter saw Great-crested Grebe and Hoary-headed Grebe, Musk Duck and Magpie Geese added while our scribe worked

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 1998

overtime keeping up with the waders in the estuary. A decision to pick up three easy species at Newcastle Beach did result in three species but also increased stress levels because of Sunday afternoon traffic jams around the foreshore. A much quicker stop to pick up a dead cert Tawny Frogmouth and on to Shortland wetlands for Latham's Snipe, Wandering Whistleduck, Little Corella and an extremely lonely female Australasian Shoveller among hundreds of teal.

The final tally at 5:00pm? One hundred and ninety nine species! The magical 200 once again eludes us. Next year there will be a crash course in identifying Blackbird calls prior to the start of the twitchathon.

David Geering

## Let's Tick 'em For A Day

The reason that the Twitchathon starts at 4:00pm on a Saturday and finishes at 5:00pm on a Sunday is because it is necessary to allow for the change from Standard Time to Daylight Saving. What people are required to do is to adjust their clocks forward an hour before they go to bed on the Saturday night, especially their alarm clocks! Everyone knows this of course but after a terrific evening of twitching at Awabakal perhaps someone's mind could have been preoccupied. Sounds plausible.

Awabakal provided a great start to our attempt at being famous with a massive score of forty one species.

The next morning we met at Blackbutt Reserve to continue the onslaught but at the prearranged time only half of our team was on deck. All the birds were there, calling like mad and totally oblivious to the mental anguish suffered by humans at this time of the year. Almost exactly an hour later the "other half" showed up slightly embarrassed but still managing a smile. After all, we were in the champagne event and strict timekeeping, and anything else that inferred seriousness, were just not in the rules.

The birds of Blackbutt continued to call like mad and happily we ticked 'em; another twenty three to the list.

Our next hot twitching spot on the itinerary was Kooragang Island where, after a relaxed morning tea break, we really got amongst the waders at Stockton Sand Spit and later at the Big Pond. Our efforts here added another thirty seven species including fourteen waders. Slightly disappointing since we knew that more wader species were present in the estuary but no one had told them about the Twitchathon. The Big Pond was visited by at least two other Twitchathon teams that we know of which speaks volumes for the high regard this place has amongst bird watchers, both local and visitors to the Hunter.

Shortland Wetlands Centre and adjacent wetlands was our afternoon twitching area. Following a well deserved lunch hour (with champagne of course!) another twenty odd species were identified. Our final total of 125 bird species and three bottles of champagne was not enough to take out the prize (more champagne I believe) this year. A very creditable second place behind some mob from Wollongong called JC Jacanas with 127 species will just have to do for the time being.

Our team of Liz, Chris & Dan Herbert, Greg Newling and Tom Clarke had all enjoyed the day (was it 24 hours? or was it 23?) very much and agreed that this relaxed version of twitching is certainly within the capabilities of most bird watchers.

A special thank you is extended to all our supporters who later coughed up the pledged amounts of cash which is going to help maintain habitat for Black-eared Miners and other birds of the mallee. Our club is thankful also for the generous corporate sponsorship from Port Waratah Coal Services, Brambles, Northern Instrument Services and Merry Hall. Together with the personal donations from club members and friends a total of \$1275 was raised. Well done, everyone.

Tom Clarke

Articles for our Newsletter are always welcomed.

Closing date for the next issue is 30th January, 1998

Mail to:

Tom Clarke

28 Kokera St, Wallsend 2287

Phone: (02) 4951 3872 (h) or (02) 4910 1384 (w)

**CAMP AT SHARPE'S CREEK/GLOUCESTER TOPS.** 3-5<sup>TH</sup> October, 1997

There seemed to be something of an exodus of club members to Currawinya National Park for the Gould League camp in the October school holidays; nevertheless eight stalwarts made their way to the programmed Sharpe's Creek venue hoping to get a sighting of the elusive Rufous Scrub bird.

Intermittent storms hampered proceedings somewhat on Friday afternoon, and kept us confined to quarters that night. However the weather was more settled than the forecasters had predicted on Saturday and Sunday and we were sheltered from the strong Westerly winds which apparently made conditions very unpleasant at home. The campsite at Sharpe's Creek is always very popular with the general public on holiday week-ends, and this one was no exception. We were fortunate though to find a somewhat secluded corner of the camping ground where we were left very much to ourselves, and enjoyed some good company around the campfire at night.

