

I. B. O. C. NEWS

No. 130 FEBRUARY, 1990.



THE CIRCULAR OF THE ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB

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POSTAL ADDRESS P.O. BOX 56, FAIRY MEADOW, NSW 2519

CLUB MOTTO "ONE GOOD TERN DESERVES ANOTHER"

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CLUB'S AIM

This is to join together people with a common interest who wish to further their knowledge and enjoyment of the birdlife around them.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

These are due on 1st January each year
FAMILY \$10 SINGLE \$7 STUDENT \$2

NEXT MEETING - Will be held at the Fairy Meadow Senior Citizen Centre, corner of Collaery Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, Monday, 12th February, 1990, commencing at 7.30 pm. Our Guest Speaker for the evening will be Annette Prehm. Annette is employed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service currently working at the Minnamurra Falls N.P. and her talk for the evening will be about Rainforest Protection which should prove to be very interesting.

NEXT OUTING - WEDNESDAY - FEBRUARY 7th. This is our annual new year get together at Windang. We will be meeting at the eastern end of the pine trees on the northern side of the entrance to Lake Illawarra at 5 pm. There should be plenty of water birds, waders, gulls and terns so come along and bring a bite to eat afterwards.

SATURDAY - FEBRUARY 17th. This month's field outing will be to the new Forest Island track in the Royal National Park. We will be meeting at the southern end Lady Carrington Drive in the park at 8.30 am. Habitat includes wet eucalypt forest and rainforest patches. This is an excellent walk and I highly recommend it. Please note that there is a \$4 entry fee per car into the park therefore car pooling would be advisable.

Chris Chafer

FROM THE PRESIDENT. As we start a new year I would like to thank all members and committee members for their support last year and for their confidence in voting me in for another term. Last year we promoted a few changes to our routine which we believe made things run better. This year we hope that the speakers, walks, films and bus trips prove to be successful enabling us to carry on with the strength we have enjoyed for the past thirteen years. The committee plays a very important roll in the smooth running of the club and this year we would like to see, if possible, other members attending one or two committee meetings and injecting some new ideas and involvement in the Club's activities. In conclusion I would like to thank the members who set up the hall and others who serve in the canteen on our meeting nights and all the people who attend our walks, meetings, etc. People are what our club is about as well as birds.

Brian Hales

FROM THE TREASURER.

1990 Membership fees are now overdue. Please pay Ron Almond as soon as possible so that the mailing list can be brought up to date. Fees are Family \$10, single \$7 and Student \$2.

MID-WEEK OUTING TO SAINT MARY'S TOWERS, DOUGLAS PARK, 6th December, 1989.

Our December mid-week outing was attended by five members, meeting at the entrance to St. Mary's Towers, at 8.30 am on a calm, humid, cloudy morning. The clouds tempered the weather and gave us an excellent morning for walking.

Before we left the entrance gate we had twenty birds on our list. A few of these were the Red-rumped Parrot, Eastern Rosella, White-winged Triller, Dusky Woodswallow, Noisy Miner and Eastern Swamphen. While driving up to the Monastery a Dollarbird was observed flying overhead. We passed by the group of buildings which includes the Monastery and Retreat and parked the cars just beyond the cottage from where we began our walk. We made our way across to the large dam in which we observed the Eastern Swamphen, Dusky Moorhen and Pacific Black Duck with young. As we walked on through the grazing section of the property there was a large stand of eucalypts which attracts many birds to the area. Here we observed the Australian Magpie, Palid Cuckoo, Willie Wagtail, House Sparrow, Welcome Swallow, Grey Butcherbird and immature Channel-billed Cuckoo. From there the track led on to the freeway which runs through the property and forested area takes over from the grazing land. The forest consists of Ironbark trees, which pre-dominate, with a mix of other eucalypts and wattles, many small shrubs which form a thick ground cover and isolated outcrops, through which a creek flows. It is a very pleasant area in which to walk observing the birds and vegetation. Entering the forest the Yellow-faced Honeyeater was heard calling. After going under the freeway, through a culvert, the forest changed as we came to the creek in a wet gully. The track crossed the creek then up to higher ground, overlooking the gully. We came to a very dry open forest where the birdlife came alive, those little brown birds everywhere in the tree tops. Slowly they were identified one by one. There was a group of sittellas, Brown-headed Honeyeater, White-throated Treecreepers, Striated Pardalote, White-eared Honeyeater, Grey Shrike-thrush, and a group of White-throated Needle-tails overhead. At this spot we headed back, along the same track. The birds were still active, the White-throated Gerygone which had been heard calling earlier was sighted in some acacias, the Rufous Whistler, Lewin's Honeyeater, White-eared Honeyeater and Spotted Pardalote were also observed. Back near the cars the Yellow-rumped Thornbill, Welcome Swallow and Tree Martin were observed. For the morning we recorded 55 species.

Horace Ward.

BANGALEE RESERVE, 9th DECEMBER, 1989.

Our final outing for the year 1989 was held at Bangalee Reserve, with an attendance of 22, on a calm, humid, cloudy afternoon.

We parked our cars just inside the entrance gate to the reserve, in a small parking area. From there we walked about 500 metres along the road which runs through the reserve, then turned off to follow the forest walk, a trail for bush walking. It is a short hard walk with some rock climbing up on to an escarpment, then down again to the grassy river flats. The first section of the track was through some rainforest with hanging vines, ferns and moss covered rocks. Then the track led up the escarpment over the sandstone rocks which are the collapsed sandstone cliff. Reaching the top of the escarpment the track led on through an open eucalypt forest to Condies Walk, a track which goes back down the escarpment to the river flats, making a delightful round walk, through diverse habitat, of about three km. It was a truly delightful walk. In the lower forest we observed the Golden Whistler, Eastern Yellow Robin, Lewin's Honeyeater, Black-faced Monarch and Rufous Fantail and along the river flats Crimson Rosella, Australian Pelican, Yellow-faced Honeyeater and Dollarbird. The Brown Gerygone was building its nest. The call of theonga Pigeon was heard and two Brown Cuckoo Doves were sighted as we came to the picnic area. During the afternoon we recorded a total of 31 species.

Horace Ward.

contd.....

CHRISTMAS MEETING - DECEMBER 11th.

Brian Hales has produced two photograph albums, one of the club history, the other of black and white shots. Both will be available for members to borrow from the library. Karen Hansen, our supper manager, and Jack Hyslop, our official Royal National Park guide, were presented with Octogenarian medals by the president. It is good to see them still so actively involved in the club. Peg and Bob McKinlay received the President's Gold Award for services to the club.

Jim Robinson presented Betty Gibson with a signed copy of Doug's revised book of the Birds of the County of Camden. Dave Thomson showed slides of the first I.B.O.C. trip to Lord Howe Island and an idyllic place it looks. Margaret Parkinson displayed some pre show advertisement for the local business birds. Wal Emery presented a development application to the Council's Odd Soxly to upgrade the bike track in preparation for Laurie Williams's exercise program. Russell Hales strummed a "Bon Jovial" tune and Wendy Hanks gave a rendition of "Because".

Barbara Hales prosed pommie poems about a tricky parrot and a starling family. Chris and Kerry Chafer performed the Barking Owl, Ninox woofii, mating performance, which ended in the usual headache excuse. Aussie Brian Hales played that old favourite "Click to the Shears" on his Japanese organ and as we enjoyed it so much he played it again.

Denise Strickland read a moving poem on a bird's last migration. Laurie Williams presented a complaint from the Pollution Control Board. Denise Strickland and Margaret Parkinson did a little skit on the effect of acid rain on bird habitats and their adapting to a modern diet of saccarin and Pal.

The come as another Member competition was won by Horrie (Wal Emery) Ward, second was Brian and Betty (Gwen Robinson) Kelly, third was Peggy (Olive Rodwell) Merret and last but not least was Phil (Barbara Hales) Bath.

Santa Hales came down the chimney to give Chrissy cheer to Karen, Betty, Jim, Bob, Brian and Betty, Horriw, Nola and Gwen. Betty Kelly presented Wal Emery with the key to the City of Bulga. Laurie found Santa had dropped Brian's present and delivered it. It was an anti-snoring kit to help the island trippers get some sleep and keep the birds on the island.

Betty and Brian showed two videos, the first on their trip to the pulsating, developing city of Bulga, the other on the Lake Cowal camp, including the boat trip with more captains than crew.

Chris Brandis.

NOVEMBER BUS TRIP.

This year we are planning something a little different for you. The November field outing will be in the form of a weekend bus trip camping overnight on Saturday. We will be visiting the Newcastle-Gosford Region and exploring some of the better birding spots. Highlights will include Shortland Wetland Centre - a multitude of waterbirds including the huge egret colony in which all four "white" egrets breed. Wandering and Plumed Whistling Duck, Magpie Goose and many more; Stockton Bridge/Kooragang Island - probably the best location in N.S.W. for shorebirds, on a recent trip here I observed over 10,000 individuals. Highlights include Red-necked Avocet, Terek Sandpiper, Gull-billed Tern, Mongolian Plover, large numbers of Bar-tailed Godwits, Osprey, Striated Heron and Mangrove Gerygone; Swansea - where we will spend the night; Red Gum Nature Reserve - huge and beautiful Angophora forest, plenty of bush birds including White-checked Honeyeater; Norah Head - a superb rocky headland, good for rockshelf and sea birds; Katandra Forest - a mixed eucalypt/rainforest area where we could find Pacific Baza, Regent Bowerbird, Scarlet Honeyeater, Green Catbird and many more. On a recent reconnaissance here of the areas mentioned above we recorded over 150 species and it rained for part of the time. Accommodation will be in stand-up type camping tents and a limited number of overnight caravan berths for those who don't like tents. Cost will be around \$100 per person including meals. We will be departing early on Saturday morning circa 7 am and returning late on Sunday circa 8 pm.

A list will be passed around at the February meeting to indicate who will be interested in attending this outing. If you can't come to the meeting but think you will be interested in going on the trip give me a ring on 752339 and I will note you down. At this stage there is no obligation to the namees, it is purely to find out if we can get enough numbers to make the trip economical.

Chris Chafer.

UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS REPORT - NOVEMBER/DECEMBER, 1989.

Owlet Nightjar	1	Helensburgh	29 Sep	T. Grant
Tawny Frogmouth	2	Woonona (with young)	1 Nov	K. Mills
Little Corella	2	Stanwell Park	1 "	J. Hyslop
Azure Kingfisher	1	Nth Wollongong	- "	L. Williams
Kelp Gull	6	Wollongong Baths	- "	"
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1-2	Woonona	2-12 "	K. Mills
Striated Heron	1	Shoalhaven Heads	3 "	S. & G. Parker
Fuscous Honeyeater	4+	Bailey's Island (Geroa)	3 "	"
Little Corella	6	Gerringong	4 "	"
Singing Bushlark	1	Jaspers Brush	4 "	B. Virtue
Pallid Cuckoo	1	Lake Heights	5 "	C. Chafer
Pilotbird	1	Waterfall	11 "	K. Mills
Koel	1	Mt. Pleasant	12 "	D. Thomson
Koel	1	Gerringong	12 "	J. & G. Parker
Koel	1	Helensburgh	13 "	K. Mills
Little Corella	8	Woonona Beach	13 "	H. Ward
Collared Sparrowhawk	1	Mt. St. Thomas	14 "	C. Brandis
Sooty Owl	2	Helensburgh (1 juv.)	14 "	R. Jordan
Figbird	2	Gerringong	14 "	J. & G. Parker
White-throated Needletail	3	Greenwell Point	22 "	C. Chafer & D. Wright
Powerful Owl	2	Culburra	22 "	" "
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	Broughton Creek	22 "	" "
Common Bronzewing	1	Dangalee	22 "	" "
Black-bellied Storm Petrel	4+	off Wollongong	26 "	D. Fischer et al
Black-winged Petrel	1	"	26 "	" "
Gould's Petrel	4	"	26 "	" "
Buller's Shearwater	1	"	26 "	" "
Pacific Daza	1	Appin	27 "	K. Mills
Large Sand Plover	1	Windang	29 "	C. Chafer
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1+	Keiraville	all "	R. Almond
Koel	2	Gerringong	all "	J. & G. Parker
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1-3	Mt. Pleasant	all "	D. Thomson
Tawny Frogmouth	2	Keiraville	1 Dec	R. Almond
Red-rumped Parrot	1	Mt. Pleasant	3 "	D. Thomson
White-headed Pigeon	1	"	5-7 "	" "
White-winged Triller	2	Douglas Park	6 "	" " et al
Red-rumped Parrot	3	" "	6 "	" "
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	" " (juv)	6 "	" "
Pallid Cuckoo	1	" "	6 "	" "
Leaden Flycatcher	1	" "	6 "	" "
White-throated Needletail	2	" "	6 "	" "
Weebill	5	Dapto	6 "	R. Imisides
Streaked Shearwater	1	Bass Point	6 "	C. Brandis
Koel	1	Stanwell Park	6 "	J. Hyslop
Musk Duck	12	Waywards Bay	- "	C. Brandis
Striated Heron	6	" "	- "	"
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1-4	Mangerton	10-20 "	D. Fischer
Australian Hobby	1	Wollongong C.B.D.	21 "	K. Mills
White-winged Tern	1	WINDANG	25 "	C. Chafer
Buff-banded Rail	1	Berry (road kill)	27 "	K. Mills
Common Sandpiper	1	Little Lake	27 "	M. Parkinson
Brown Falcon	1	Figtree	29 "	K. Chafer
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1-2	Keiraville	all "	R. Almond
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1-3	Woonona	most "	K. Mills
Koel	2	Gerringong	most "	G. & J. Parker

Unusual sightings contd.

Kevin Mills' Pacific Baza is the fourth recorded occurrence of this species from the region, the others being near Cordeaux in 1880, west of Bulli in 1978 and at Appin in 1980. Owllet Nightjars are also rare in the region, the only previous records coming from the catchment area in 1967, Canyonleigh in 1981, Mt. Murray in 1984 and the Royal National Park in 1985. Likewise the Singing Bush-lark is only known from two other locations, Merro in 1933 and 1939 and Maldon in 1954.

The Sooty Owls were found feeding a juvenile in a dense gully and this appears to be the first occurrence of breeding in the Sydney-Wollongong regions. Channel-billed Cuckoos continue to be regularly observed along the escarpment forests. Very few White-winged Trillers have been reported this summer. Weebills, as I've mentioned before are rarely found east of the escarpment. The November boat trip was one of the best of the year with the number of Black-bellied Storm Petrels being the largest concentration ever recorded in N.S.W. The Treaked Shearwater is the sixth live bird from the Illawarra. The Common Sandpiper was found on the same date at the same place as it occurred the previous summer, while the White-winged Tern has returned each year within ten days of its initial recording at Windang in December 1984.

Chris Chafer.

MID-WEEK WALKS.

Mid week walks take place on the first Wednesday of each month commencing Wednesday 7th March. The March walk will be at the Guide camp at Mount Keira Road. Meet at the gates at 8.30 am. The Wednesday walks are usually for half a day, bring morning tea. For further information contact Ron Almond, 298612, Trace Ward, 843473 or Esme Gay, 293463

Please add to your membership list,

Penny Ferguson, 233 Lawrence Hargrave Drive, Coalcliff, 2508.
Phone 942423.

PROGRAMME FOR 1990

<u>FEBRUARY</u>	7th Wed.	5.00 pm.	Evening outing to Windang.
	12th Mon.	7.30 pm.	Meeting, Annette Prehm - Rainforest Protection.
	17th Sat.		Outing, Forest Island, Royal N.P.
<u>MARCH</u>	12th Mon.	7.30 pm.	Meeting, Bob Crombie, Bird and animal scaping your garden.
	17th Sat.		Outing, Tallawa Dam
<u>APRIL</u>	7th Sat.		Outing, Maianbar.
	9th Mon.	7.30 pm.	Meeting, Members Night.
	13th Fri./16th Mon.		Easter Camp, Murga.
	28th Sat.	7.00 pm.	Film/Video Night.
<u>MAY</u>	14th Mon.	7.30 pm.	Meeting, Fred Spiteri, Raptors.
	19th Sat.		Outing, Bus Trip, Springwood.
	26th Sat.	7.00 pm.	Film/Video Night.
<u>JUNE</u>	11th Mon.	7.30 pm.	Meeting, speaker to be advised.
	16th Sat.		Outing, Gibson Track/Bellambi Point.
	30th Sat.	7.00 pm.	Film/Video Night
<u>JULY</u>	9th Mon.	7.30 pm.	Meeting, speaker to be advised.
	14th Sat.		Outing, Wodi Wodi Track.
	28th Sat.	7.00 pm.	Film/Video Night.
<u>AUGUST</u>	13th Mon.	7.30 pm.	Meeting, Speaker to be advised.
	18th Sat.		Outing - Korrungulla Swamp/Windang.
<u>SEPTEMBER</u>	10th Mon.	7.30 pm.	Meeting, speaker to be advised.
	15th Sat.		Outing, Field of Mars.
	Fri. 28th/1st Oct. Mon.		Family Camp, Wanganderry.
<u>OCTOBER</u>	Sat. 27th/4th Nov. Sun.		Camp, Pilliga.
<u>NOVEMBER</u>	12th Mon.		Meeting, Alan Morris.
	17th Sat./18th Sun.		Bus Trip/Campout, Newcastle.
<u>DECEMBER</u>	8th Sat.		Outing, Carrington Falls.
	10th Mon.	7.30 pm.	Meeting, Members Christmas Meeting.

Wednesday Walks, 1st Wednesday of each month starting time 8.30 am. venues to be advised

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MARCH FIELD OUTING - The next field outing will be held on Saturday, 17th March. We will be exploring the Shoalhaven River Gorge in the vicinity of Tallawa Dam. Our leader for the day will be Dr. Kevin Mills, an internationally known and respected authority on rainforests. Kevin has studied the gorge rainforest pockets for many years and is intimate with both their ecological makeup and the local avian inhabitants. Many species should be observed on this outing. We will be meeting at the Tallawa Dam Road turn-off, 1.4 km east of the Hampden Bridge at Kangaroo Valley at 9 am sharp. Bring a carry lunch. Allow 1½ hours travel from Wollongong.

MID WEEK WALKS - These walks take place the first Wednesday of each month meeting at 8.30 am and finishing approximately 12 noon. March 7th walk is at the Girl Guide camp, Mt. Keira, meet at the gates. April 4th walk will be in the Stanwell Park area, meet at Bald Hill 8.30 am.