Overall, birds were perhaps less plentiful than usual but with persistent work we put together a commendable list of 74 species for the week-end, including Paradise Riflebird, Noisy Pitta [heard only near the campsite], Little Raven, Red-browed Treecreeper, Crescent Honeyeater and Olive Whistler. The Scrub bird failed to put in an appearance - not even a tweet to encourage us! Breeding activity was plentiful, and many Superb Lyrebirds were in evidence, including a pair with a territory just near our camp. Brush Turkeys with an active mound claimed the foraging rights for the site, keeping even the Pied Currawongs at bay.

Another sortie to the Gloucester Falls area on Monday was aborted and camp was struck when the weather closed in. Most campers left the area just ahead of the heavy rain which followed us most of the way home.

Sue Hamonet.

**FIELD OUTING TO MILBRODALE.** 19<sup>th</sup> October, 1997

A last minute change to the planned Howe's Valley venue became necessary due to serious bushfires burning for days in that area and so we were grateful to the owners who allowed us to transfer our activities to their Milbrodale property for the day.

On a mild, but overcast day, with light breezes fourteen members scoured the timbered sandstone gullies and Box/Ironbark woodland along the Bulga Creek, sadly reduced to only a few small pools. In these very dry conditions there was a scarcity of the blossom which usually attracts much attention from the Honeyeater family. However, while numbers were low, eleven different species seemed able to eke out an existence. Mistletoebirds were present in surprisingly large numbers, and it was hard to tear birds away from a pair found feeding young in their beautifully cosy nest. Several Channel-billed Cuckoos were feeding on the ripe fruit of large fig trees along the escarpment and hundreds of Sulphur-crested Cockatoos fed continuously on the cleared pasture land. Rainbow Bee-eaters were a welcome sight along the dry creek bed and Satin Bowerbirds fed cheekily on the ripening orange crop in the orchard.

A pair of Brown Falcons kept us interested as they made several passes through our luncheon clearing, much to the annoyance of the local Noisy Miner population, who pursued them relentlessly with loud complaining calls. But late in the day, the Falcons teamed up to make a raid on the Miner's nest, in the top of a large Eucalypt, and the successful pirate dined defiantly on the hapless chick, quite oblivious to the frantic attentions of the bereft Miners.

A total list of 76 species seemed fair for a satisfying day in interesting surroundings.

Sue Hamonet

## Birds At Stuarts Point

Recently we spent more than a week at a convention centre at Stuarts Point, which is a few kilometres off the Pacific Highway between Kemsey and Macksville. There is plenty of forest country and cleared land, to say nothing of a patch of rain forest at the Yarrahapinni Ecology Centre nearby. During the week we managed to compile a list of over sixty birds.

Around the camping ground and along the road were the usual Laughing Kookaburra, Eastern Rosella, Willie Wagtail, Galah, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Australian Magpie, Pied Currawong and Australian Raven. Scaly-breasted Lorikeet and Rainbow Lorikeet took full advantage of the bottlebrush plants which were blooming at the time. We were awakened each morning by the flute-like notes of the Pied Butcherbird and at about the same time a flock of Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo made their presence known - eleven one morning. Dollarbird and Rainbow Bee-eater were plentiful and more rarely King Parrot while Sacred Kingfisher could be heard (and sometimes seen) in the forest nearby. Spangled Drongo, Common Koel, Figbird, Leaden Fycatcher, Grey Shrike-thrush and Olive-backed Oriole made occasional appearances.

Mistletoe plants were flowering, attracting the honeyeater tribe - Little Wattlebird, Eastern Spinebill, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, New Holland Honeyeater, Lewin's Honeyeater and of course, Noisy Miner and Mistletoebird. Smaller birds included Superb Fairy-wren, Variegated Fairy-wren, Silvereye and Striated Thornbill.

On a farm up the road was a swamp surrounded by paperbarks and this was home to Great Cormorants, Little Black Cormorants, Little Pied Cormorants and Darter as well as Australian Wood Duck, Purple Swamphen and Dusky Moorhen. Overhead were Australian White Ibis, Welcome Swallow and White-breasted Woodswallow. In a tall tree up the hill was the nest of an unidentified raptor but Whistling Kite and Brahminy Kite were both seen. A Pheasant Coucal could be heard in the distance.

At the Ecology Centre in the rain forest the birds are fed each morning at 9 am. The feeding attracts Laughing Kookaburra, Satin Bowerbird, Regent Bowerbird, Green Catbird, Bar-shouldered Dove, Emerald Dove, Wonga Pigeon and White-headed Pigeon, and they can all be viewed at close range from inside since the reflections on the glass doors prevent the birds from seeing the people. In the nearby forest you can see Eastern Yellow Robin, Grey Fantail, Eastern Whipbird, Crested Pigeon and Spectacled Monarch.

Down at the beach Silver Gulls pick up food on the sand. On a previous occasion I saw Red-backed Fairy-wren in the scrub on the sandhills but not this time. On the lagoon which is reported to be the former mouth of the Macleay River are Australian Pelican and Little Egret. I was disappointed not to see a number of other water birds.

A weekend at the Yarrahapinni Ecology Centre is well worth while for the ardent bird lover.

Don & Daphnie Halliday

## Conservation Corner

### 1. Big Pond.

This letter from Pam Allen (see opposite) should not be taken as confirmation of victory in the battle to gain permanent protection for the "Big Pond", but it is certainly an important step forward. HBOC will write to Pam Allen and Bob Carr stressing the uniqueness of the "Big Pond" and thanking them for their concern and conservation perception.

### 2. Five Islands Bridge.

There are strong rumours that the bridge that links the Speers Point and the Teralba roundabouts is to be widened. HBOC will try to discover exactly what is planned and if possible take an active role in ensuring the extensions are as environmentally and feathered friends friendly as possible.

David Kibble - Conservation Officer

## Wild Life Preservation Society of Australia

GPO BOX 3428 SYDNEY NSW 2001  
TELEPHONE & FAX (02) 9556 1537

The annual Urban Bird Count will take place on January 1st, 1998.

The Wild Life Preservation Society asks any interested person to walk around the garden between 7am and 8am recording, not only the kinds of birds they see or hear, but also the numbers present in the garden, or flying over.

Post your list with your address and postcode to Mrs Rosalind Gordon, BIRD COUNT COMPILER, WLPS of Australia.

Facts obtained will help in the study of urban birdlife. Last year's count revealed the following in New South Wales.

Species	% of gardens present in	Average / garden
Australian Magpie	75	2.3
Common Mynah	52	2.3
Pied Currawong	50	1.3
Rainbow Lorikeet	48	3.3
Laughing Kookaburra	43	0.9
House Sparrow	41	3.3
Galah	39	2.5
Crested Pigeon	39	1.3
Magpie-lark	39	0.9
Noisy Miner	37	1.6



MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT  
NEW SOUTH WALES

Level 9 St James Centre 111 Elizabeth Street Sydney 2000  
Telephone: (02) 9233 4044 Facsimile: (02) 9233 3617

In reply please quote:  
97/08891/mlu/mgo

Mr David Kibble  
Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc  
PO Box 24  
NEW LAMBTON NSW 2305

12 SEP 1997

Dear Mr Kibble

The Minister for the Environment, the Hon Pam Allan MP, has asked me to respond to your recent letter concerning the "Big Pond" on Kooragang Island. The Premier also referred a copy of your letter to Ms Allan, and I would be grateful if you would consider this as a response to that letter.

The Director-General of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) has advised that the NPWS has undertaken an investigation of the matter, and supports the Club's view that the "Big Pond" has conservation significance and is the only freshwater wetland of its type remaining in the Hunter estuary.

As you are aware, the land is presently identified for industrial purposes, and is owned and managed by the Department of Public Works and Services.

Accordingly, the Minister recently wrote to the Minister for Public Works and Services, the Hon Carl Scully MP, emphasising the conservation significance of the site and supporting your request that the Department reconstruct the small weir and restore previous water levels in the "Big Pond", and give serious consideration to the long term protection of this wetland.