NOVEMBER OVERNIGHT CAMPING TRIP. Response to the proposed weekend trip to Newcastle in November has been poor. It has therefore been decided to cancel the trip and the monthly outing for November will now be advised at a later date.

EASTER CAMP - MURGA. As announced at our February meeting, there is the opportunity for some members to be accommodated in the Farm House with hosts Sue and Neil Skinner. Vacancies are limited and we already have four takers. Full board is \$50 per day and we are looking into just bed and breakfast costs. This is a great chance for members who do not have camping gear or those who do not normally attend our camps to join in. You will definitely have a very enjoyable experience at an I.B.O.C. camp. If you would like to participate we must know by the 12th March Meeting, first in first served. For further details ph. 844200.

THE FOREST WALK, RED CEDAR WALK, THE ROYAL NATIONAL PARK.

For our February outing, seventeen members met at the south end of the Carrington Walk to Audley, where the forest begins, 500 metres north of the intersection of the drive through the National Park and the Waterfall turnoff.

It was cool in the early morning becoming warm and humid later with little breeze among the very tall trees. We walked along the Carrington Walk for 500 metres then branched off left onto the Forest Walk. It is a beautiful area with lovely rainforest patches consisting of Red Cedar, Lilly Pilly and Cabbage Tree Palms among the many other species of trees with ferns and vines among the ground litter and a number of moss covered fallen trees lying on the ground. There were some more open areas of wet sclerophyll forest with many eucalypts including many tall Ironbarks in company with Casuarinas, wattles and some Cabbage Tree palms.

The walking track is semi-circular following closely around the lower slopes of a hill forming a gully along which flows the Hacking River. The river is in view from the walking track much of the time for about 3 km. Whether it was by design or good luck, the walk was ideal for the day as we were sheltered by the cool shade of the tall trees all the way, even in the more open forest there was still enough shade to break the sun's rays. One of the beautiful sights of the day was the topmost branches of the eucalypts on the opposite slopes of the gully shining white against the dark green foliage covering the hillside and the water of the Hacking River winding its way over rocks and sand in the foreground.

With all the beautiful sights to see observing birds was a bonus because much of the time we were looking for leeches on the forest floor and they were quite plentiful in some areas in the rain forest. We did make some good sightings nevertheless including Crimson Rosella, Eastern Yellow Robin, Black-faced Monarch, Rufous and Grey Fantail, Green Catbird, Golden Whistler, Rose Robin and Brown Cuckoo-Dove. We arrived back at the cars at 11.45 am and then moved on to Red Cedar Flat for lunch. Afterwards we spent about 30 minutes on the Red Cedar Walk on the eastern side of the road in a section of rainforest, opposite Red Cedar Flat. We then decided to finish up for the day being rather hot. A total of 26 species were observed.

ILLAWARRA LAKE ENTRANCE, BERRIWARRA POINT, WINDANG.

The annual visit to Windang, the first for the year, was attended by thirteen members meeting at 5 pm on the north side of the entrance to Lake Illawarra, on a cool, grey afternoon. We began in fine weather but about 6 pm some light, misty rain came over but it was not enough to interrupt our bird watching. As we usually do, we covered the north side of the entrance from the end of the pine trees to the beach.

It turned out to be a great afternoon with some birds being there in large numbers. The water in the lake was up covering some of the flats with shallow water. As we approached the flats a number of Red-capped Plovers were feeding on the wet sand and a group of about 40 Grey-tailed Tattler, some Bar-tailed Godwits, Green Shank, Great Knot and Red-necked Stint were seen. On the exposed sand were about 300+ Silver Gulls in three main groups. One group of gulls, out on a sand bar, was scattered among about 80 Little Terns, Caspian Tern, Kelp Gull, Masked Lapwing, Eastern Curlew and a White-winged Tern. Over the eastern end of the lake were about 50 Australian Pelicans. We then walked out onto the beach where we came upon a dead banded Wedge-tailed Shearwater. Chris Chafer took charge of the band to send it on to the appropriate address. We arrived back at the cars about 6.15 pm after observing a total of 24 species.

Horace Ward

contd.....

JOHN GOULD AND THE ILLAWARRA.

The name John Gould is synonymous with the early history of both ornithology and exploration of the Australian continent. When Gould finished his extraordinary seven volume work 'The Birds of Australia' in 1848, it encompassed a descriptive, illustrated account of some 600 Australian species. Although a number of these were later reduced to sub-specific level, it still represented over 70 per cent of the species now known to inhabit Australia. This was an incredible achievement in a country so vast and only 60 years after the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788.

Gould's interest in Australia began in the mid 1830's when he began receiving a stream of specimens from his wife's brothers, who had a property in the upper Hunter Valley near Scone. With these and other "novelties" from Australia, he produced his first book on Australian avifauna 'A Synopsis of the Birds of Australia and Adjacent Islands' in 1837-38. His curiosity grew and developed to become an obsession and, in due course, he decided a trip to the 'great southern land' was needed so he could study and collect first hand "the novelties that country has to offer".

In May, 1838, with his wife, eldest child, two servants, a nephew and Great-nephew Gilbert, he sailed for Australia. They arrived in Tasmania in September and explored that state until February, 1839, when Gilbert left for Western Australia and Gould sailed north to Sydney and his brother-in-law's property. Elizabeth Gould remained in Hobart with the rest of the party and in May gave birth to their seventh child. Gould returned to visit his wife briefly before setting off to explore the Murray River in South Australia with Captain Sturt. Gould again returned to Hobart in August, collected the family and sailed north to spend four months exploring the central part of N.S.W. basing himself at Elizabeth's brothers property. Here, west of the Liverpool Ranges, he made some of his most memorable discoveries. They then moved south to Sydney and stayed with Alexander Macleay at his property near Camden. From here Gould travelled first south then east to spend several weeks exploring the 'brushes' of the Illawarra. This occurred in February/March, 1840, 150 years ago this month. Gould left Sydney for England in April, returning via Cape Horn and thus circumnavigating the world.

My interest in Gould was stimulated some eighteen months ago while I was researching material for a forthcoming paper on the Powerful Owl, which incidently Gould described for the first time at a meeting of the Royal Zoological Society in London in October, 1837. The head of this magnificent species is illustrated beautifully in his 1837-38 work, while an equally majestic study appears in Volume 1 of his later work, complete with a carcass of a young koala, one of 22 species of mammal and 20 species of bird the Powerful Owl has been recorded feeding on (but that's another story).

I continued to search for material on Gould's visit to the Illawarra and after many long hours of library reading, I have been able to piece together some of his movements. My research on this matter is far from complete but, as it is the 150th anniversary of his visit to our region, I felt it appropriate to publish what I know. If any of you reading this can enlighten my knowledge on this subject I would be only too pleased to hear from you.

Gould spent time visiting with a number of prominent locals such as Throsby-Smith, Cunningham and McArthur, travelled along the old Bong Bong Road which descends the escarpment behind Dapto, visited Mt. Kembla and the surrounding forests, Jamberoo and Kiama, received mail at Wollongong Post Office and explored at least part of the Yarrawa Brush near Robertson, which would have still been intact at that time. While here he recorded well in excess of 100 species, many of which he collected for specimens. Some of his more interesting records include Wompoo Pigeon (now locally extinct), Glossy Black Cockatoo, Grey Currawong, Log-runner, Topknot Pigeon, Emerald Dove, White-cheeked Honeyeater and the Brush Turkey, which he regarded as being as numerous as the lyrebird.

contd.....

JOHN GOULD AND THE ILLAWARRA CONDOR.

While Gould was busy running around the countryside his wife and family remained in Camden. Here they had a semi-domesticated Brush Turkey. This was to become the subject of Elizabeth's artistic hand and eventually used to illustrate the species in Volume 1 of 'The Birds of Australia'. Shortly after the portrait was finished the unfortunate Brush Turkey saw its reflection in the property's well and "mistaking it for a rival, he darted at it, precipitated himself in the water and was drowned". The bird was recovered, preserved as a specimen and sent back to England. In 1847 Gould sold his Australian collection to an American (a decision he later regretted) and this was later donated to the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia in the United States where the collection, including our Brush Turkey, is now held.

A few further facts are probably also worth noting. At the time of Gould's visit, Wollongong was only six years old, having been surveyed by Thomas Mitchell in 1834. Gong Bong road was the only regular route from Wollongong to that part of the highlands. Cedar cutters were rapidly disposing of this valuable timber in the region. Travel was by foot, horseback, occasional coaches and sailing ship.

During his 76 years of life Gould produced some fifteen folio sized sets of books in 49 volumes, containing over 3,000 plates of birds from various parts of the world and mammals from Australia, over 300 scientific papers, 8 medium sized books and a 636 page 'Handbook to the Birds of Australia'.

Material for this manuscript comes from too many references to list here, but needless to say I have spent many hours in a number of libraries including the Mitchell, Wollongong and Wollongong University, as well as using the greatest work on Gould so far published 'John Gould The Bird Man' by Gordon C. Sauer. In the club's library there is 'The Great Bird Illustrators' by Peyton Skipworth which is well worth a read.

Chris Chafer

FEBRUARY MEETING

Annette Prehn of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, who is stationed at Minnamurra Rainforest (was falls), was the guest speaker and gave a most interesting account of the work being carried out by the dedicated staff of the service. Howard Judd was the pioneer conservationist who studied and developed the Reserve to the detriment of his own business and ensured some pockets of rainforest would be preserved for the future.

The initial Reserve became a Park and is now part of the Budderoo National Park with some 30,000 visitors a year seeing the constant improvements being carried out. All these feet were causing the tracks to erode and exotic weeds such as lantana were gradually ruining the area, so a board is being constructed and regeneration of the forest plants is slowly pushing back the weeds. Rock falls have closed the waterfalls to viewers but when funds are sufficient the board walk will continue to the top waterfalls. Board and canopy walks are the methods now being used to allow people to see the various habitats of eco systems while preventing the damage caused to the forest floor by soil compaction.

There is much we as the area residents can do to help the survival of our forests and the inhabitants. We can ensure the products we purchase are made from alternate timbers that look similar to the rainforest species but are farmed, grow native plants so that any stray seeds do not cause exotic weed growth, do not feed the native animals so they become pests and have to be removed as well as ensuring our pets do not end up feral. If we take care of our environment as well as patronise our Parks and ensure their political future, we will be able to continue to enjoy our bird watching in these beautiful, natural surroundings.

Ron Simcock gave the vote of thanks from a local view point which was carried by all present.

Chris Brandis.

BARREN GROUNDS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE - 1989 REPORT.

During 1989 much of the discussion of the Management Committee meetings centred around the proposed new accommodation buildings. Sightings of the Long-nosed Potoroo and Spotted-tailed Quoll resulted in some alterations to the original plans. The decision was made that the present wardens' house be demolished and a new one erected. Accommodation for visitors will move from the Lodge near the picnic area to an area near the present wardens' house and will comprise four 4-bunk bedrooms, toilet and shower facilities, as well as a separate eating/recreation area.

Two working bees were held during the year - one at the Lodge in June which involved painting the interior, renovations to the plumbing and washing facilities, plus the installation of a gas fridge; and another at the wardens' house in November when a new rainwater tank was installed, along with resurrecting the fishpond, internal and external painting and the erection of new shelving in the kitchen. The demountable building which served as a laboratory has been altered to accommodate four beds and is now known as The Hilton because of its running water and inside toilet. One half of the building doubles as a display/education/slide showing area.

Twenty consecutive wet weekends last year meant that some courses had to be cancelled, resulting in a drop in visitor nights for the second quarter of 1989. Some leakage of water into The Lodge occurred, but the problem has now been fixed and new carpet laid. However, despite the inclement weather, research continued at Barren Grounds. This was greatly assisted by help from volunteers, one from New Zealand and two from America. A research paper on the Eastern Bristle Bird (the first such paper since the fifties) is being prepared for publication; Ground Parrot studies continue - the next census is on March 10th, 1990 and anyone wishing to participate should contact the wardens on (042) 36 0195. Mick and Jacqui Bramwell would love to hear from you.

Overall it has been a very busy year for the committee, with the proposed upgrading generating some rather lively discussions at times. We are indebted to those representatives from the NPWS and Wollongong University for their informed and constructive contributions.

Robin Wilson
I.B.O.C. Representative.

WASHING DISHES!

Washing dishes in the sink is not a favourite passtime but I do have a lovely view from my kitchen window that looks towards the escarpment (which probably accounts for the high number of dishes that get broken in our house).

In the foreground is a huge gum tree which, although dead, provides the perfect perch for birds to be easily seen. The beautiful Darter was seen perched here last month with his outspread wings catching the sunlight. The Dollar Birds usually perch in this tree when they visit us and we saw them last month too.

One day last week I looked out to see a number of pied cormorants sitting in the tree and I was wondering where the one with the lovely orange/brown chest had picked up his 'dye' when they were joined by a couple of White-faced Herons. This is not unusual but within a few minutes there were at least fifty herons gracefully flying around the tree and trying to land but the cormorants were not giving up any perches. To add to the picture a pair of pelicans flew over higher in the sky along with Silver gulls and sparrows and mynahs hopped along the ground while the spotted dove sat on the fence and a pair of ~~Bulbuls~~ ~~bulbuls~~ darted in and out of the bushes. None of the birds were rare or unusual except for the number of herons (we usually get them in ones or twos in our garden) but it was still a lovely few minutes distraction from doing the dishes.

Barbara Hales.

contd.....

UNUSUAL RECORDS JANUARY/FEBRUARY, 1990.

Red-kneed Dotterel	1	Why Juck Bay	16 Dec. 89	C. Brandis
Red-rumped Parrot	1	Unanderra	3 Jan. 90	C. Chafer
Weebill	1	Lake South	7 "	C. Brandis
Noisy Pitta (jov.)	1	Jamberoo Pass	15 "	M. Dramwell
Stubble Quail	4	Appin	17 "	C. Chafer, I. Rowles
Black-winged Stilt	27	Jarrawong	18 "	C. Chafer
Koel	1	Lake Heights	19 "	C. Chafer
Logrunner	4	Mt. Keira	21 "	K. Mills
Cicadabird	1	"	21 "	K. Mills
Pilotbird	1	"	21 "	K. Mills
Sullers Shearwater	1	off Wollongong	21 "	D. Fischer et al
Gould's Petrel	2	"	21 "	"
White-necked Petrel	1	"	21 "	"
Long-tailed Jaeger	4	"	21 "	"
Wandering Albatross	1	"	21 "	"
Figbird	1	Primbee	22 "	R. Imisides
Rufous Night Heron	3	Kembla Grange	22 "	"
Powerful Owl	1	Bass Point	28 "	T. Palliser
Koel	1	Lake Heights	1 Feb.	C. Chafer
White-winged Tern	9	Windang	2 "	L. E. Smith
Double-banded Plover	4	Comerong Island	10 "	C. Chafer
Sooty Oystercatcher	16	Sandon Point	12 "	J. Jenkin
Chestnut-breasted Mannikin	60+	Oak Flats	13 "	M. Parkinson
Darter	1	Corrimal East	14 "	B. & G. Halcs

Comment. The wet weather welcomed the new decade in and has remained with us for a bit longer than necessary. None the less the Red-kneed Dotterel is the first record for a couple of years. The juvenile Noisy Pitta is extremely significant as it almost certainly indicates a local breeding record, a point I will examine further in next months newsletter. The wandering Albatross is a little out of season, being generally regarded as a winter visitor. Double-banded Plovers began returning from New Zealand right on time and finally the Chestnut-breasted Mannikins have again turned up from who knows where, this time appearing near Oak Flats railway station.

Chris Chafer

1990 MAILING LIST

Fees are now overdue if you have not paid them. The 1990 mailing list will be compiled after the March Meeting; only financial members will receive the Newsletter after that date. If there is a X in the box at the end of this sentence, you are unfinancial!



I.B.O.C. NEWS

NO. 132 APRIL, 1990.



THE CIRCULAR OF THE ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB

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CLUB'S AIM

This is to join together people with a common interest who wish to further their knowledge and enjoyment of the birdlife around them.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

These are due on 1st January each year
FAMILY \$10 SINGLE \$7 STUDENT \$2

NEXT MEETING - Will be held at the Fairy Meadow Senior Citizens Centre, corner of Collaery Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, Monday, 9th April, 1990, commencing at 7.30 p.m. This will be a Members Night. Bring along your favourite slides of birds, wildlife or club activities or maybe you have paintings, craft work, poetry or other items you wish to share with other members. Your contribution will be greatly appreciated by other members and will ensure a successful evening.

NEXT FIELD OUTING - Saturday 7th April. Please note that because of the Easter Camp, this outing takes place BEFORE the club meeting and is to Maianbar in the Royal National Park. Our leaders for the day will be club members Betty and Bryan Kelly who live at Maianbar and we will walk to the Bundeena area and also explore the sand flats and check out the resident birds around the Kelly' garden. This is a lovely area and should prove to be very enjoyable. Bring morning tea, a carry lunch and afternoon tea, you are assured of a fresh 'cuppa' at the end of the day. We will meet at the Maianbar General Store car park, which is at the end of the road to Maianbar, at 9 am. To get there drive into the Royal National Park and take the Bundeena turn off, which is on the right from the Otford entrance or left via Audley, follow this road and the Maianbar turn off is on the left.

MID-WEEK WALKS. April 4th - Stanwell Park area. Meet at Dald Hill at 8.30 am.
May 2nd - Bulli Pass reserve. Meet near Bulli Primary School in Hobart Street at 8.30 am.

F I L M N I G H T

The first film night for the year is on Saturday, 28th April, at the home of Brian and Barbara Hales, 39 Lake Parade, Corrimal East. There will be one session only starting at 7.30 pm Bring along a plate for supper and your camping chair if you have one and enjoy an evening of good entertainment and company.

MARCH MEETING REPORT.

Chris Chafer gave a short presentation on the Club's library which includes a book on some of John Gould's work and referred those interested to "John Gould the Birdman" which is available in the Wollongong City Library. Our library contains publications from other ornithological organisations and are stored in the cupboard around the corner from the display table and borrowings through Olive Rodwell are enlightening. The publications vary from the easily readable "Birds International" to the more scientific "Corella" but all have their place for entertainment or education.

The speaker for the evening was Bob Crombie who used to be a ranger with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and he gave a cheery talk on nature-scaping your garden. Our gardens started in the well manicured English style and this is slowly changing to an Australian style with native plants predominating. As we become more environmentally conscious they must change from the closed fenced area type suburbs, designed for cars and people only, to the more open range type where all creatures can live in balance. This will take a major attitude change with what we consider as a suitable environment where all creepy crawlies are zapped chemically into oblivion to one where all creatures are food for others and to encourage birds and animals we must provide food and shelter.