The Minister trusts that this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely

*Angela Hanger*

FOR

PATRICK HOLLAND  
Policy Adviser  
to the Minister for the Environment

# Arid Avians

## Gould League Bird Study Camp - Currawinya National Park

Like Brigadoon the Gould League Bird Study Camp comes to life but once a year. Its sole reason for existence is to run an eight to ten day camp at a suitable venue within NSW, although occasional forays across the border, such as Currawinya are condoned. Currawinya National Park is literally the back of Bourke, about 250km to the northwest on the Queensland side of the border. This year's event from 30 September to 9 October was organized by our own HBOC president Ann Lindsey. Despite her modest protestations of being disorganised, Ann chose a terrific venue for the camp which was extremely well run, especially considering the remoteness of the area and the 35 intermingling personalities.

A camp such as this is a birder's bliss. Birding all day with prepacked lunches, then returning to camp for cooked dinners and breakfasts, all eaten outside under bush timber shade shelters. Hot borewater showers were another luxury after firing up the donkey, a big blackened boiler! Three fence posts, from a big pile supplied by the ranger, was usually sufficient fuel. Those not camping under canvas occupied the shearers' quarters adjacent to the now historical, abandoned wool shed of Currawinya Homestead.

The park is dominated by the blue-grey sameness of acacia Mulga Scrublands which easily confused the unwary - several campers (including me) suffered unwonted adrenalin rushes when realising they were lost - fortunately for only an hour at the most, but what a harrowing hour! Eucalypt-lined water courses and billabongs of the ephemeral Paroo River provided a welcome contrast to the mulga with strikingly coloured River Red Gums and sensuous Yapunyah stretching long brown limbs towards the sky. Numerous dry salt and clay pans are dotted throughout, but the main features of the park are several large fresh and salt water lakes. Thus although arid western bush birds were of great interest, water birds were in some places staggeringly abundant. The number and variety of raptors were also notable.

Crested Bellbirds with their distinctive and delightful calls were actually very common as were Major Mitchell Cockatoos, Ringneck, Blue Bonnet, Mulga and Red Winged Parrots, Cockatiels, Chestnut Rumped and Inland Thornbills, Spiny Cheeked, Striped, Blue Faced, Singing and White Plumed Honeyeaters, Yellow Throated Miners, Little and Noisy Friarbirds, Grey Crowned and Chestnut Crowned Babblers. All the Woodswallow species were seen. A peculiarly colourless western form of the Rufous Whistler was interesting. Spotted Bower Birds were also common and several well decorated bowers were found with pavements of white stones and bleached bones and side displays of pale green glass fragments and broken brown bottle necks. Freshly picked green berries were placed on the floor of the bower itself.

Especially sought-after birds of the Mulga, were the spectacular White Winged and Splendid Wrens, Red Browed Pardalote, Diamond Dove, Red Backed Kingfisher, White Browed Treecreeper and Halls Babbler. Eventually, nearly all campers saw these birds, as the bird count each evening encouraged and directed them where to look. Bourkes Parrot was also eagerly sought but hardly seen by most until many days into the camp. This was amusing to us as we had seen them from the first day and on every day, prompting many people to inquire where we had seen them, possibly only in our imaginations! Highlights for us and most people were the brilliant Crimson and Orange Chats commonly seen on what became known as 'chat flat' adjacent to one of the lakes. Betty from the Gold Coast was affectionately

dubbed 'Lady Chatterly' for her arm waving flourishes as she strolled through the saltbush and the chats rose around her.

Some waterbirds were spectacular in their abundance, about 10,000 Hardheads on one lake alone, hundreds of Black Winged Stilts and Red Necked Avocets, dozens of Pink Eared Ducks, Red-necked Stints, Marsh, Sharp-tailed and Curlew Sandpipers and the occasional Musk Duck, Australian Shoveler, Plumed Whistling Duck, Australian Shelduck, Banded Lapwing and Banded Stilt.

A total of 14 raptor species were observed, many offering great views at their nest sites such as the Black Breasted Buzzard, Whistling Kite, Collared Sparrowhawk, Wedge-tailed Eagle, Little Eagle and Hobby. Brown Goshawks were common and our day was not complete without what I called our daily Goshawk, sometimes spied late in the arvo at the campsite with stubby in hand. Peregrine and Brown Falcons were not uncommon and even the Grey Falcon was seen by a lucky few. We counted 7 Wedge-tailed Eagles at one location, in the vicinity of a road kill.

In the evenings, a Barn Owl, Owlet Nightjar and Tawny Frogmouth were sighted and the Boobook Owl and Owlet Nightjars were often heard. One night we heard three Owlet Nightjars calling at the same time. An overnight road-killed Spotted Nightjar was brought in one day for us all to admire in the hand. It was wonderful lying in your sleeping bag listening to the bugling calls of Black Swans flying low overhead and then the trumpeting of Brolgas as they made their night-time migration between the lakes.

Emus were very abundant, many with striped chicks in tow. We had a nightly competition to see just how many chicks the old man could look after. The largest creche of striped emulets was 12!

Birds expected, but disappointingly not seen, were the Pied and Black Honeyeaters. Chirruping Wedgebills were seen by Alan Morris, Chief Ranger for the Central Coast, but only on the last day, when it was not possible for most of us to revisit the site. Pratincoles, Cinnamon and Chestnut Breasted Quail Thrushes were rarely seen and not by us. Oh well, you've got to leave some birds for next time!

Not content with listing birds, we also listed mammals, reptiles and amphibians that were observed on our daily rounds of the park. Mammals included Red and Western Kangaroos, Wallaroos, Yellow-bellied Sheath-tailed Bats, rabbits, foxes, cats, pigs, goats, sheep and cattle. Reptiles included Mulga Snakes, Sand and Black-tailed Monitors, Shingle-backed and Blue-tongued Lizards, two species of Geckos, many Skinks, Gilberts Lashtail, Central Bearded Dragon and Painted Dragon. Amphibians included the Holy Cross Toad, Perons Tree, Green Tree, Desert Tree, Ornate Burrowing and Barking Frogs.

The park has a bird list totalling about 180 species of birds, an incredible 160 of these were sighted during the camp! Including the trip up and back, I bagged 27 new species so I was more than happy.

Next year's Bird Study Camp, also to be organised by Ann Lindsey, is to be held in the Warrumbungles and promises to be equally enjoyable.