Bob's example of this is his home yard where from the ground cover up is a mass of variation and organised chaos with the loss of suitable homes and habitat being compensated by nest boxes, fish ponds, rock piles and runways under fences. Two of the most memorable quotes were "If it's native it's gold, if it's also local it's platinum" and "Look, learn, listen and love it" which covered the theme adequately. With a change occurring slowly it is hoped that once again native creatures will roam freely through our suburbs free of the dangers of dogs cats, cars and escape proof fences.

Mary Shaw gave a vote of thanks which was carried by all in attendance for a most enjoyable evening.

Chris Brandis.

MID-WEEK OUTING - 7th MARCH.

Three hardy souls, including one from Woronora Heights, met at the Guide Camp after much rain with more threatening. However, there was little rain while walking along the road, across the grassed area and into the rain forest and quite a number of birds were observed. Whilst returning the group sheltered from a shower under a covered barbecue area and was rewarded with good sightings of the Rufous Fantail and male Golden Whistler. Male Superb Fairy-wren and Black-faced Monarch were other highlights.

Ron Almond.

MEMBERSHIP.

We welcome Ron and Joy Smart of Figtree as new members. Peter Ewin, one of our youngest members says "hello" from the Australian Marine College in Launceston. We regret that the following have indicated that they will not be renewing their membership - Tom and Joyce Barnes, Shirley Rooke and her daughter Sue Owen. Shirley has hosted us at Wirrimbirra on several occasions and has been a speaker at one of our meetings. She has taken up a new position in Queensland.

Ron Almond.

Don't forget, lots of books available from our library, plus bird call tapes and magazines, see Olive Rodwell. Books, badges, stickers, bird lists etc. available from Chris Brandis.

Contd.....

EASTER CAMP + Friday 13th to Monday 16th April to Murga which is about half way between Grange and Forbes. The property "Cleveland", which is owned by Neil and Sue Skinner, is 1,500 acres in area. Turn right onto dirt road about 2 km from Murga. There is a park on the corner. The property is located about 8 km along a dirt road on left hand side - look for the I.B.C.G. signs. Murga can be reached either through Katoomba, Bathurst or Goulburn, Cowra. The property owners suggest the latter route would be best. Once again it will be necessary to take drinking water. Hot showers and toilet facilities will be available. Happy camping, surely it can't rain again!



OPPORTUNIST NESTING BEHAVIOUR OF TREE MARTINS.

On the 28 Oct 1989 Phil Bath and myself were conducting a bird count in the Wingecarribee area and were following the route we had previously established. We had arrived at the Glen Quarry Cut on the northern shore of the Wingecarribee Dam to survey the surrounding area. At this point the road crosses a 30 metre deep cutting, that allows water to flow from the Dam to other water storage facilities in the area, by means of a concrete bridge. The under side of the bridge has been a favourite nesting site for a colony of Fairy Martin *Cecropis ariel*, with approximately 20 bottle shaped nests attached to the concrete arches. As we approached we could see martins flying about the cutting and initially assumed them to be the usual resident Fairy species. Upon arriving above the cutting Phil pointed out that at least one of the birds was a Tree Martin *Cecropis nigricans*, and on closer examination all the 16 birds counted were Tree Martins.

One bird was then noticed to fly up to and into one of the Fairy Martin nests and exit about 5 seconds later, an action that was repeated another four times in the following minute at various nests sites. The nests were in a state of disrepair and the martins were entering through broken off necks and holes in the sides of the "bottle" which still had a broken jagged edge appearance. The birds appeared to be feeding young as their beaks and throat appeared bulging on entering the nest and normal on exiting.

The usual nest site of Tree Martins are hollows in trees that may be modified slightly by using mud to make the entrance hole smaller and if enough sites, are available, small colonies will be formed. Other nest sites recorded are holes in earthen banks, hollows in city buildings (Beruldsen 1980), small caves in sandstone cliffs (Wall 1984) and in cavities under shed roofs (Campbell 1900). The only record I could find of Tree Martins using other bird's nests is of the birds dispossessing Welcome Swallows *Hirundo neoxena*, of a newly built nest and building up the edges with mud to form a small hole for their own use (Campbell 1900). From the range of nesting sites recorded the nesting behaviour of Tree Martins is apparently opportunist and the use of Fairy Martin nests appears to be an extension of this behaviour.

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Chris Brandis.

contd.....

THE LORD HOWE ISLAND TRIP.

A group of somewhat nervous Birds gathered at Mascot on the 25th March for our flight to Lord Howe Island, that tiny speck out in the Pacific Ocean. However, the flight turned out to be smooth and pleasant and was enjoyed by all. At the airstrip we were met by May Shick, the proprietor of Sea Breeze Lodge which is on the southern end of the island, close under its two highest peaks, Mt. Lidgebird and Mt. Gower.

Lord Howe Island and Ball's Pyramid are the remnants of ancient volcanic activity. It was first discovered in 1788 by the brig "Supply" on a trip to Norfolk Island but remained unsettled until 1834. Unfortunately, the early sailors who called there for water, introduced goats, pigs and rats which have destroyed some of the native flora and fauna. Today two thirds of the island is a Permanent Park Preserve, and is cared for by the National Parks and Wildlife Association, and they have done much to eliminate the feral animals. The island has also been included on the World Heritage List. The permanent population is around 300, and while there are a few farms and Kentia palm seeds are exported, the main industry is tourism.

On our first afternoon we walked along the beach track to Little Island - the point where the track leads off to Mt. Gower. Along the way we saw Magpie Larks, Welcome Swallows, a Sacred Kingfisher, Silvereyes, Golden Whistlers and Whimbrels. As we entered a rainforest area we saw our first little Green-winged Pigeon - a little bird of which we were to see quite a lot during the week. The "stone clappers" got busy and to our delight a pair of woodhens responded. We could hardly believe our luck. Later we were to discover a resident pair in the Lodge garden, in spite of a cat and a dog.

On Monday morning we were driven into the commercial centre - Post Office, Power Station, Hall, a couple of shops and a bike hire place. We visited Ned's Beach and saw Ruddy Turnstones and ducks, mainly Mallards. Bikes were hired and ridden to Elinky Beach, where we climbed up the track to Transit Hill Lookout where a good view of the whole island is obtained. Golden Whistlers were seen and heard and the Pied Currawong, which seemed to have a somewhat different call to the ones we know.

On Tuesday morning the energetic members of the party rode and walked to Mt. Eliza, at the northern end of the island, while others wandered around Stephen's Reserve. I believe this is the area where the pens were set up for woodhen rehabilitation programme. The Green-winged Pigeon and Golden Whistlers were about. In the afternoon we all went out on the Lagoon in a glass-bottomed boat to the reef to view the coral and fish. The fish were beautiful - so many different types and colours, from tiny ones to big fellows. When the boat anchored, many people went snorkelling and then the boatman went down and fed the fish. Some of the larger ones he claimed to know by name. Back on land, some of the bikies stopped at a swamp near the airstrip and saw a Painted Snipe and Masked Lapwing. Golden Plovers were seen daily on the golf course.

Wednesday we set off for Mutton Bird Point, Rocky Run and the Coat Harbour, all on the eastern side of the island. It was a warm morning as we made our way around the side of the hill to the platform provided to look out over the Point, the nesting site for many seabirds including the Masked Booby and Sooty Tern. We spent some time watching many birds milling around the point and then clambered around the palm covered slippery hillside and down to the picturesque Rocky Creek where we lunched in the rain. Gai, Phil and Robyn went to Coat Harbour, an inlet used by the early whalers when they came in for fresh water. The rest of the party toiled up Smoking Tree Hill through ferns and palms and many elkhorns in the trees - a very lovely place. We rested where the Goat House Track up Mt. Lidgebird branches off and how I wished I was younger and fitter. Gai and Phil did go up and though they came back with a few bruises, they claimed it was well worthwhile to see the nesting tropic birds and Ball's Pyramid in the distance. At the bottom of the hill we met two Sydney Birds and as we talked two woodhens wandered across the path. A little further on near a swampy, reedy area Orien had seen a Banded Rail the previous evening. The bird list was marked "thought to be extinct" but that afternoon we saw three, which was a great thrill.

contd.....

LORD HOWE ISLAND TRIP CONTD.

Thursday, the big hike was on to Malabar and Kim's Lookout. The walk started from near Ned's beach, where a stand of palms is pitted with holes, the nesting burrows of the Fleahy-footed Shearwater. As I didn't get far on this walk I will leave it to someone else to write up. We did see a pair of Nankeen Kestrels give a display of hovering and diving for prey. Nine members of the group took a lanuch trip around the island, and in spite of a crowded boat, they had a good trip and all returned.

At dusk on Friday we were taken in to Ned's Beach to watch the sheorwaters re- turn to their burrows among the palms. These birds leave at dawn and fish all day and just on nightfall flocks of them circle around then land and run up the grass and into their burrows. The adult birds or chicks make a wailing noise apparently to attract the right bird to the right burrow. It was wonderful to see. Another bird we saw a lot of was the White Tern. It lays its egg on the bare branches of the Norfolk Pines and pairs were nesting all along Lagoon Road, the main thorough- fare.

Lord Howe Island is a beautiful place with magnificent scenery and friendly people and a great place for a quiet holiday. The folk at Sea Breeze Lodge cared for us well and the Birdos enjoyed many laughs and I'm sure will have many happy memories of our week on Lord Howe.

Our thanks to Barbara and Brian Hales for organising the trip and also to Phil Bath for sharing his knowledge of the seabirds with us.

Peg Hedinlay.

Lord Howe Island Bird List Total 35.

Pee Wee	Nankeen Kestrel	Welcome Swallow
White Tern	Golden Whistler	Black-winged Petrel
Lord Howe Silvereye	Sooty Tern	English Blackbird
Grey Ternlet	English Starling	Masked Booby
Chining Bronze Cuckoo	Painted Snipe	Sacred Kingfisher
Black Duck	Masked Lapwing	Ruddy Turnstone
Black Noddy	Double-banded Plover	Providence Petrel
Banded Land Rail	Wedge-tailed Shearwater	Eastern Swamphen
Fleahy-footed Shearwater	Eastern Golden Plover	Great-winged Petrel
Whimbrel	Red-tailed Tropicbird	Green-winged Pigeon
White-faced Heron	Lord Howe Island Woodhen	Lord Howe Is Currawong
Bar-tailed Godwit	Song Thrush	

Horace Ward.

BIRD BRAINS.

The 1939 movie It Ain't No Sin was to be a big money-spinner for Paramount Studios and they wanted to give it the full publicity treatment.

An eager, and definitely imaginative, publicity man hit on the bright idea of shutting a platoon of parrots in a room with a record that played the name of the film over and over again. Quite soon Paramount were the owners of a flock of feathered friends which could squawk "It ain't no sin" to order.

By this time, however, the studio bosses had changed the name of the picture to I'm no Angel.

Please remember if you have any snippets to share with us forward them to the editor and they may be used in future newsletters.

contd.....

MARCH FIELD TRIP - TALLOWA DAM.

On St. Patrick's day, on a fine, sunny morning, 32 members met at Tallowa Dam for our monthly outing. The dam is a gravity mass dam situated at the confluence of the Shoalhaven and Kangaroo Rivers in the Morton National Park.

The gorge in which the dam is sited is overhung by immense cliffs of Nowra sandstone complete with caves and areas of erosion which were in deep shadow on the growing heat and glare of the day. The Bell Miners were in fine voice and were a joy to hear and from the top of the dam we could see a Little Pied Cormorant and a Great Cormorant, also an Azure Kingfisher, Wedge-tailed Eagle and a White-bellied Sea-Eagle.

After morning tea (our second) we set off on a delightfully shaded track down to the water's edge at the bottom of the dam, passing through mixed eucalypt forest, stands of *Acacia mearnsii*, all with tiny flower spikes already formed, and scattered graceful arching burrawang. About half way down we came upon an area covered with rounded stones of metamorphic origin, evidence of past floods and higher river levels. Here the river oaks grew plentifully and at a lower level, where the ground was marshy, a pink polygonum held pride of place, then into a thicket of river oak growing on silt deposited in the big floods seven years ago and already fifteen to twenty feet tall. On the way down we saw Dusky Wood-wallow, Jacky Winter, Crested Shrike-bird, Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, Golden Whistler and Lyrebird amongst others.

After returning to the cars we drove a little way then walked along a surveyors overgrown track on top of the escarpment through an open area of scribbly gum and stringy barks and then on through heath with a few white ericas in flower and mountain devil, persea, banksia and tea tree, growing but not thriving in the thin sand and clay on top of the rock of which large flat areas were at times exposed. Further on the soil became deeper and the flat sandstone was replaced by large angular boulders and the vegetation changed to small shrubby trees of *Eucalyptus erimia* (yellow bloodwood) all budded up in groups of seven and ready to burst forth at their appointed time. Here also were casuarinas, old man's beard and blackboys without their spears.

The boulders became bigger and more jumbled and presently we were at the edge of the escarpment with an extensive view back to the dam and down to the valley of the Shoalhaven. Here we had our lunch in the shade of banksias and on this walk we saw Eastern Spinobill, Rufous Whistler, New Holland Honeyeater, Beautiful Fire-tail, White-eared Honeyeater and Oriole and then it was time to go back to the cars and on to the third walk.

This was along a recently graded dirt road through woodland of scribbly gum, silver top ash and red bloodwood which was still covered in creamy blossom. This tree was called 'gum tree' by Banks and Solander because of the 'gum' exuded from the damaged parts. This red gum was used in early colonial days for the relief of chest ailments and dysentery, but with what degree of success I don't know.

Further on we came to open forest. Here the trees grew straight and tall and the soil was darker and richer in humus and Sydney peppermints threw dappled shade across the road which made for pleasant walking. The birds were not prolific here but a White-cheeked Honeyeater, Rose Robin and Brown Thornbill were sighted and a tree-creeper heard. A total of 34 birds and no leeches were the tally for the day.

A total of approximately 10 km was walked and a most enjoyable walk it was. Many thanks to Dr. Kevin Mills who led the walk and to all other club members for their company.

Peggy Merrett.

contd.....

UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS + FEBRUARY - MARCH, 1990.

Pheasant Coucal	1 Maddens Plains	31/12/89	G. Darwell
Figbird	1 Kiama Downs	14/2 /90	"
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	5 Shoalhaven Heads	27/2	G G J. Parker
Tahiti Petrel	2 off Wollongong	24/2	D. Fischer et al
Grey Ternlet	1 " "	24/2	" "
Kermadec Petrel	1 " "	24/2	" "
Black Petrel	1 " "	24/2	" "
Wedge-tailed Shearwater (white-bellied form)	1 " "	24/2	" "
Spangled Drongo	1 Bulli	1/3	I. Rowles
White-plumed Honeyeater	3 Nth Wollongong	13/3	L. Williams.

COMMENT.

The Pheasant Coucal is included because it is quite rare in the Illawarra these days, this record being only the third since the 1960's. Apart from the good array of seabirds on the February boat trip it was also pleasing to hear of the 2.5 m Leatherly Turtle which gave excellent views to those on board. This is largest sea turtle in the world and can grow to over 3m (10 ft.). It usually lives in more tropical seas, though it will venture down the Australian coast when warm currents are present, such as the day of the boat trip, as evidenced by the presence of several tropical seabirds i.e. Tahiti Petrel and Grey Ternlet. The white bellied form of the Wedge-tailed Shearwater is only the second sighting off eastern Australia though this form does breed in Western Australia.

Chris Chafer

Members of I.B.U.C. are invited to join Shoalhaven Birds on their outings, the programme for 1990 is as follows:-

- Saturday Apr. 7th, Devil's Glen Nature Reserve, meet Beaumont 12.30
- Sunday May. 13th, Rogers Creek, meet Berry Post Office, 9 am
- Saturday Jun. 9th, Yerriyong Vale, meet Navy Jet, 12.30
- Sunday Jul. 8th, Wandean Road, meet Navy Jet, 9 am
- Saturday Aug. 11th, Black Ash Nature Reserve, meet Berry Mountain/Tourist Road, 12.30
- Sunday Sep. 9th, Brown's Mountain, meet Illaroo Road/Highway, 9 am
- Sat/Sun. Oct. 13th, 14th, camp, 12 Mile Road, Tianjara.
- Saturday Nov. 10th, Berara, meet Highway/Sussex Inlet turnoff, 1.30 pm
- Friday Dec. 14th, Bangalee, 5 pm barbecue, meet at Reserve.

For further information or to check on outings phone Barry Virtue (044)641389 or Diana Wright on (044) 213426.

JAILBIRDS. Police near Sheffield learnt the hard way that abiding by the letter of the law can be a mistake. Answering a complaint, they took into custody eight ducks that had been found wandering nearby. The feathered felons soon began disturbing the peace of the local nick, driving the boys in blue quietly quackers with their constant clamouring for food. Regretting their initial zeal, the policemen had soon placed at the top of their Most Wanted list the owner of the noisy runaways.

I.B.O.C. NEWS

NO. 133 MAY, 1990.



THE CIRCULAR OF THE ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB
Registered by Aust. Post Publication No. NBH 3848
POSTAL ADDRESS P.O. BOX 56, FAIRY MEADOW, NSW 2519

CLUB MOTTO "ONE GOOD TERN DESERVES ANOTHER"

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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

These are due on 1st January each year
FAMILY \$10 SINGLE \$7 STUDENT \$2

NEXT MEETING - Will be held at the Fairy Meadow Senior Citizens Centre, corner of Collaery Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, Monday, 14th May, 1990, starting at 7.30 pm. Our Guest Speaker for the evening will be Fred Spiteri, telling us of his work with raptors. Those who saw Fred at a previous meeting will remember the magnificent live birds he brought with him so maybe we will get to see some more of these beautiful creatures he works with.

NEXT FIELD OUTING + Saturday, 19th May, at 9 am to the Blue Mountains National Park. We will enter at the end of Whitecross Road, Winmalee. Proceed along the Great Western Highway to the Hawkesbury Road turn-off to Richmond at Springwood. The turn-off is on the right immediately past the overhead bridge over Springwood by-pass of highway and is signposted "Richmond". Whitecross Road Winmalee is on left 5.3 km from highway with shopping centre in turning corner. Proceed approx. 1 km to end of Whitecross Road where National Park signs will be seen. Park off end of bitumen on gravel area at start of fire track. Travelling time from Wollongong is approx. 1 hour 35 minutes. Bring a carry lunch and have a great day. Our leader will be Jack Hyslop.

NEXT FILM NIGHT - The second film night for the year will be held at the home of Barbara & Brian Hales, 39 Lake Parade, Corrimal East, Saturday 26th May, one session only at 7.30 pm. Bring along a plate for supper, your camping chair if you have one and enjoy an evening of good entertainment and company. The first film night consisted of two excellent videos, "Black Cockatoos" and "New Arrivals" showing Superb, Red Winged and Regent Parrots to name a few. Thanks to Lindsay Smith for supplying the videos. Make a point of attending our next film night, you are assured of an excellent evenings viewing.

JUNE MID-WEEK WALK - This takes place June 6th and is to the Appin area. Meet around the corner to left at the intersection of Bull-Appin Road and Appin-Campbelltown Road. 37 species were seen when we last visited this area including the Crested Shrike-tit, Yellow-tufted and White-naped Honeyeaters and the lyrebird was heard calling.

APRIL FIELD OUTING, MAIANBAR IN THE ROYAL NATIONAL PARK.

Our April outing was held at Maianbar on the northern boundary of the Royal National Park and the shore of Port Hacking. Eighteen members met at 9 am on a mild, cloudy morning with some sunny breaks through the day. We met at the car park just below Maianbar post office and we were led on our walk by Bryan Kelly who lives in the area and knows it well. We began by walking south-east along Pacific Crescent for a short distance towards The Basin past homes with many old, well preserved trees, among which we observed the Rainbow Lorikeet and Sulphur-crested Cockatoo. We branched off along a walking track which goes down a steep sandstone hillside to a bridge which crosses "The Basin", a tidal body of water with an outlet into Port Hacking. We then entered an area which has been built on but those buildings will be demolished as the owners vacate them. We covered this area during the morning and it extends to Bundeena at the eastern end.

Some of the low lying areas were under water which blocked the tracks we were to walk along, due to the heavy rains of the previous few days, but we still had a good morning walk and sighted a good number of birds. On a lake we had the pleasure to observe a group of beautiful Chestnut Teal, both male and female, two Pacific Black Duck and seven Maned Duck. Some other birds in the area were the Willie Wagtail, Crested Pigeon, Little and Red Wattlebirds, Lewin's Honeyeater, Grey and Rufous Fantail, Yellow Robin and Varied Sittella. It is a beautiful area abundant in vegetation, on Hawkesbury sandstone with a thin layer of soil on the elevated areas which produces conditions conducive to the beautiful Angophora, stately and abundant in the area. Some of the many other species are the variety of eucalypts, smooth barked Scribbly Gum, Casuarinas, Lilly Pilly, Cabbage Tree Palms, Blackboy and bracken fern. The Banksia Integrifolia and Spinulosa were showing some flowers. On the tidal flats of the Basin were groups of mangroves.

Following our walk around the eastern side of The Basin we returned crossing the bridge and walking up a steep rocky track and over to the other side of the headland to the home of Betty and Bryan Kelly where we had lunch, in the delightful surroundings there. The home is built on the rough sandstone hillside overlooking Fishermans Bay and Port Hacking. After lunch we returned to the track which follows along the hillside overlooking The Basin, a large body of water with a steep sandstone hillside surrounding a large part of it. It was a pleasant walk but we didn't see many birds there. The walk finished about 3 pm. For the day we observed a total of 37 species. Some of the birds sighted around the waters edge were the Australian Pelican, Little Egret and Eastern Curlew.

APRIL MID WEEK WALK, KELLY'S FALLS WALKING TRACK, NEAR STANWELL TOPS.

The mid week outing was attended by six members, meeting at Bald Hill at 8.30 am then moving along to Stanwell Tops. The walk was delayed a short time because of rain but we made the walk except for the last few minutes when the rain came again. It was cloudy all morning but we enjoyed the walk. The track begins on the north side of the road from Bald Hill, opposite where the road branches off to Stanwell Tops. The track leads off through a wet eucalypt forest with a wide range of vegetation including eucalypts, banksias, casuarinas, pittosporums and a ground cover of blackboy, reeds and grasses in the undisturbed areas with introduced species growing where clearing has taken place, allowing privet and lantana to take hold. The track led in through the forest to the rim of the valley in which the Hacking River flows, then follows around the valley passing a number of lookouts before arriving at the Kelly's Falls, which was a beautiful spot. We continued on around the valley through a tick bushland for some distance on the north side of the valley, then the track descended into the valley. The track here went through some open grassland before crossing the river and up a steep trail to the road, a few minutes walk back to where we left the cars. Bird numbers along the walk were not great. We found them a bit patchy and not easily seen on the dull morning and we observed a total of twenty species.

Horace Ward.

contd.....

APRIL MEETING - MEMBER'S NIGHT.

Although only a relatively small turn out of members, those present were treated to some of the skills displayed by our members that shows they are not total bird fanatics. Anne Scandritt showed us her bird stamp collection and spoke briefly of the early pre decimal stamps with native birds, some of which would be now worth quite a bit. Dorothy Payne exhibited two of her paintings, one a landscape in oils and one water colour with hidden birds. Gwen Robinson showed a plate that she had painted with a decorative design and had placed on a display stand. Wendy Hanks showed a quilted Scarlet Robin on a library bag and was wearing a T shirt with a quilted Black Cocky flying across the front. Dora Lockrey showed her collection of Gould League badges from 1935 to 1959. Nola Williams took us through the research stages of her embroidering project of the "World in my Garden" from a bird's eye view. The workwomanship was exceptional and was highlighted by the wooden frame crafted by Lennie Klumpes. Who said some did not have interests that did not revolve around birds?

We then saw a series of slides from Horrie Ward on Lord Howe Island, Ron Almond on Lord Howe Island, Brian Hales on, yes, Lord Howe Island, but all from a different perspective, Richard Fackender on some of the birds seen on his around Australia trip, Bob McKinlay on his trip out to the Broken Hill area and Mike Phett on his bird study area of the old Excelsior Mine.

A thanks to all who helped make this a most enjoyable night followed by the usually well prepared supper.

Chris Brandis.

VACANCY - EXCURSIONS OFFICER.

Chris Chafer has had to resign as our excursions officer for personal reasons and we take this opportunity to thank him for his work in the past. Obviously this position is now vacant and for various reasons cannot be taken on by any of our existing committee members. We are appealing for more help. The walks for the rest of this year and the October camps are fairly well catered for but we must have a new excursions officer by at least November 1990 to plan next years programme or excursions will cease for 1991. The Excursions Officer is responsible for deciding which areas the walks and camps will take place in and for co-ordinating same. The Officer does not necessarily have to attend all outings as leaders can be appointed for the day if they are informed. He/she would also be responsible for arranging any coach tours and preparing a write-up for the monthly newsletter containing details of where to go, how to get there, meeting/starting times etc. The rest of the committee and other club members are all very helpful with locations etc. but we must have someone to take on the responsibility of Excursions Officer. If you can take on this job please contact any committee member as soon as possible.

OIL SPILL.

According to US environmentalists, the operation by Exxon to clean up the Alaskan coast after the massive oil spill in March (1989) has failed. The company claims that the harsh winter weather will degrade the oil naturally and that they can do no more. Over 33,000 waterbirds (mainly puffins and petrels), 140 bald eagles and 930 sea otters have died. It is thought that this is only a fraction of the total deaths. About 200 otters were said to have been saved at a cost of \$40,000 each. Recent reports of thousands of birds dying in the Kodiak Island region of Alaska may be linked with oil that has worked its way into the food chain.

Birds magazine.

contd

BANDED BIRDS.

Those of you who came on the February outing to Windang will recall that I picked up a dead Wedge-tailed Shearwater on the beach. The bird had a band on its leg which I removed and later sent to the relevant authority - The Australia Bird and Bat Banding Scheme. I recently received acknowledgement for the recovery and relevant details which I will repeat here.

The bird was banded on Big Island on the Five Islands Nature Reserve by G. D. Bell on 12th February, 1986. At the time the bird was regarded as a second year or older individual and the period from then until recovery was 4 years and 9 days. This means that the bird was at least six years old. I also received an interesting and informative brochure about the scheme which I will put on the notice board at the next meeting. None the less, some of the data is well worth repeating for those who are interested.

Every year over 80,000 birds of all species are banded in Australia by amateur and professional researchers. Some of the most outstanding results are:-

Red-necked Stint - banded Hobart, 23rd Nov. 1979, recovered Luhua Village, China, 26th Mar. 1986. Wedge-tailed Shearwater - banded Wollongong, 1st Dec. 1985, recovered Philippines, 17th Jun. 1986. Australian Pelican - banded Broome, 14th July 1974, recovered West Lombok, Indonesia, Aug. 1978. Sacred Kingfisher - banded Mudgee, 23rd Jan. 1969, recovered Trobriand Island, Papua New Guinea, 17th Aug. 1970. Wandering Albatross - banded Wollongong, 9th Aug. 1975, recovered South Gorgia, South Atlantic, 22nd Jan. 1976.

Some long time periods have also been recorded:-

Wandering Albatross	banded	3 Dec. 1954	recovered	14 Apr. 1982,	27 years	4 months
Sacred Ibis	"	16 Sep. 1964	"	4 Sep. 1983,	18 "	11 "
Grey Teal	"	18 Aug. 1957	"	28 Apr. 1981,	23 "	8 "
White-plumed Honeyeater	"	28 Oct. 1961	"	11 Apr. 1976,	14 "	5 "
Willie Wagtail	"	17 Oct. 1964	"	1 Mar. 1974,	9 "	4 "

It is also worth mentioning that Lindsay Smith is continuing to colour band Kelp Gulls on the Five Islands. He has been doing this for five years now and some interesting long term data is beginning to show up. Colour banded birds have been sighted as far north as near Newcastle and South to Ulladulla, whilst other moderately distant sites include Botany Bay and Shoalhaven Heads.

So take note, if you see a Kelp Gull, have a look at its legs. The bands are large and easily discernable with binoculars. There are two bands, usually different colours, on the same leg. Record the combination, the place where you saw it and the date and pass the information on to either Lindsay or any club office bearer. It only takes a few moments to record this data and in the long term every little bit of information will fit together to show where Kelp Gulls go, how often they move from place to place, longevity and time it takes to reach full adult plumage and begin breeding etc.

By the way you might like to know the problems of banding the gulls are not just restricted to catching the young just before they leave the nest. The main problem is that the island on which they do most of their current breeding is not accessible to a boat landing. You have to jump off the boat and swim to the island, climb up the barnacle encrusted rocky shore, find and band the birds, then swim back to the boat. Not a bad way to spend a Saturday afternoon!

Chris Chafer.

contd

MACLEAY ALL AFLUTTER.

Sydney University's Macleay Museum, unlike a number of others scattered around Australia, is not an entertainment centre but a museum in the traditional mould.

Everything in it, right down to the solid cedar cabinets made in 1890 and the fossilised excrement of a giant lizard collected in 1989 from Dog Dung Creek in the Upper Hunter Valley, NSW, exudes a 19th-century aura.

The Macleay Museum has been a rather neglected part of the Sydney campus since 1838, when Sir William Macleay bequeathed to the university the family's natural history collection which had been started almost 100 years earlier by Alexander Macleay. During the past century the museum has been the recipient of quite a few donations which have enhanced the original Macleay collection, the most recent being a collection of mounted indigenous birds donated by a local licensed taxidermist. The technical officer at the museum, Mr. Stuart Norrington, said the birds were an important addition to the museum's vertebrate collection because many of the specimens collected in the 19th century were no longer suitable for display.

"With time, the older birds become very fragile and the colours fade quite a bit. These new birds have all been collected in the past 10 years" he said. Mr. Norrington was keen to stress that all of the birds in the collection were road victims or had died a natural death and also that a person must be licensed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service to collect, mount and preserve the birds.

The collection contains a large number of parrots and aviary birds as well as a significant number from the Narrabeen area, which the museum staff said would prove valuable in the future when the lakes there silt up. The Macleay museum, unlike the Nicholson Museum, also on the university campus, does not receive purchase funding. It relies on donations made through the art's tax-incentive scheme. The Curator of Anthropology, Ms. Lydia Eushell, said: "The Macleay's bequest has been rather shabbily treated over the years."

PLEASE MAKE NOTE OF THE MID-WEEK WALK PROGRAMME FOR THE REST OF 1990.

- June 6th Appin area. Meet around the corner to left at the intersection of Eulli-Appin Road and Appin-Campbelltown Road.
- July 4th Blackbutt Bush. Meet at recreation area by proceeding into Woodland Road off Shellharbour Road then left into Blue Gum Place which leads into bush.
- Aug. 1st O'Brien's Road area. Meet at park at corner of Princes Highway and O'Brien's Road, Figtree.
- Sep. 5th Mount Kembla area. Meet at Lookout (under power lines).
- Nov. 7th St. Mary's Towers, Douglas Park. Meet outside the gates by travelling along Mount Ousley Road to Picton turn-off, turn left into Picton Road and continue to intersection with Wilton Road, turn right and continue for about 200 m then left into road called both Douglas Park Road and Mt. Keira Road, travel along that road for about 3 km to the gates.

These outings are held on the first Wednesday of each month and the meeting time is 8.30 am in each case. Further enquiries to Ron Almond 298612, Esme Gay 293463 or Horace Ward 843473.

UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS - MARCH - APRIL, 1990.

Spangled Drongo	1 Berry	1 Mar.	B. Virtue
Black-winged Stilt	10 Shellharbour Swamp	9 "	G. & J. Parker
Emerald Dove	1 Woonona	9 "	K. Mills
Red-browed Treecreeper	1 O'hares Creek	11 "	K. Mills
Azure Kingfisher	1 Tallowa Dam	17 "	K. Mills
Little Raven	12 Gerringong	19 "	G. & J. Parker
Painted Button Quail	3 O'hares Creek	22 "	K. Mills
Little Raven	10 Nowra	22 "	G. & J. Parker
Sooty Gystercatcher	23 Red Point	25 "	D. Wright
Spangled Drongo	1 Lake Heights	1 Apr.	C. Chafer
Azure Kingfisher	1 W'gong University	1 "	C. Chafer
Crested Pigeon	41 Yallah	4 "	R. Imisides
Crested Pigeon	1 Coniston	6 "	G. Robinson
Spangled Drongo	1 Mt. Warrigal	15 "	C. Brandis
White-winged Tern	2 Windang	15 "	C. Brandis
Spangled Drongo	1 Bass Point	17 "	C. Chafer
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1 Windang	17 "	C. Chafer

C. Chafer.

EASTER CAMP MURGA.

The Easter Camp held on Sue and Neil Skinner's property at Murga was a huge success and attended by 35 club members. There were activities for everyone with lots of birds to be seen right on your doorstep. Besides the walks and the bird watching other activities included a drive around the whole property with Neil giving a commentary on the farm machinery, trees, plants, nest holes, ants and spiders, cattle and sheep, a visit to Parkes Museum and Sewerage treatment works, tea and tabnabs around the camp fire, star-gazing, scrabble, a night with the Skinner's viewing some excellent audio visuals (anyone know how to get rid of a cat) mushroom sprints and, if you stayed beyond Wednesday, a chance to show off your brilliant driving skills, the course completed by all with flying colours, well, nearly all, no names mentioned, just that he is a member of the S.A.C.O.D. set! A big thankyou to all those members of the advance party for setting up the amenities block and taking it down, the woodchoppers and the fire stokers for the lovely hot showers and to all other members for making it such a great camp. A big, big thankyou to the escort party its a grand feeling to know that you can always rely on your Eirdo friends to lend a helping hand.

Barbara Hales.



Overheard at Murga, when the skies had cleared and the stars appeared.

"Daddy, Daddy, Where's the constellation called Brian?"

Maybe Ali (aged not quite three) has got the IBOC hierarchy right after all!!

B. Zealey.

A NEW CONSTELLATION
OH BRIAN

I.B.O.C. NEWS

NO. 134

JUNE, 1990



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NEXT MEETING - will be held at the Fairy Meadow Senior Citizens Centre, corner of Collaery Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, Monday, 11th June, 1990, starting at 7.30 pm. Our Guest Speaker for the evening will be Fred Spiteri. Fred holds a licence which enables him to work to rehabilitate raptors which he does in his spare time. Owing to circumstances beyond his control, Fred was unable to address our May meeting as advertised but the bonus is that he now has two more raptors to show to us. Our thanks go to Val Emery and Dave Thomson for stepping in at extremely short notice at the May meeting and providing us with two very interesting and informative talks.

NEXT FIELD OUTING - SATURDAY 16th JUNE. Please note that the venue is different to that stated in the yearly programme. For various reasons it has been decided to walk the Box Vale Track near Mittagong. The trackhead is located about 250 metres off the Hume Highway, 3.7 km west of Mittagong. Follow the road out of Mittagong towards Berrima, do not take the Berrima by-pass road which curves off to the left but go straight ahead. The entrance to the Box Vale track is on the right immediately at the bottom of the bridge. If you reach the Wombeyan Caves turn off you have gone too far. The track has easy grades and follows the formation of an historic railway line passing through cuttings and along embankments and through an 84 metre tunnel and ending at a point overlooking Nattai Gorge. We will meet at the trackhead carpark at 9 am. Bring your eats and drinks and have a great day.

NEXT FILM NIGHT - SATURDAY 30th JUNE. This will take place at the Hales, 39 Lake Parade, Corrimal East, one session only, starting at 7.30 pm. Bring a plate and your camping chair if you have one. Two excellent videos were provided by Chris Chafer for our last film night on Canadian birds and some very interesting footage of fish. If you didn't come to the film night not only did you miss out on two outstanding videos you missed out on the Klumpes special soup and Nola's rhubarb pie that nearly caused a riot at supper time! See you at the next one?

MID-WEEK WALKS - June 6th, is to the Appin area as advertised in last months newsletter. The July mid-week walk takes place on the 4th and is to Blackbutt Bush. Meet at the recreation area by proceeding into Woodland Road off Shellharbour Road, then left into Blue Gum Place which leads into the bush.

contd.....

We are sorry to have to inform members of the sudden death of Jack Costigan, at his home, on Saturday, 19th May, 1990.

Although less active in the club in recent years, Jack was one of the people who attended the original W.E.A. course which resulted in the formation of our club and he will be sadly missed by his friends and fellow I.B.O.C. members.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to his wife Mary and family.

MID-WEEK WALK, BULLI PASS NATURE RESERVE.