Chris Herbert

# OBSERVATIONS FROM OCTOBER/NOVEMBER CLUB NIGHTS

Aug 15	Brown Falcon	2	Parkville	G.Newling
	Little Eagle	2	Bayswater Colliery	"
	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	1	"	"
Aug 17	Zebra Finch	40	Broke	"
	Cattle Egret	27	Jerry's Plains	"
	Straw-necked Ibis	16	"	"
Aug 18	Western Gerygone	2	Bayswater Colliery	"
Aug 21	Grey Butcherbird	2	Wingen Village	"
Aug 24	Australian Hobby	1	Aberdeen	"
Aug 27	Australian Raven	1	Wingen Village	"
Aug 29	Little Black Cormorant	5	Parkville	"
Aug 27	Black-shouldered Kite Nest	2	Fern Bay	M.Kearns
Aug 28	Leaden Flycatcher	2	Lemon Tree Passage	"
	Spotted Pardalote Nest	2	"	"
	Sacred Kingfisher Nest bldg	2	"	"
Aug 29	Australian Wood Duck	2+4dy	Salt Ash	"
	Masked Lapwing	2+2dy	Grahamstown Dam	"
	Masked Lapwing	2+1dy	"	"
	Dollarbird	2	Medowie	"
	Noisy Miner	20+2dy	Grahamstown Dam	"
	Willie Wagtail Nest with eggs	2	"	"
	Musk Duck	1	"	"
Aug 30	Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	Wingen Village	G.Newling
AugSep	White-faced Heron	2-4	New Lambton	A.Stuart
Aug 24	White-browed Scrubwren	1	Wallsend	T.Clarke
Aug 30	Superb Fairy-wren	1	"	"
	Striated Pardalote Nest	1	Lemon Tree Passage	M.Kearns
Sep	Barn Owl	1	Shortland	G.Brosie
Sep 7-10	Channel-billed Cuckoo		Jesmond	"
Sep	Powerful Owl	2+1dy	Blackbutt Reserve	P.&M.Hely
Sep 7	Magpie-Goose [flying over]	4	Wingen Village	G.Newling
Sep 10	Rainbow Bee-eater	4	"	"
Sep 16	Great Cormorant	4	Parkville	"
Sep 10	White-headed Pigeon	7	New Lambton Heights	M.Hamilton
Sep 14	Sacred Kingfisher	1	Anna Bay	I.Hamilton
Sep 3	Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	Secret Bay	R.Waymark
Sep 13	Black Bittern	1	"	"
Sep 12	Latham's Snipe	2	Market Swamp	T.Clarke
Sep 19	Latham's Snipe	3	"	"
Sep 13	Tawny Grassbird	4	Wallsend	"
	Golden-headed Cisticola	B	"	"
	Clamorous Reed-Warbler	B	"	"
	White-fronted Chat	2	"	"
Sep 26	Black-fronted Dotterel	1	Market Swamp	"
Sep 20	Tawny Frogmouth	1	New Lambton	A.Stuart
Sep 28	Pallid Cuckoo	1	"	"
Sep 19	Australian Magpie Nest with yng	2	Malabula	M.Kearns
Sep 25	Australian Magpie Nest with yng	2	Mayfield	"
	Black-shouldered Kite	1	"	"
Sep 20	Grey Goshawk	1	Blackbutt Reserve	P.Lightfoot
Sep 21	Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	1	Jesmond Bushland	"
	Red-capped Plover	6+1dy	Big Pond, Kooragang	S.Hamonet
	Swamp Harrier	2	Big Pond, Kooragang	S.Hamonet
	Curlew Sandpiper	10+	"	"
	Red Knot	1	"	"
	White-fronted Chat	6+	"	"
Sep 26	Australian Wood Duck	6	Parkville	G.Newling
	Little Black Cormorant	8	"	"
	Great Cormorant	6	"	"
	Grey Teal	4	"	"
	Pacific Black Duck	3	"	"
	White-faced Heron	2	"	"



Sep 20	Little Eagle	2	Muswellbrook Common	"
	Eastern Yellow Robin	2	"	"
	Western Gerygone	3	"	"
Sep 25	Shining Bronze-cuckoo	1	Wingen	"
Sep 26	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	4	Parkville	"
	Straw-necked Ibis	9	"	"
	White-necked Heron	2	"	"
Sep 25	Topknot Pigeon	100+	Cardiff Heights	J.Perry
Sep 9	Black-faced Monarch	1	S.W.C.	W.Barden
late Sep	Rainbow Bee-eater	3	"	"
Oct	Pheasant Coucal	1	Rankin Park	J.Stephenson
Oct 4	Scarlet Honeyeater	2	Silo Hill, Stroud	P.Hanson
Oct 5	Glossy Black Cockatoo	5	Martinsville	G.McCulloch
	Spangled Drongo	2	S.W.C.	W.Barden
	Azure Kingfisher	1	"	"
	Latham's Snipe	2	"	"
Oct 7	Wedge-tailed Shearwater	10,000	Off Seal Rocks	J.Perry
Oct 8	Southern Boobook [calling]	1	S.W.C.	S.Hamonet
Oct 6	Dollarbird	1	Mirabooka	G.McCulloch
Oct 9	Singing Bushlark	2	Bayswater Colliery	G.Newling
Oct 15	<b>Black Falcon</b>	1	"	"
Oct 20	Barn Owl	1	Aberdeen	"
Oct 21	Black-fronted Dotterel	2	Bunnan	"
	Australian Hobby	1	Manobolai	"
	Australian Hobby	1	Scone	"
	Leaden Flycatcher	3	Manobolai	"
	Singing Bushlark	4 pr	Bunnan	"
	<b>Black Falcon</b>	1	Wybong	"
	Brown Songlark	1m	"	"
Oct 10	Aust. Magpie-lark Nest/young	2	Malabula	M.Kearns
Oct 11	Sacred Kingfisher Nest bldg.	1	Lemon Tree Passage	"
Oct 12	Royal Spoonbill	18	Tea Gardens	"
	Intermediate Egret	15	"	"
	Great Egret	25	"	"
Oct 15	Dollarbird	2	Nesca Pde Newcastle	J.Moyse
Oct 25	Striated Heron	2	Lemon Tree Passage	M.Kearns
	Striated Pardalote Nest	1	"	"
	Australian Raven Nest/eggs	2+1dy	"	"
Oct 26	Red Wattlebird	1	Malabula	"
Oct 27	White-necked Heron	3	Williamstown	"
Oct 28	Nankeen Night Heron	13	Stockton Sandspit	"
Oct 31	Masked Lapwing Nest/eggs	2	Williamstown	"
Oct 4	Dollarbird	1	Secret Bay	R.Waymark
Oct 4	Sacred Kingfisher	1	Secret Bay	R.Waymark
Oct	Pheasant Coucal	1	Rankin Park	J.Stephenson
Oct/Nov	Ruddy Turnstone	20-30	Ocean Baths, Newcastle	R.Parker
Nov 1	Nankeen Kestrel	1	Wallsend	T.Clarke
Nov 2	Gang-gang Cockatoo	2	Summit Point, Sugarloaf	R.Walker
	Helmeted Guinea Fowl	4	Mt. Sugarloaf	"
Nov 9	Australian Hobby	1	Glendonbrook	"
	Wedge-tailed Eagle	2	"	"
Nov 8	Pink-eared Duck	7	Stockton Borehole	J.Perry
Nov 1	White-throated Needletail	15+	Garden Suburb	"
Nov 8	Tawny Frogmouth	12+2dy	Rankin Park	J.Stephenson
	Grey Butcherbird	2+4dy	"	"
Nov 9	Pacific Baza	1 imm	"	"
Nov 10	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	35	Edgeworth	G.O'Connor
Nov 11	Little Corella	flock	Seaham	G.Mae
Nov 9	Masked Owl Road kill	1	7km Nth of Bulahdelah	D.Geering
Nov 8	Dusky Woodswallow	11	Oyster Cove	M.Kearns
	Brown Quail	2	"	"
	Southern Emu-wren	3pr.	"	"
	Tawny Grassbird	1	"	"