For the May mid-week outing twelve members met to enjoy the mild, bright, sunny morning for the walk into the Bulli Pass Nature Reserve. The walk was along the firetrail starting about 100 metres below the elbow on Bulli Pass going south. The firetrail begins in the nature reserve and goes on to private mine property, ending beyond Brokers Nose but we only walked a part of it. After a few minutes the trail forked. The lower trail led to a large dam but the only birds there were three Australasian Grebes. We joined the main trail again by climbing up a steep, wet, slippery track through the bush. It is a lovely area to walk. The undulating trail winds along a bench of the escarpment, crossing a series of small, wet gullies. After the previous wet season the vegetation growth has been vigorous with a very thick undergrowth. In the open areas along the trail crofton weed and lantana have taken over. Some stands of Bangalow and Cabbagetree Palms break the regularity of the eucalypts with an occasional Red Cedar along the northern end of the trail. The birds were rather scarce there. Maybe the strong westerly wind drove them into cover. The Lewin's honeyeater and Australian Raven were the only birds heard regularly through the morning. The female Cicadabird was sighted high up in a eucalypt. Twenty two species were recorded during the morning including Gang-gang Cockatoo, Australian Kestrel, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Brown Gerygone and White-browed Treecreeper.

Horace Ward.

MAY MEETING.

A large gathering of members turned out to hear our guest speaker Fred Spiteri tell us about his work with raptors. Fred had three birds of prey in boxes ready to bring to our meeting when he received a message that birds for rehabilitation had arrived at Sydney Airport and it was imperative that he collect them immediately. So, at very short notice, he was unable to come to our meeting. In one way we had first hand knowledge of the important work he is doing and in a very minor way we became involved. Our President, Erian, had some fast manoeuvring to do to fill Fred's position at such short notice. Fortunately in our club we have many capable and enthusiastic members willing to help out. Wal Emery and Dave Thomson were the two who came to the rescue.

Wal talked about "Attracting Birds To Your Garden" and supported his most interesting talk with slides and plant specimens. One hundred and four species have visited his garden and many have nested there, so he has a wealth of knowledge to impart. Wal used to be a strict native man but in time has mellowed (with Hazel's help) to include some exotics in his list of bird attracting plants.

Dave talked about "Bird Banding" and "Atlassing". He gave background information about the band sizes, information recorded (plumage, sex, age and movement) and recovery rates. He showed us some bands and a mist net - things many of us may not have seen - and described different methods of capturing the birds.

Both talks were most informative and even though Fred Spiteri was unable to come we had a most interesting evening thanks to Wal and Dave.

Clive Rodwell

contd.....

EASTER CAMP - MURGA.

The Easter camp was held at Murga on the property of two wonderful people, Sue and Neil Skinner, who were most generous and helpful to us while we were there. The property of "Cleveland" is a beautiful place of 1500 acres, which is mainly grazing land with a tree covered mountain in the centre. To the west of the mountain is a valley with Reedy Creek winding its way through from the north, past the farmhouse and dividing the grazing area where we camped with the dividing fence of the next-door property in which is another low hill further to the west.

By nightfall thirteen members had arrived at the campsite and for a place that never gets rain, well that's another story. The first obstacle was a recently ploughed area we had to cross which had had some rain in the morning. As we arrived at the house we were met by Sue who welcomed us and a short time afterwards Neil arrived. It was then a sunny afternoon when the first seven of our group arrived at Cleveland. With Neil standing by we virtually slipped across the muddy field and on to firmer ground for a while to the creek crossing. Going down the creek was easy but getting out the other side was a different matter. Neil's tractor was of the greatest assistance up the other slippery bank. He was busy all afternoon as each one arrived he came along to pull them through the creek.

Our campsite was along the creek, close to the shady River Gums where the birds were quite active. During the afternoon we had some twenty birds recorded. The Little Lorikeet was observed entering a hollow in an old dead tree nearby. The Manded Duck was investigating the hollows in a large tree. The Restless Flycatcher and Hooded Robin were common in the area around the camp.

Friday dawned a bright clear morning but through the day the clouds built up until late afternoon it was quite grey. After lunch we had a walk south down Reedy Creek which winds down along the valley which Neil uses for grazing and sowing of crops. We followed closely along the picturesque creek which was flowing freely beneath the gums lining the banks until we came to the spot where we camped in 1986 during our late October camp. We returned close to the treeline back to camp. On Friday we added 15 species to our list for the camp some of which were the Pied Currawong, Brown Treecreeper, Tree Martin, Richard's Pipit, Speckled Warbler and Red-capped Robin.

Saturday began with a little early morning rain which eased later when we had a fine afternoon. The evening around the campfire was ended prematurely when rain came on again. The light rain didn't deter a group of keen birdos. Being restricted some by the weather we had another walk down the creek as the rain was only light and showery. The birds were still active although in the dull light were difficult to identify but in the two hours we were out we added another 15 birds to our list, some of which were the Clamorous Reed-Warbler, Little Pied Cormorant, Red-browed Firetail, White-eared Honeyeater and Pied Butcherbird. While the weather was clear in the afternoon small groups checked out the area especially around the trees on the hillside. A few of the birds observed were the Black-chinned Honeyeater, Olive-backed Oriole, Rufous Whistler and Mistletoebird. By Saturday the number of campers had swelled to 35 with two more members being accommodated at the farmhouse.

Sunday was a fine day so we walked north past the farmhouse then across the hillside to join up with the road again along the northern boundary of the property where we walked along the road for a time to a little gully in the hillside where we wandered among the trees for a while. There we sighted the Crested Shrike-tit, Golden Whistler, Striped Honeyeater, Fuscous Honeyeater and Red-browed Firetail. We continued on then to the property entrance and went south for a couple of hundred metres to check out some large eucalypts along the roadside after which we made our way back to camp returning about 1.30 pm.

Monday was a calm, clear day so we set out on the planned walk which was to the south end of the mountain, then made the climb to the top. It was a steep climb and a little rough but with a couple of breaks we all made it. The height of the mountain is about 600 feet above the campsite. Our rest point was just short of the top of the mountain where we had one of the many grand views of the surrounding countryside with the rolling hills to the south. There too we could see, in a large tree, a Wedge-tailed Eagle's nest. The Wedge-tailed Eagle was frequently observed while we were there, gliding over the hills.

contd.....

- 4 -

MURGA CAMP CONTD.

We resumed our walk up to the top and followed a rough, sometimes rocky, course along the top of the mountain. There the trees were less vigorous in growth on a thin top soil mixed with a lot of loose rocks. Mainly the trees are eucalypts and cypress. The views from the high elevation were extensive. Mount Canoblas was clearly visible, with its radio masts, some 60 km to the east. About 12 noon we had lunch at the northern end of the mountain in an open spot in view of the beautiful countryside and a good sighting of the Brown Falcon and Australian Kestrel. From there we made our way down to the road through the property and back to camp arriving about 1.30 pm. The Rufous Songlark and Chestnut-rumped Hylacola were observed on the walk.

Tuesday. Neil took us on, as he said, a three hour tour of the property beginning at 9 am and finishing at 2 pm. There is plenty to see on the extensive 1500 acres property. He gave an in depth talk on the various aspects of farming, the equipment and the area in general including the vegetation. We had a very interesting time. Some of the vegetation he described was the Red River Gum, White, Yellow and Apple Box, Black and White Cypress and Kurrajong trees. The tree covered mountain in the centre of the property runs roughly north and south and is surrounded by open grazing land on which have been recorded over 120 species of birds during and since our first visit there in October, 1986.

Wednesday we drove into Parkes. We called into the historic museum and spent an hour or so there. Among the exhibits were a number of bird skins which we identified for them. We had an interesting time looking over all the antiques on show. After lunch we drove to the birdo's favourite spot, the sewage ponds. They consisted of three main ponds of which two were shallow with some waders. The third had a number of Black Swans, Grey Teal, shoveler, Pacific Black Duck, Australasian and Hoary-headed Grebes enjoying the habitat. We also sighted the white-headed stilt, Masked Lapwing and Black-fronted Plover. Later on Wednesday afternoon light rain began to fall and it became much heavier through the night.

Thursday, the rain continued with a short break in the morning but becoming heavier through the afternoon. As the rain caused the creek level to rise, one by one we moved up the hill away from the rising water which was a good move. By Friday morning the creek had broken its banks and continued to rise as the heavy showers continued through the day. The cloud capped mountain gave us a reminder of the previous Easter at Gloucester. One likes to see the sun but when the clouds descend on the hills and a swollen creek the landscape takes on its own special captivating beauty. As much of our time was taken up with moving our tents and vans we didn't do much birdwatching that day.

Friday, showers were generally light and by afternoon the creek height had fallen slightly but the light was poor for birdwatching. The Welcome Swallows were active and a family of Brown Treecreepers were regularly observed on the other side of the creek. Sulphur-crested Cockatoos were heard in some trees to the west but smaller birds were hard to see.

Saturday morning the sky was clear but by mid morning the sky became overcast again and by mid-day light misty rain was falling and increased through the afternoon. In the early morning while the weather was clear the birds were active. The Little Lorikeet, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Australian Kestrel and Peaceful Dove were seen around the camp while the Diamond Firetail, White-plumed Honeyeater, Grey Fantail, Southern White-face and Red-capped Robin were observed on the hillside.

Sunday arrived. The day to leave our beautiful campsite. All packed and ready to go about 8.30 am for the wet slippery drive out of Cleveland. We set off, Laurie leading the way. He got a little close to the edge of the track and was bogged but was soon on his way again with a little help. All went well until we arrived at the Mandagery Creek bridge which was under water. We had to turn about, then with some help from Neil and Sue we arrived at the sealed road near Bumberry after a number of creek crossings along the road. We travelled about 25 km in three hours to reach the sealed road. Our thanks to Sue and Neil for all their help and generosity while we camped at Cleveland. The total number of sightings for the camp was 106 species, 92 species observed on the property of Cleveland.

Horace Ward

Contd.

BLUE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK WALK.

On Saturday, 19th May, 1990, ten members of the Illawarra Bird Observers Club met at Winmalee at the entrance to the Blue Mountains National Park. It was a perfect Autumn day - the sun warm, the air crisp as is to be expected at 304 metres elevation.

Led by Jack Hyslop, we walked down a wide, rough, graded track through woodlands and open forest with large areas of tilted sandstone protruding through the sand and clay. The trees were quite large considering the poor quality soil. These were mainly *Banksia serrata* complete with big bad *Banksia* men in situ, *Banksia spinulosa* with their hairpins at the ready, *Eucalyptus gummifera*, the prototype gum tree, *Lambertia* and *Grevillea sericia* were flowering (they always seem to be) and a number of geebung and some old men's beard.

As we continued downwards the air became cooler, the leaf litter and humus thicker, the soil better quality and the vegetation thicker. Presently we heard the sound of running water and we followed a narrow track along a creek, in whose steep banks were the burrows of unknown animals. The undergrowth was thick here, in places bracken grew to six feet high, in others maiden hair, water fern, fan fern and wild violet all competed for living space.

With some difficulty we crossed the creek and were now in a more open area with black wattle (which isn't a wattle but a *Calliconia* and is the species that Black Wattle Bay in Sydney was named after as it grew there profusely 'til it had been cleared for use in the "wattle and daub" houses in vogue in the early days) forming an understorey to the spotted gums (*Euc. maculata*) which are as tall and impressive in stature as their dimpled and mottled bark is conspicuous in colour and stately Sydney blue gums (*Euc. saligna*) with their cool, blue-white trunks and their dark, untidy stockings dangling around their ankles. Ahead of us was a small cliff completely covered with different species of very large ferns - all flourishing and, from the top of the cliff, water dripped continuously into a small man made swimming(?) pool. We had morning tea in this lovely spot, sitting on logs provided for the purpose, and were entertained by a chorus of whipbirds.

Nobody wanted to go swimming so we resumed our walk along the aptly named Blue Gum Swamp Trail and saw and heard much of interest. Lyrebird scratchings and callings, dingo tracks, large and small, a possum's nest, a huge tree with galls as large as footballs, waratahs with clusters of seed pods hanging down. We even sighted one lyrebird. Also in evidence were epiphytic orchids, alas not in flower, King Parrots, rosellas, currawongs, plenty of Grey Fantails and a Little Wattlebird. We had lunch in another clearing, this one complete with barbecue and here it was quite chilly as the sun had ceased to shine.

After lunch we continued along the same track and a most interesting sight was a large green slug with a red, diamond shaped mark in the middle of its back and a red frill around its edge. It was surprisingly well camouflaged as it sat? lay? among the fallen gum leaves. Presently the track started ascending the bush became drier looking and more sparse and there were rock overhangs and caves some of which had remarkable orange honeycomb markings and bands of dark ironstone and puddingstone. Angophora trees now made an appearance and their contorted branches and bright orange bark caused them to look conspicuous among the more sombre tones of the rest of the bush.

We continued upwards, the air became warmer and the group spread out for the first time. We saw one beautiful orchid, species unknown, quite a few late flowering flannel flowers looking somewhat bedraggled, a kookaburra, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo and a Golden Whistler.

In due course we arrived back at the cars after a most enjoyable day. Many thanks Jack for leading the walk and to fellow club members for their company. All told we saw twenty four species of birds and no leeches.

Peggy Merrett.

contd.....

KORRONGULLA WETLANDS.

Yes, the club is still looking after the wetlands at Primbee, but with all the wet weather over summer organising a working bee was not possible. All that has been done is to keep the track open and remove some blackberries and bathurst burr. Of the seventy odd casuarinas that were planted last year and not stolen during summer, about twenty five are still alive, although a few look a bit water logged and yellow. Overall the area looks well after the rain but there is little bird life there other than the local bush birds.

A pair of swans did raise six young and a few black duck were observed with very small ducklings.

What is required on Saturday, 10th June, that's the Sunday before the next meeting, is a few willing helpers to pull the new growth of bitou and lantana that has popped up in the areas previously cleared and in areas being revegetated by natives. The path at the back also needs widening as the lantana is gradually closing in over the area opened by us last year and the reeds will require trimming with a brush cutter.

Hoping to see a few there for the morning from 8.30 to help maintain this little oasis in suburbia, bring your gloves etc. and of course morning tea, every little bit helps.

Chris Erandis.

"ON THE ROAD TO WITTENOOM".

Just to add interest, each time we drove along the road, a Peregrine Falcon come from nowhere and glided along beside us, to catch insects, disturbed by the passing of the car. The local Ranger told me that it did this with almost every car that passed, the grass and Mulla Mulla were so thick that it was difficult for the bird to catch his food in it and he had learned that some took wing each time a car passed."

extract Mayflower Witness
supplied by Nola Williams

LAST LAUGH.

In June 1980 we had an atlassing camp at Putty. On one of our walks we came across a patch of droppings on a farm track, with an obvious roosting perch above but no rooster. Return that night showed seven Laughing Kookaburras roosting side by side, snuggled up close, all facing the same way and the inner five with heads tucked under their wings (leaving those on the end on sentry duty?).

In April 1989 at Numeralla (near Cooma) I came across a patch of droppings on the edge of a bitumen road. Again there was an obvious roost above but no roosters. Return at night revealed six Laughing Kookaburras sleeping shoulder to shoulder on the roost.

Dave Thomson.

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FAMILY \$10 SINGLE \$7 STUDENT \$2

NEXT MEETING - Will be held at the Fairy Meadow Senior Citizens Centre, corner of Collaery Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, Monday, 9th July, 1990, starting at 7.30 pm. Our Guest Speaker for the evening will be Jim Wallace. Jim is the Principal at Greenwell Point School and he will speak to us on his special interest in Spiders.

NEXT FIELD OUTING - SATURDAY, 14th JULY. This months walk will be on the Wodi Wodi Track at Stanwell Park. We will meet at the Stanwell Park Railway Station at 9 am. This 0.5 km scenic walking track was developed in close co-operation with local community groups from Coalcliff and Stanwell Park working consistantly to gain support from the government. Wodi Wodi was named after one of the five Aboriginal Tribes who lived along the Illawarra Coast. Please bring a carry lunch.

NEXT FILM NIGHT - SATURDAY 28th JULY. This will be the fourth and final film night for 1990 held at the home of Brian and Barbara Hales, 39 Lake Parade Corrimal East. As usual there will be one session starting at 7.30 pm. Please bring your camping chair if you have one and a plate to share at supper time.

MID-WEEK WALKS - July 4th to Blackbutt Bush is as stated in the last newsletter. The August mid-week walk takes place 1st August in the O'Briens Road area. Meet at the corner of Princes Highway and O'Briens Road at 8.30 am. Bring morning tea.

NOVEMBER COACH TRIP. We are hoping to organise a trip to Taronga Park Zoo for our November outing providing we can get sufficient numbers to make the trip viable. We need to have names in at the July meeting and probably money paid at the August meeting. Cost of the coach fare will be around \$10. Zoo entry is \$10.50 adults, \$4.50 children 4-15 years, \$5.50 pensioners, these are concession rates, normal entry is \$12 for adults. Enquiries have been made to gain access to the breeding, quarantine and sick bay areas for birds. We were able to visit these areas some years ago and we were also given a very informative and interesting guided tour. Although I am sure most of us would rather see birds in the wild the Zoo does offer the opportunity to see species some of us would never get to see i.e. The Lord Howe Island Woodhen to name one. If you cannot come to the July meeting please register your interest with a committee member.

Barbara Hales.

JUNE MONTHLY MEETING.

The Monday nightspeaker was Fred Spiteri who is a local bird of prey rehabilitator who arrived with his "apprentice", Peter, and four of their patients. Fred's aim in rehabilitating an injured bird of prey back into its natural life is to ensure that it is in peak fitness and has its hunting technique finely tuned. Firstly, the injured bird must be treated, often by Wollongong veterinarian Mike Cannon, and the probable success of the treatment assessed as raptors require everything going for them to survive out there on their own. During convalescence the bird tends to forget the hunting techniques it has learned from its parents and it gains fitness and timing chasing the falconer's lure and finally proving its ability on live introduced prey such as sparrows. It is only when Fred is confident that the bird can survive on its own and not go hunting in the local pigeon lofts that it is released to continue life as it was meant to be.

Peter brought in a young female Australian Goshawk that he has flying to his hand already, although the injured wing still has a little droop. Fred had a hand reared Nankeen Kestrel on his fist that thinks humans are its parents and will probably never be able to be released into the wild but could be used to study the breeding biology of the species. Fred then displayed a female Collared Sparrowhawk with its wing in plaster. This species is extremely nervous and generally refuses to eat and actually die of fright but this bird is eating and Fred is confident that there is chance of success. Next Fred displayed a young female Peregrine Falcon whose injured wing did not heal correctly and could only just fly and could also be used as a breeder if facilities were more readily available. All this work is done without any assistance from even government bodies, most of whom appear almost negative to the rehabilitation of non-endangered species of native fauna.

Ron Simcock carried the vote of thanks from all of us for this most interesting hands on experience and we all wish Fred and Peter all the best in the future, which would be for humans to care for the native birds and animals so that they do not require rehabilitation.

Chris Brandis.

MID-WEEK WALK, APPIN AREA, JUNE 6th, 1990.

The June mid-week outing was attended by seven members meeting in Appin at the intersection of the Dulli-Appin Road, at 8 30 am. We drove to Brook's Point Road, then south to an area of bush on the right. It was a bright, sunny morning, after a few brief showers through the night. We entered the area at the gate and walked some of the tracks for about 90 minutes. Birds were rather scarce there. We heard a number of calls but didn't see any birds for a time. Then the Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Gang-gang Cockatoo, Red-browed Firetail, Yellow, Brown and Striated Thornbills and Grey Fantail were sighted. The Wonga Pigeon, Eastern Whipbird and Fan-tailed Cuckoo were heard calling as we walked around, a number of times, although they were difficult to see.

We then drove to a lovely spot near Campbelltown. Turning off the Appin-Campbelltown Road to the north about two km before Campbelltown and across the Wedderburn Road to a car park above "Woolwash" in the Georges River Reserve, an extensive area along the Georges River. It was a short walk down to the river, rather steep but really worthwhile. On a sharp bend in the road the river came into view in a deep, narrow gorge. The steep, narrow gorge is thickly wooded with tall trees, some of which grow straight out of the sandstone rocks. Among the eucalypts are a number of Angophoras in their normally deformed shapes. A little lower down the road and looking back up to the cliffs there are some of the most beautiful weather sculptured rocks above. On our way down we observed the Spotted Pardalote, Brown Gerygone, Silvereye, Origma and as we reached the river a beautiful Azure Kingfisher. Then the group moved on to another spot in the Georges River Nature Reserve along the Wedderburn Road but as I didn't stop there someone who did may report on it. During the morning we recorded 30 species, 27 at Appin and 7 at Woolwash with 4 species in both places.

Horace Ward

DOXVALE WALKING TRACK, SATURDAY, 16th JUNE, 1990.

For the June outing 31 members met at the Trackhead Carpark of the Doxvale Walking Track, located 3.7 km west of Mittagong for the June monthly outing, on a cool, clear and calm morning. Clouds built up through the morning until about 11.30 it was overcast and threatening rain. The walk, beginning at the carpark winds through some stunted vegetation and some exposed sandstone to the beginning of the old, disused, historic trainline track, along which the main walking track follows for about 4.5 km to what was once a facility for the loading of coal, the reason for the building of the railway track. It was used for a short period but was abandoned about 100 years ago.

The country through which we walked is based on a Hawkesbury sandstone formation with a thin topsoil layer. At the beginning is stunted growth that develops along the track which is along a spur which forms the edge of the Nattai Gorge where the Nattai River flows. The area with a low rainfall and much of it on steep rocky terrain creates a dry sclerophyll forest. The forest sustains some large trees and has been logged periodically for commercial gains. Some of the timbers there are Lessmate, Mountain Ash, Ironbark and Stringybark. The understorey consists of a variety of vegetation some being tea trees, *Banksia Ericifolia* and *Banksia Spinulosa*, the latter was flowering quite freely over the area.

At the beginning of the walk is a large dam where we sighted the Musk Duck, Australasian Grebe, Little Pied Cormorant, Eurasian Coot and White-faced Heron. The walk along the track is easy along the embankments and through cuttings, although some of the cuttings have collapsed sides and there it is a bit rough. Since the cease of railway operations natural regeneration has occurred along the embankments and in the cuttings. Conditions in the cuttings vary producing a variety of vegetation due to soil, aspect and drainage. One supporting Casuarinas, another Treeferns or gums.

We left the railway track at a point to go to Forty Foot Falls along a firetrail which led through an open eucalypt forest. A level walk until we branched off to go to the falls where the track became very steep and rough. The track descended steeply over rocks and down steps built into the track to go down to the falls. The forest change was dramatic in the deep gully, being wet and sheltered the birdlife changed. From a lookout spot near the bottom one could see part of the falls going down into the gully and the Nattai Creek flowing on down the gully. Some of the group continued on down to the foot of the falls and walked in under the falls on some ledges behind the cascading water. Some of the birds along this part of the walk were the Golden Whistler, Brown Gerygone, Mistletoe Bird, Silvereye and a group of Varied Titellas at the top of the gully.

Returning to the railway track was a pleasant walk along the firetrail where wattles were in flower in various shades of yellow and cream. After the wet season fungi was growing freely on the many fallen, dead trees on the forest floor. On the way back to the main track the Scarlet Robin, Red-browed Firetail, Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo and New Holland Honeyeater were seen.

Rejoining the main track again we moved on through Boulder Cutting and Fern Cutting and the tunnel, then had lunch in a clear spot about 1 pm. We returned along the railway track arriving back at the car park about 3 pm. For the day we recorded 37 species.

Horace Ward.

contd.....

LOOKING FOR BIRDS ON THE NORTH ISLAND OF NEW ZEALAND.

During May 1990, Jacqueline and I spent three weeks on the North Island of New Zealand. New Zealand is not renowned for a diverse plentiful avifauna; it supports far fewer birds than Australia, although we did manage to see a wide range of birds during our visit. Birding in New Zealand is not made exciting by the promise of a lengthy species list at the end of the holiday, or by the abundance of the birds, at least as far as the bush birds are concerned. There are, however, some uniquely New Zealand birds to be found. In all we recorded 63 species during a period of 20 days on the North Island. Much of New Zealand is dominated by exotic birds and, of the 63 species observed, 21 or 33% have been introduced by Europeans. The total of 42 native species appears rather disappointing when compared with the 50 to 60 species one could easily observe in a single day in Australia.

Unfortunately, many native New Zealand birds have either become extinct or are very rare today, only being found on small offshore islands. The introduction of several dozen mammal species to a country which only naturally has two small bats, and massive clearing of the vegetation have caused a drastic decline in the fauna, particularly birds. One brochure claimed that New Zealand has 10% of the world's endangered bird species. The picture is not totally bleak, however. The conservation service has become a world leader in the breeding and re-introduction of endangered birds to the natural environment. This mainly occurs on off-shore islands where mammalian predators can be controlled. Some of the most important reserves for birds are the small islands off the coast such as Little Barrier Island. Other "islands" which support many native birds are the larger areas of native bush, particularly those contained within the national parks system. We were particularly keen to visit the six parks on the North Island, and visited all but one. This includes two maritime parks which cover coastline, bays and off-shore islands. In addition to its large national parks and forest parks, there are many scenic reserves in New Zealand. These range in size from less than one hectare to many hundreds of hectares, and are scattered throughout the country. Many of the bush remnants seen along the roadside display signs indicating their status as scenic reserves. Scenic Reserves often provide pleasant walks on well established tracks, often with pamphlets and clear sign posting. Some scenic reserves also cover areas of coastline and wetlands.

The most common birds on the North Island are introduced species. The most common and widespread species that we saw were the Common Mynah, Blackbird, Chaffinch, Yellowhammer, Goldfinch and House Sparrow. The Australian Magpie is also introduced and is quite common. Other species introduced from Australia, although not (yet) as common or widespread as the Australian Magpie, are the Eastern Rosella and the Sulphur-crested Cockatoo. Some species which are either native or self-introduced from Australia have increased dramatically in numbers since European settlement because of the creation of extensive areas of cleared land. Species in this category include Welcome Swallow, White-faced Heron and Masked Plover. The most common and widespread native species observed, in addition to the above three species, were the Pied Fantail, Silvereye and New Zealand Kingfisher (our Sacred Kingfisher). In open country, the Harrier (known as the Swamp Harrier in Australia) is common and is found throughout the country, being the only common bird of prey. This species appears to fill the role of several species of birds of prey in Australia. It is commonly seen feeding upon road-killed Brush-tailed Possums, of which there is an abundance, as well as over wetlands and bush areas.

In the bush areas, other native species to be seen include the New Zealand Pigeon, North Island Tomtit, Grey Warbler, Porepork, Tui and Bellbird. Other species recorded, but only in larger areas were the Rifleman, Whitehead and North Island Robin. Despite searching, some of the rarer species were not found. The Kiwi, a national symbol of New Zealand, is represented by three species, one of which, the Brown Kiwi, is still quite common in many bush areas. Unfortunately, we did not see any in the wild as they are nocturnal and very secretive. We did, however, see them in the nocturnal house at Utorochanga. Most of the rarer native birds were seen at Utorochanga Bird Park, which is well worth a visit.

contd.....

LOOKING FOR BIRDS.....contd.

The following gives some idea of the birds one could expect to see in an average bush area, such as at a reserve known as the Trounson Kauri Park, about 40 km north of Dargaville in the north-western part of the North Island. On a one and a half hour walk through the reserve, which is composed of mature Kauri forest surrounded by cleared land, 19 species were observed; 11 of these were native. Most of the birds were associated with the cleared area rather than the forest.

Wetlands are always worth a visit to see new birds. Two common and widespread species in wetlands and paddocks throughout the island are the Pukeko, a relative of our swamp hen, and the Paradise Shelduck. In the far north, the Brown Quail was commonly seen near low lying areas with a thick cover of vegetation. The most common wetland species is the introduced Mallard, which is ubiquitous. On many of the lakes the introduced Black Swan is also common. Native species commonly seen were Shags (three species), Grey Teal, Grey Duck, New Zealand Scaup, New Zealand Shoveller and Pied Stilt. Less common species seen were the Australian Coot, White Heron (known here as the White Egret) and New Zealand Dabchick.

The number of species of sea birds and waders found in New Zealand is similar to that found in Australia. Unfortunately, May is the wrong time of the year for viewing waders, and few were observed. Similarly, it was too late to see mainland breeding colony of the Australian Gannet at Cape Kidnappers, near Napier. We did, however, experience an earthquake there!

We have a great deal of information on reserves and places to visit on the North and South Islands, should anyone be contemplating a birding trip to New Zealand. Please feel free to come and see us for some tips on where to go.

Kevin Mills.

BOWERBIRDS IN DANGER.

After reading John Pollard's article in I.E.O.C. News, No. 122, April, 1989 on the danger of blue dairy rings to the Satin Dowerbird, I raised the issue at the April meeting of the Shoalhaven Conservation Society. A letter was sent to Nowra Dairy Co-op. who assured us they were concerned but, to quote; "Unfortunately, it is not a simple matter of just changing colours, marketing concepts and research is involved with package changes".

A letter was then sent to the Minister of Environment, Mr. Tim Moore. In August I received a phone call from Mr. Moore's office requesting the name of the manufacturer of the plastic containers concerned. This information was passed on and it was not until May this year that we received a letter from which I quote; "Thank you for your letter of 31st July, 1989. I apologise for the delay in replying to you. I requested a report on Satin Dowerbirds from the National Parks and Wildlife Service and subsequently met with the Plastics Industry Association. Your concerns were raised with the Association at that meeting and they are currently investigating the possibility of modifying milk container tops".

Mr. Moore suggested we contact the Plastics Industry Association to follow up on any developments. This has been done and I shall pass on the answer when received. It is most gratifying to find that not all "small" matters are lost within the red tape of government departments.

Diana Wright.

contd.....

PROJECT CUTTLEFISH.

It is well known that albatrosses visit the coastal seas off Wollongong each winter to feed on cuttlefish. The four albatross species which occur regularly are Wandering, Black-browed, Yellow-nosed and Ghy. But only the Wandering Albatross is banded here. This activity is made possible because of the species insatiable appetite for cuttlefish and a good supply of food.

Wanderers gorge themselves so greedily that they are unwilling to fly and are easily caught in a net tossed from a boat. Banding operations which were pioneered by the late Doug Gibson are continued today by Harry Battam. About 4,000 Wanderers have been banded since 1950. 1,500 have been recovered; some while breeding on islands in the Southern Ocean, others when they return to Dellambi.

The large cuttlefish which provides food for the Wanderers has a bone about 30-50 cm long and is found on the surface. After the flesh is eaten, the bones are washed onto the beaches. An interesting feature of this large cuttlefish is its unknown distribution along the coast. How far does it extend north and south? One way to answer the question is to count cuttlebones on beaches after storms in the Tasman Sea.

One such storm occurred on Monday 13th June, 1990. Thirteen club members walked in teams of two or three on 9 beaches in the area on Wednesday 30th June. Cuttlebones were found mainly to the north, although Olive Rodwell, Don and Vera Rogers were happy to find 5 cuttlebones and a yellow-bellied sea snake on Perkins Beach. Beach-washed seabirds were also looked for (a secondary project) but none were found. More comprehensive survey data is required before any conclusion can be made but the project has at least begun. As one member remarked we now have the embryonic data.

Cuttlefish and squids are cephalopods, a word which means head-footed. They are so called because the tentacles are in a ring around the mouth. Two tentacles, much longer than the other eight, are shot out to seize prey and retract it to the grasp of the short arms. Octopus are also cephalopods but only have eight tentacles.

I welcome discussion with people interested in all aspects of "project cuttlefish", particularly those who would like to take part in future surveys after winter storms.

Kevin Wood.

A MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR NEW SOUTH WALES WADERS. information needed.

Over the last ten years there have been a number of major studies of waders and of estuarine ecosystems in New South Wales. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service is now reviewing this information and preparing a management plan for waders in this state. All waders are being considered but the emphasis is on the waders and the problems in estuarine wetlands. The first objective is to identify the important sites for waders and establish priorities for reservation. The second objective is to identify the specific problems for waders in this state and to decide what management actions the Service should be taking, both inside and outside reserves. The third objective is to identify the gaps in our knowledge and to make recommendations on research and monitoring programmes which the service should be initiating or supporting.

A plea for information. If you have unpublished records of numbers of waders at specific sites, please let me know. I am anxious to find out the maximum number of waders of each species seen at each site over the last ten years or so. Also I would be grateful for any information or opinions on the particular conservation problems at each site. All information to be sent to Peter Smith, 44 Hawkins Parade, Blaxland, NSW 2774 or phone (047) 39 5312 any time.

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NEXT MEETING - Will be held at the Fairy Meadow Senior Citizens Centre, corner of Collaery Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, on Monday, 13th August, commencing at 7.30 pm. Our Guest Speaker for the evening will be Mr. Martin Sullivan of the Australian Customs Service. His lecture on "Bird Smuggling" will be supported by the showing of a video tape and various handouts. Martin, "Inspector, Barrier Control", has been with the customs service for twelve years and he has just finished a tour of duty from Port Kembla to Narooma giving lectures on the New Fauna Task Force Operations. For a minority of people the temptation to poach our beautiful wild birds to keep or sell illegally is too great. Come and see the invaluable work being carried out by people like Martin to protect Australia's birds which give so much pleasure to us Birdos.

NEXT OUTING - This will be to Korrungulla Wetlands, Perkins Beach, Bush and Sand Dunes and, time permitting, Coomaditchy Lagoon. We will meet at the western side of Korrungulla at the gate situated in Nicolle Road, Primbee at 8.30 am. Bring along your morning tea and lunch.

MID-WEEK OUTING FOR SEPTEMBER - This takes place on the 5th and is to the Mount Kembla area. Meet at the lookout under the power lines at 8.30 am and don't forget your morning tea.

TARONGA PARK ZOO COACH TRIP, NOVEMBER 17th. - Arrangements for this trip are well in hand. Owing to the varied commitments of the organisers it would be a great help if as many members as possible could pay their \$10 coach fare as soon as possible. There are only two more meeting nights and it would be convenient to have this outing finalised before the October camps. Your early co-operation will be greatly appreciated.

ADVANCE NOTICE - For the November issue of the I.B.O.C. News, Wal and Hazel Emery have kindly consented to take on the editor and typist jobs. Because of the October camps all articles for the November newsletter need to be with Wal and Hazel, 53 Dymock Street, Balgownie, 2519 by FRIDAY, 19th OCTOBER.

contd.....

MID-WEEK WALK, 4th JULY, 1990 - BLACKBUTT BUSH.

Seven intrepid souls braved the windy morning for a few hours in the Blackbutt Bush. There wasn't a great variety of birds, only 24 species, but there were a few specials.

In the shelter of the forest there were as many Grey Fantails as we've seen for quite a while and all very active. Also in the forest was a small party of Red-browed Firetails finding seed in the rank grass, a couple of Eastern Yellow Robins keeping low and quietly checking us out, a solitary female Golden Whistler with a snippet from her repertoire and the distant early call from a Fan-tailed Cuckoo. On the edge of some lantana in the open parkland we came on a lone male Variegated Fairy-wren in full colour (not in "winter" plumage) - a beautiful bird. Further over in adjoining pasture were ten Cattle Egrets feeding on insects disturbed by the resident cattle.

Several of our party added an unusual touch to a bird outing by rolling down an inviting, grassy slope. I forgot to mention earlier that our party was made up of two club members and five grandchildren.

Dave Thomson.

JULY MONTHLY MEETING.

Our guest speaker for the night was Jim Walliss from Nowra who presented slides of some of the spiders found locally. Jim started out with an interest in photography and a desire to show others, especially the school children he teaches, the marvels of nature. The range and spectacular nature of spiders allowed him to practise these interests and he took the opportunity to display some of his findings to club members.

We saw a range of spiders from the small to the large, the drab to the coloured and a range of hunting techniques that were astounding. The small Spine or Enamel Spider is a brightly coloured little spider that lives in small colonies and would probably set up a colony in your back yard if collected in the bush and allowed to go free there.

We are all familiar with the Garden Orb Spider that weaves its web across the path we use at night and we saw how it can change colour slowly to match its background. The odd looking Bird Dropping Spider looks like its name as does the Scorpion Spider and the little Jumping Spider can move its head section to follow movement. Hunting methods vary from the large webs of the Golden Orbs to small leg held ones of the Net Casting Spider through to the wandering Jumping Spider that gets prey larger than itself to those that lie in wait for prey like the Trap Door Spider.

Generally harmless these fascinating creatures can provide much interest in watching them go about their business. As they grow they have to shed their hard skins and the much smaller male takes its life into its legs when it deposits the sperm sacks into the receptacles on the females side. The eggs are stored or carried with the female and some of the young when they hatch throw out a line of web and float off with the wind while others stay in safety on mum's back.