## Birds On Roundabouts

There isn't much to do on a bus, especially on a bus bound for university, as the majority of travellers lack a personality and show no emotion to fuel my social curiosity. So once my eyes become strained from staring at the attractive female passengers, I tend to look out the window and try to spot wildlife.

My bus turns right at the roundabout on Newcastle Road at the western edge of Jesmond Park. This roundabout must be one of the biggest in the world as it not only accomodates a mature palm tree, which marks its centre, but there is also enough open space to kick a footy around as well as plots of native grass tussocks. A pair of Masked Lapwings are the sole visible animal occupants.

I first noticed them this winter. They would either be standing still, as if to keep watch, or one would be walking carefully and slowly in search of food, like a magpie.

Around six weeks ago (mid September), I could only spot one. The other one was missing for about three weeks, during which time I suspected and hoped that it was incubating. Then one Wednesday around lunch time I was rewarded for my persistent inquisitiveness when I saw through the dust coated bus window a helpless looking downy chick close to the plot of grass tussocks on the western side of the roundabout. One parent was sitting next to it while the other was keeping watch at a distance of about eight metres. All this with motor vehicles constantly roaring by.

Two days later though I couldn't spot the chick, however the two parents were present. I was a bit worried because I noticed the grass (not the tussocks) had been mown by the council since I had last gone by. I havn't seen the chick since.

On the last three occasions my bus has gone past, one of the birds has been sitting in the same spot out in the open near the palm tree. I wonder if it is incubating an egg or two. I hope the council doesn't mow the roundabout again for a while.

Colin Goodenough

## NEW MEMBERS

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

Sheena Goodwin of Arcadia Vale  
Mark Loewenthal & Sue Tiley of Cook's Hill  
Ann Squair of Hamilton  
Sylvia Rea of Paxton

we look forward to meeting you at Clubnights and field outings during the new year.

## Couldn't Find The Woods For The Trees

Warkworth Outing 23/11/97

Thirteen members of the club attended this field excursion and the weather turned out hot and dry. We travelled north west from Cessnock to Wambo Colliery land and entered via a gate and track from the Jerry's Plains road (or we thought we did).