Dave Thomson gave the vote of thanks from us all and we should all think twice before automatically crushing that Huntsman that has found its way into the home.

Chris Brandis.

contd.....

I.B.O.C. OUTING 14th JULY, 1990 - WODI WODI TRACK.

Eighteen club members enjoyed perfect walking weather and the quite spectacular scenery of the Wodi Wodi Track. The Track is named after one of the five aboriginal tribes of the Illawarra coast and provides a comfortable one day circular walk starting from Stanwell Park Railway Station. There are several interpretation panels along the track explaining special features associated with the Illawarra Railway, history of the area and the natural environment. There is also an excellent guide pamphlet available from the city council describing all aspects of the track and points of interest.

From near sea level to the cliff top lookout the vegetation varied from coastal flora to tall open forest under the escarpment with pockets of rain-forest and palms, to hanging swamps and low heath forest at the top. I was particularly interested to see the blend of Blackbutt and the pink trunked Smooth barked apple in the forest and in one small area near the lookout four different species of Banksias.

This wide diversity of habitats provided homes for a range of birds giving the walkers 47 species for the day. Highlights were the Red-browed Treecreeper in the forest behind the station, a Rose Robin further up the escarpment, the cockatoos which screeched overhead for much of the day and rock warblers amongst the high cliffs. Pilot birds were heard and there was evidence along the walk of lyrebirds scratching but none were seen or heard.

The most significant sighting was a Red-tailed Black Cockatoo which everyone was able to have a good look at. Following the previous meeting there was much discussion of spiders but no sightings.

The day concluded for most with a visit to the gallery and craft shop at Stanwell Park.

Barry Virtue.

BOWERBIRDS IN DANGER.

Further information has been received regarding the the blue dairy rings and the Satin Bowerbird. Susan Ryan, The Executive Director of the Plastics Industry Assoc. has informed me that the industry is already negotiating with dairy companies over the need to make milk tops the same colour as the bottle. She states that the manufacturers of the bottles are keen for them to be made from one colour only as this makes them more recyclable, this should also remove the problem of the attraction by bowerbirds. Compol and Brickwoods, manufacturers of these containers, are waiting for a response from the dairy industry but are hopeful for a positive outcome before the end of the year. It looks as if the wheels are turning however slowly.

Diana Wright.



Many came back with dirty pants

P.S. The red-tailed black was in a cage for those who didn't guess.

contd.....

SEEDS, FRUIT AND.....

In March of 1990 we were putting food out on the veranda rail of a holiday flat at Nelson's Bay - steak trimmings for the Laughing Kookaburras and toast crusts for the Eastern Rosellas. But there was one rosella that hadn't read the book. It landed beside a piece of steak, picked it up in its left foot and nibbled at it for about a minute before being scared off.

There was no repeat performance. Rosellas are generally viewed as eaters of seeds and fruit but the books show that they eat also some insects - there seems to be no mention of anything more meaty than that.

Dave Thomson.

DONATIONS.

Our club gives donations to the R.A.O.U., last years being \$100. The following shows ways in which those donations are spent.

The 1989 R.A.O.U. pre-tax appeal raised nearly \$15,000 - an excellent result that helped us to give the Barren Grounds building program a flying start and to finance the Nullarbor Honeyeater Movements Study (Stephen Ambrose and his hard-working crew banded thousands of honeyeaters during January and discovered a previously unknown westerly movement of Richard's Pipits).

Success can sometimes be hard to measure with environmental studies, but there can be no doubt as to the magnitude of our achievements with the Red Goshawk Project. We know more about its breeding biology than ever before and have monitored the progress of several pairs through nest-building and rearing young.

BROOME BIRD OBSERVATORY (\$8,000) The opening in March by the Deputy Premier of Western Australia, Ian Taylor, means that Broome is officially up and running. Visitors can now enjoy air-conditioned accommodation, but funds are still needed for fridges, freezers and kitchenware. Help to make a stay more comfortable - it could be you that needs a cool drink after a hot day's birding on the beach.

AUSTRALIAN BIRD COUNT (\$9,500) After a successful Pilot Study in 1989, the ABC is forging ahead under Stephen Ambrose's expert guidance. One thousand keen counters are keeping him busy - so busy, in fact, that he'll need a computer to keep tabs on all the data in his Sydney office. With your donation the ABC can keep participants in touch with data analysis and up-to-date newsletters.

RED GOSHAWK FOLLOW-UP (6,000) In 1989, during the final phase of the Red Goshawk study, Tom Aumann found four active nests in the Kimberley - the last nest found in W.A. was in 1910. Although the main project is finished we'd like to keep a watch on this rare predator in the future. Your donation will fund short visits to known territories to establish occupancy and fledging success.

R.A.O.U. May 1990.

SWAN DOWNING.

When a body discovered in an Indiana lake was found to have bite marks on the left cheek, the local sheriff's deputies (exiles from Hazzard Country perhaps?) put their none-too-well-endowed heads together. Their conclusion? The attack could only have been made by a large swan. Of course.

Looking through their files, they came upon a likely suspect. Described as 'big and tough', the 50 lb swan was duly arrested by these gallant upholders of Law and Order. It was only when the case came to court that the lawmen realised they had goofed. Under US law it is not possible to indict a feathered suspect! Back to the drawing board boys!

I.B.O.C. NEWS

NO. 137 SEPTEMBER, 1990.



THE CIRCULAR OF THE ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB

Registered by Aust. Post Publication No. NBH 3848

POSTAL ADDRESS P.O. BOX 56, FAIRY MEADOW, NSW 2519

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NEXT MEETING - Will be held at the Fairy Meadow Senior Citizens Centre at the corner of Collaery Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, Monday, 10th September, 1990, commencing at 7.30 pm. Our Guest Speaker for the evening will be Bruce Lindenmayer. Bruce is the President of Canberra Ornithologists Group and he plans to talk to us about C.O.G. and the birds in the Canberra Region.

NEXT FIELD OUTING - Please note that the venue is different to that shown in the yearly programme. We will now be going to St. Mary's Towers, Douglas Park, Saturday, 15th September, meeting outside the gates at 8.30 am. To get there travel along Mount Ousley Road to the Picton turn-off, turn left into Picton Road and continue to the intersection with Wilton Road, turn right and continue for about 200 metres then left into a road called both Douglas Park Road and Mt. Keira Road. Travel along that road for about 3 km to the gates. Bring your eats and drinks and have a good day.

MID-WEEK WALK - 5th September to the Mount Kembla area. Meet at the lookout (under the power lines) at 8.30 am and don't forget your morning tea.

PLEASE NOTE - As is usual because of the camps there will not be a Monday night meeting, mid-week or monthly outing or newsletter in October. Please remember to forward all items to be included in the November newsletter to Wal and Hazel Emery, 53 Dymock Street, Balgownie, 2519, by Friday, 19th October.

ZOO TRIP - Arrangements have now been made for the Taronga Zoo trip for Saturday, 17th November. Please we need to have coach fares paid in to the treasurer no later than the September meeting night, \$10 adults, \$5 children. After the September meeting any remaining seats will be offered to members families and friends. We plan to leave Wollongong at 7.30 am and then leave the zoo for the return journey at 3 pm to be confirmed in the November newsletter.

GROUND PARROT SURVEY, BARREN GROUNDS. - The next Ground Parrot survey will be conducted on Saturday, 8th September at 10 am. Anyone interested in participating should contact the wardens (36 0195 or Robyn Wilson (201 511 at work). The survey usually takes about three hours.

contd.....

-2-

AUGUST MONTHLY MEETING.

The evening talk was by Martin Sullivan and Alan Page of the Australian Custom Service who were promoting the newly formed Customs Fauna Task Force. The Customs Services are basically responsible for the movement of transport, people and goods in and out of Australia and the setting and collection of duties on this movement. With specially trained staff and with the aid of dogs and computer information services they cover the millions of items and people coming in and out of Australia every year, some with goods that are illegal and dangerous. They have joined forces with the National Wildlife Service and Quarantine Dept. to try and control illegal movement of flore and fauna in and out of this country. Imported animals can carry desease or plants pests and smuggling is depleting some of our endangered birds and animals. We saw a video of a suitcase full of cockatoos doped up and taped into cardboard cylinders and packed into a suitcase with shingle-backed lizards on ice, to slow them down, that was confiscated at Sydney airport. With prices up to \$100,000 a pair couriers are prepared to risk an 80% loss of cargo life and not so stiff sentences to get a few birds out of the country and an international convention has been set up to protect the endangered flora and fauna throughout the world. With less than 30 staff to cover from Helensburgh to Eden it is up to us out and about the bush to be the eyes and ears of the Customs to detect any odd happenings such as trapping and report this to the 008 25691 hot line. We all have a part to play in helping prevent the unnecessary suffering of birds, mammals and reptiles that occurs for someone to make a fast dollar. Joan Zealey gave the vote of thanks for this most informative evening on the work being carried out to protect the Australian bush for us all.

Chris Brandis.

AUGUST MONTHLY OUTING.

On Saturday, 18th August, 13 members of the I.B.O.C. plus 6 children met at Korrungulla Swamp for our monthly walk. The day was fine and windy but once in the shelter of the Melaleucas and She oaks the wind was no longer a problem. Also helping to whiffle the wind were Coastal wattles, full in bloom and looking rather lurid with Hardenbergia and Running postman scrambling all over them. White pimelia was also adding to the show with its tiny white flowers in great profusion. Many thanks to Chris Brandis for your work on the tracks. Walking here is a pleasure and I'm sure you'll be pleased to know that all the walkers helped you in your task by pulling out masses of fireweed.

The birds here were mostly quite obliging, sitting and waiting to be observed, Australian Kestrel, Spangled Drongo, European Goldfinch and Chestnut Teal among them and sitting on a small dead tree on a little muddy island in the middle of the swamp were a ~~Sacred~~ Ibis, Royal Spoonbill and a white egret. Apparently they'd never heard that birds of a feather flock together. Soon it was morning tea and then we were off to Perkins Beach.

Along the track through the hind dunes the Banksia serrata were large and frequent and the children had great fun trying to frighten each other with the biggest of the bad banksia men. Here also were huge gum trees and, closer to the beach, Tea trees not yet in flower. Near the transmitting masts were a straight row of Pampas grass clumps, still holding proudly aloft the tattered remnants of their flower heads, all seeds long since disperses. On the track through the dunes Bitou bush was king - even crowding out the lantana and here a deal of excitement was added to the walk by a large redbellied black snake lying across the track and great interest added by a pair of Black-shouldered Kite who put on a display of aerobatics for us. We had lunch in a warm sheltered spot back near the transmitting mast where a flock of Dusky Woodswallows entertained us. Also seen was a Shining Bronze-Cuckoo. After lunch we drove to Commaditchie Lagoon where the bird life was most prolific, sea gulls by the hundred, all facing into the wind, many with a leg band, some with two and two unfortunates with very large wing tags in fluorescent blue and orange, one with 300 on it in black in quite large printing and one with 204. A flotilla of Pelicans sailed by looking as majestic as the sailing ships in the 1st Fleet re-enactment on Bicentenary Day. A Black Swan's nest was found with three eggs in it and two Kelp Gulls were seen. It was as always a most enjoyable outing, thankyou.

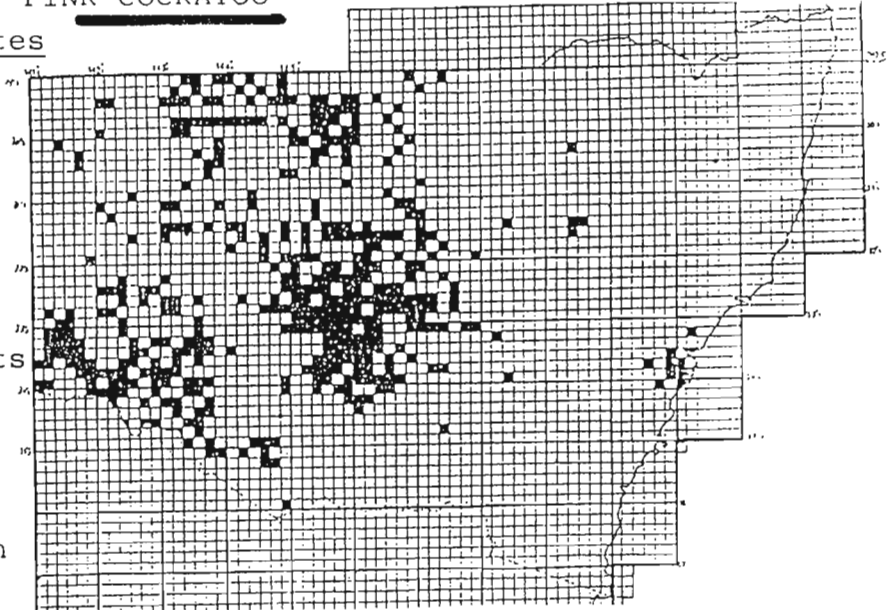
Peggy Merrett.

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THE NSW Bird Atlas
- some progress notes

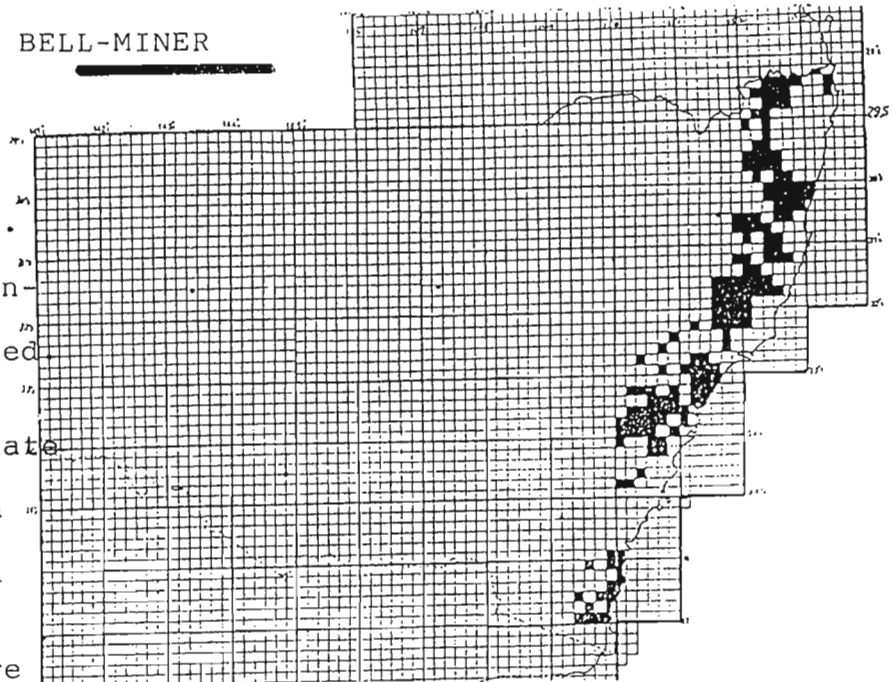
PINK COCKATOO

The maps on this page are examples of one form of output from our database. Most members will not have been aware of the type of information we can produce, so Ian McAllan suggested we should let you know something about the end results of your efforts.



Maps like these indicate the 10' blocks from which each species has been reported. Our database can provide information on breeding, frequency of reporting, habitat preferences, seasonal movements and grid and locality list to mention some of the easier information we can extract. Recently, for example, we undertook to provide details on the Sooty and Powerful Owls in SE New South Wales. Information sought was grid block, breeding or non-breeding presence, date of report, location reported

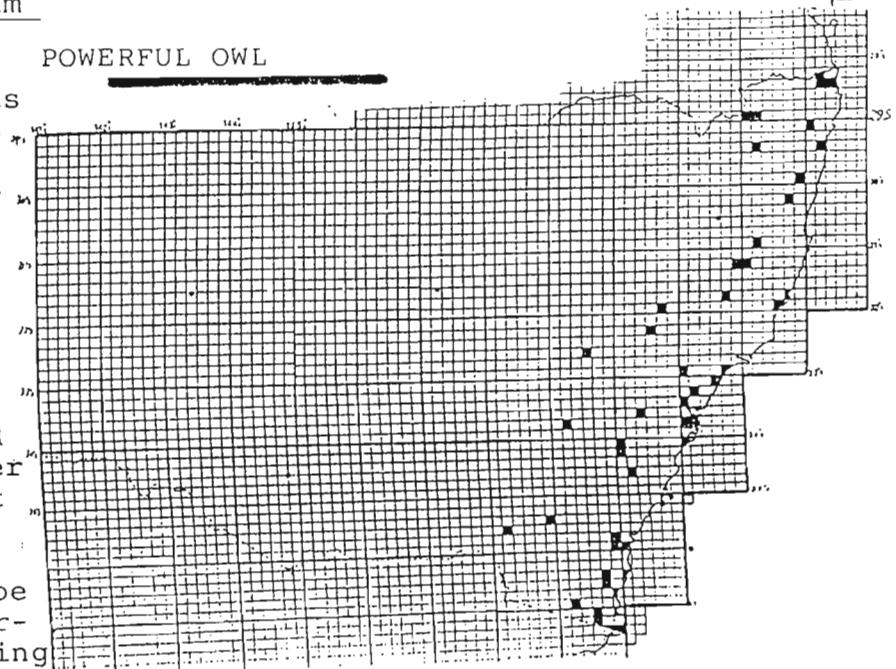
BELL-MINER



There are 2954 ten minute blocks in NSW. Our immediate objective is to obtain at least one report from each block. A map of our progress will be included with the September Newsletter.

For the longer term, we are trying to achieve a minimum of 25 visits/reports for each block. The Raou's Field Atlas work found this was the median required to obtain a 50% coverage of the estimated final number of species likely to be found in any block. (You may be interested to know that more than 640 reports are necessary to achieve a coverage of over 90%.