Within an hour a utility arrived with the caretaker to tell us we were trespassing on private land which belonged to Warkworth Pastoral Company. We had gone through the wrong gate!! After Liz Herbert, our leader, had sorted it out we exited via the right track which ran parallel over the fence.

During the return trip to the cars for morning tea our venerable Librarian managed to mislay himself. A short cut through the bush turned into a very long walk and two and a half hours later he returned in a much wiser and tired state. To find his way out of the predicament he finally and literally followed the cows home.

Many thanks to those who spent time looking for the elusive Keith and also to Janene Henderson, a local good samaritan, who patrolled the roads for us and picked him up. Is this a first for a club outing? One consolation was that the bird count was considerably enhanced by the incident.

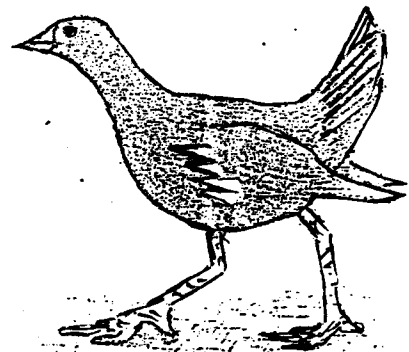
Despite the heat and dryness of the bush, birdlife was plentiful with interesting sightings of Cicadabird, Western Gerygone, twenty Mistletoebird and a flock of White-backed Swallows. The final count was sixty eight species

Margaret Woods

## Black-tailed Native-hens *Gallinula ventralis* Along The Birdsville Track

A millenium of  
native-hens  
litter the  
stoney plain.

Comic they strut  
tails aloft  
sails of a cartoon  
pirate ship.



David Kibble

## Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given of the Annual General Meeting of the Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc. to be held at the Shortland Wetlands Centre on 11th February 1998 commencing at 7:30pm.

**Business of the meeting:**

- Confirmation of minutes of 1997 AGM
- Annual Report Including Financial Report
- Special Resolution to change the Rules (see separate notice)
- 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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### Notice of Special Resolution

Notice is hereby given of the intention to move a special resolution at the AGM on 11th February 1998. The resolution seeks to change the Rules of Hunter Bird Observers Club Inc. in the following manner;

that rule 15 (1) (b) be changed to read

**"not more than 6 ordinary members, each of whom shall be elected at the annual general meeting of the Club pursuant to rules 16 and 15 (4)."**

and that rule 21 (5) be changed to read

**"Any members of the committee consisting of at least half of the elected committee members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of the business of a meeting of the committee."**

The purpose of the above amendments is to allow the ordinary members of the Committee to increase from a maximum of four to six (making a maximum total of ten committee members) and to adjust the quorum to reflect this change.

Moved Alan Stuart, Seconded Peter Phillips

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### Election of HBOC Office Bearers for 1998

Nominations are called for the following positions for 1998:

**President**

**Vice President**

**Secretary**

**Treasurer**

**Ordinary Members of the Management Committee.**

(Final number of positions will depend on result of Special Resolution)

Nominations shall be made in writing and signed by two members of the Club and accompanied by the written consent of the candidate. Written nominations shall be delivered to the Secretary by 4th February 1998.

If insufficient written nominations are received by 4th February 1998, the candidates nominated shall be deemed to be elected and further nominations shall then be received at the AGM.

Peter Phillips.      Public Officer.

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## 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 18th January	Field Day: Meet: Leader:	Dora Creek/Whiteheads Lagoon Toronto MacDonald's 6:30am Sue Hamonet (02) 4958 1023
Tuesday 3rd February	Midweek Outing: Meet: Contact:	Walka Water Works Car park off Scobies Lane, Lorn 8:00am Max Blanch (02) 4961 1655
Wednesday 11th February	Clubnight: Main feature:	Shortland Wetlands Centre 7:30pm Annual General Meeting.
Sunday 22nd February	Field Day: Meet: Leader:	Grahamstown Dam Raymond Terrace McDonald's 7:00am Jim Perry (02) 4943 2496
Sunday 1st March	Clean Up Australia Day - Stockton Sand Spit Meet: Contact:	Under the bridge 9:00am Tom Clarke (02) 4951 3872

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