POWERFUL OWL



On the next page is a grid block species list, another example of what we can get from our database. When sufficiently developed therefore the Atlas will be a unique environmental service - providing an on-going

B. BIRDS NAME	OBS'S	BREED.	OBS/PER
1 Ew	1		.93
2 Boubli-Ouail	3		.33
3 B. O. O.	3		.37
10 Buller's Shearwater	2		.55
14 Pallid Bullion-quail	2		.37
16 Little Bullion-quail	2		.55
20 Peaceful Dove	3		.93
31 Diamond Dove	3		.93
32 Bar-shouldered Dove	1		1.11
33 Red-winged Blackbird	1		1.11
43 Crested Pigeon	6		1.11
55 Black-tailed Noddy	3		.55
59 Coot	1		.18
61 Little Grebe	2		.93
62 Hoary-headed Grebe	1		.55
63 Black-necked Grebe	2		.55
97 Little Black Cormorant	2		.37
100 Little Pied Cormorant	2		.37
101 Darler	1		.18
132 Red-necked Darter	1		.18
133 Banded Plover	1		.93
143 Black-fronted Dotterel	1		.93
144 Pied Stilt	1		.18
178 Glossy Ibis	3		.55
179 Sacred Ibis	1		.18
180 Straw-necked Ibis	3		.55
186 Plumed Egret	2		.37
187 Great Egret	2		.37
188 Great Egret	2		.37
189 Pacific Heron	3		.93
192 Rufous Night-heron	3		.93
202 Wood Duck	6		1.11
208 Black Duck	3		.55
211 Grey Teal	6		1.11
212 Grey Teal	6		1.11
213 Pig-waded Duck	1		.18
221 Brown Goshawk	1		.18
222 Collared Sparrowhawk	6		1.11
224 Wedge-tailed Eagle	5		.93
225 Little Eagle	7		1.30
226 Black Kestrel	2		.37
232 Black-shouldered Kite	2		.37
235 Australian Hobby	1		.18
239 Brown Falcon	2		.37
240 Nankeen Kestrel	6		1.11
246 Parkins Owl	2		.37
247 Masked Woodswallow	2		.37
271 Little Corella	1		.18
273 Galah	6		1.11
274 Cockatoo	4		.74
291 Mallie Ringneck	1		1.11
295 Red-rumped Parrot	6		1.11
297 Blue Parrot	6		1.11
298 Blue Parrot	6		1.11
302 Turquoise Parrot	1		.18
306 Blue-winged Parrot	1		.18
310 Dusky Finch	1		.33
317 White-rumped Warbler	2		.37
322 Kookaburra	3		.93
325 Red-backed Kingfisher	3		.55
326 Sacred Kingfisher	1		.18
327 Rainbow Kingfisher	1		.18
328 White-rumped Warbler	4		.74
337 Pallid Cuckoo	4		.74
341 Black-eared Cuckoo	3		.55
342 Rufous-tailed Bronza-cuck	3		.55
357 White-necked Swallow	6		1.11
358 White-backed Swallow	6		1.11
360 Fairy Martin	5		1.11
361 Grey Fantail	4		.74
364 Little Magpie	7		1.30
369 Restless Flycatcher	6		1.11
377 Jacky Winter	6		1.11
385 Moorparrot	7		1.30
401 Rufous Whistler	7		1.30
408 Grey Shrike-thrush	6		1.11
419 Crested Bellbird	6		1.11
422 Brown Cockatoo-shrike	1		.18
423 Brown Cockatoo-shrike	1		.18
430 White-winged Trillite	3		.55
437 Chestnut Quail-thrush	3		.55
443 Grey-crowned Babbler	2		.37
448 White-fronted Chat	2		.37
449 Crinson Chat	2		.37
455 Whistling Warbler	7		1.11
465 Whistling Warbler	7		1.11
466 Southern Whiteface	2		.37
471 Yellow Thornbill	6		1.11
476 Inland Thornbill	6		1.11
481 Chestnut-rumped Thornbill	6		1.11
489 Yellow-rumped Thornbill	5		.93
502 Spotted Warbler	1		.18
508 Brown Songlark	1		.18
509 Rufous Songlark	3		.55
513 Striated Grasswren	1		.18
526 Clamorous Reedwren	1		.18
526 Varied Whirren	1		.18
536 Varied Whirren	1		.18
543 White-breasted Woodswallow	3		.55
544 Masked Woodswallow	3		.55
545 White-browed Woodswallow	6		1.11
549 Sittella	1		.18
554 White-bellied Swallow	7		1.30
554 White-bellied Swallow	7		1.30
574 Silvereye	1		.18
583 Brown-headed Honeyeater	6		1.11
585 Striped Honeyeater	3		.55
594 White-fronted Honeyeater	1		.18
607 White-winged Honeyeater	5		.93
622 Yellow-plumed Honeyeater	2		.37
623 Grey-fronted Honeyeater	5		.93
625 White-plumed Honeyeater	5		.93
634 Mossy Miner	6		1.11
635 Yellow-throated Miner	6		1.11
641 Blue-faced Honeyeater	5		.93
646 Little Friarbird	5		.93
653 Zebra Finch	2		.37
671 Olive-backed Oriole	1		.18
672 Spotted Pardalote	1		.18
680 Spotted Pardalote	1		.18
691 Little Crow	2		.37
693 White-winged Chough	3		.55
700 Pied Butcherbird	5		.93
702 Grey Butcherbird	7		1.30
920 Australian Rattle	1		.18
954 Little Raven	4		.74
957 Domestic Pigeon	2		.37
976 Striated Pardalote	2		.37
995 House Sparrow	1		.18
999 Common Starling	1		.18
No. Species	139	Total no. visits	7
No. Breeding Species	21	Total Observations	537

monitoring and reporting service on the distribution of birds in NSW.

Now that we are on this page, I should say something about the list shown. It represents a sample taken of "Coombie" - the homestead block attlassed by Janet Houghton.

As you will see, there are 5 columns. The first and second are self-explanatory. The 3rd indicates the times each species has been reported out of the 7 visits/reports in this period; while the 4th column shows the number of breeding reports. The final column indicates, as a percentage, how many times each species was reported out of a total of 537 observations in this period. Finally, at the end of the list, top left corner of the page (well almost), the total number of species, visit breeding species and observations is shown.

Why are we doing all this? I have been asked more than once.

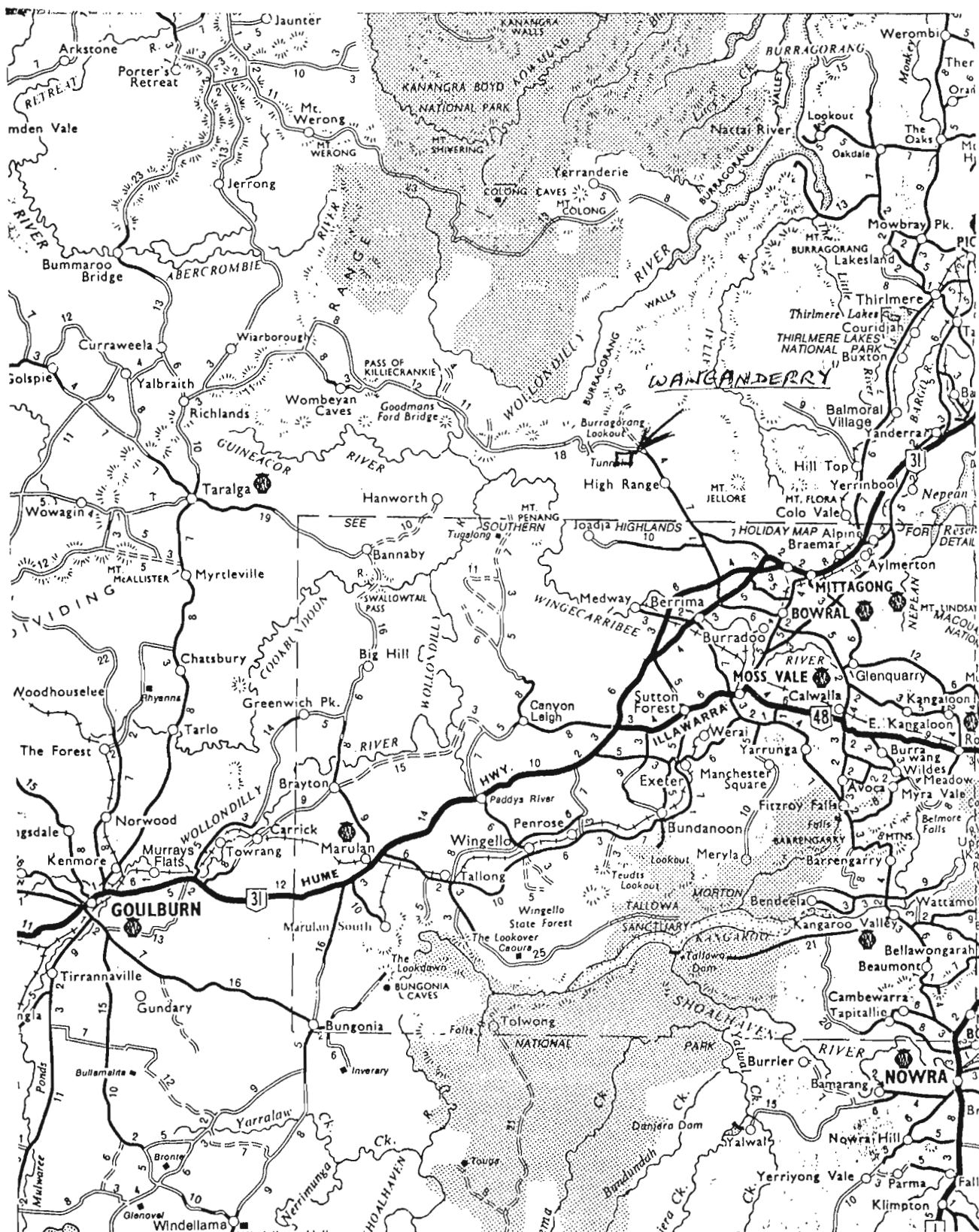
Well, in my opinion, it is important because of the significant changes we have all made during the last 150 (not 200) years - much of NSW was not altered until after 1830. These changes have substantially reduced the opportunities now available to birds. Four species are extinct. About 90 others are under threat. For the remainder, maintenance of the gene pool is imperative.

Every species needs the opportunity to not just survive but to flourish,

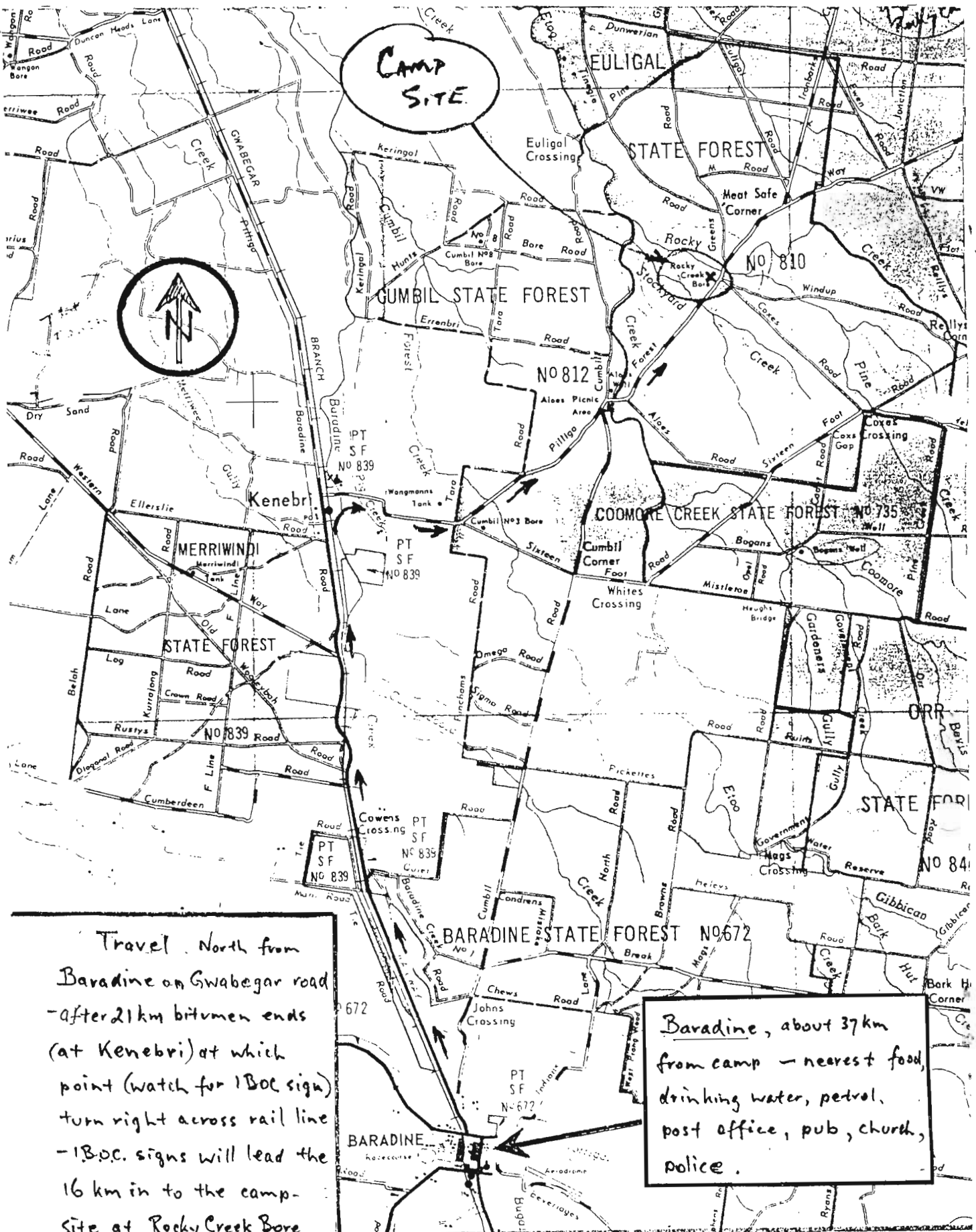
The above is an extract from the June 1990 Newsletter of the New South Wales Bird Atlassers, of which group our Club is an active member. If you want to know more about Atlassing, talk to Dave Thomson (84.2876).

FAMILY CAMP - 28th SEPTEMBER TO 1st OCTOBER - "WANGANDERRY".

The camp is to be held at "Wanganderry" the property of Miss. Badgery. The camp gate is on the South side of Wombeyan Caves road, 19 km off the Hume Highway (do not take the Berrima by-pass road). I.B.O.C. signs will be erected. All the usual first class facilities will be provided, toilets, hot showers, campfires and great company. Bring along enough drinking water for the weekend and your sense of humour. We camped here in 1983 and sighted 64 bird species for the weekend plus Wombats, kangaroos and wallabies. Day visitors will be most welcome.



I.B.O.C. CAMP - PILLIGA STATE FORESTS - Oct 27 / Nov. 4. 1990.



Travel North from Baradine on Gwabegar road - after 21km bitumen ends (at Kenebri) at which point (watch for IBOC sign) turn right across rail line - IBOC signs will lead the 16 km in to the camp-site at Rocky Creek Bore - site identified by windmill + tank on stand.

Baradine, about 37 km from camp - nearest food, drinking water, petrol, post office, pub, church, police.

Extract from Forestry Commission map "Pilliga State Forests" (also shows well on N.R.M.A. map "Pilliga").

I.B.O.C. NEWS

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

These are due on 1st January each year

FAMILY \$10 SINGLE \$7 STUDENT \$2

HAPPY CHRISTMAS 1990

NEXT MEETING -

This will be our last meeting for 1990, how time flies, and will be held at the Fairy Meadow Senior Citizens Centre, corner of Collaery Avenue and Princes Highway, Monday, 10th December, at 7.30 pm. As usual for the December meeting we will not have a guest speaker, rumour has it that a very special guest is bound to make an appearance. The emphasis will be on a festive atmosphere with good fun, good entertainment, good company and good food.

Don't forget to bring along your "Birds Breakfast", great prizes to be won and bring your pen or pencil and participate in the "Name the Baby" quiz.

For your entertainment we have a musical item, slide shows, poetry, a "Rap"?? segment and a few surprise items so come along and join in the fun.



NEXT OUTING - Please take note that the December outing takes place before the December meeting and is on Saturday, 8th December. We will be meeting in the Carrington Falls Picnic area at 3.30 pm. To get there turn off the Jamberoo Robertson Road about 8 km east of Robertson where the access road is signposted. Follow the unsealed road to a 'Y' section. The right fork takes you to the picnic area. If you intend taking a barbeque meal please make sure you listen to news reports to find out if any fire bans are in force on the day. If the weather is good we intend spending some time spotlighting after dark.

MID-WEEK OUTING - The final mid-week outing for the year is to the Girl Guides camp, Mount Keira Road, Mount Keira, please meet outside the gates at at 8.30 am.

FAMILY CAMP SEPTEMBER 28th to 1st OCTOBER.

What a great place to hold the Family Camp, the weather was sunny, the area consisted of sclerophyll forest and open grazing land. Miss Badgery's property "Wangenderry", on the Wombeyan Caves road, 19 km off the Hume Highway, was the venue for this years camp. The club visited the area seven years ago when 64 bird species were sighted.

Some of our members arrived on the Friday and set up camp. Twenty nine members attended, of this number ten were children and nine day visitors visited the camp over the weekend. A creek near the camp provided plenty of water for the showers, the creek continued into a deep gully which was lined with an abundance of ferns and mosses.

Saturday morning we awoke to the calls of a chorus of birds which was wonderful. After dinner we went out on a walk along a trail across the creek which led through some wet gullies and a waterhole where a sighting of a maned duck with some young was made. One sighting of a Scarlet and a Flame Robin sitting side by side on an old, dead, fallen tree was worth seeing.

At night, around the campfire, Miss Badgery joined us and told of the history of the property. Sunday saw us on another walk in a northerly direction eventually to a spot overlooking the beautiful valley and mountains. We had walked this trail on previous field trips but it was great to see the old farmhouse again and all the surrounding area. We had lunch there before heading back to the camp, convering almost 14 km on the walk. The weather was cool with a strong south-easterly breeze blowing, a good sighting of birds was made during the day.

Monday morning the group walked through the trees from the camp south along the gully. The diverse habitat attracts a large number of birds as we discovered. Some of the members stayed 'til Tuesday morning when the camp broke up after a lovely stay insuch a beautiful place. It is great to know that people like Miss Badgery care for the environment while still carrying on the business of farming. Seventy eight species of birds were sighted during the weekend some being Grey Butcherbird, Red Wattlebird, Grey Shrike-thrush, Maned Duck, Yellow Thornbill, White-throated Treecreeper, Glossy-black Cockatoo, Eastern Spinebill, White-eared Honeyeater, King Parrot, Brown Quail, and Golden-headed Cisticola.

Ron Hanks.

P.S. Those members of the club who don't go camping with us don't know what they are missing, we have a great time.

NOVEMBER MONTHLY MEETING REPORT.

All members are invited to attend committee meetings to ensure that their views and ideas are incorporated into the successful running of the club.

The guest speaker was Alan K. Morris, the Editor of the NSW FOC magazine, "Australian Birds", whose work as a superintendent of the NPWS allows him to work with birds of the Central Coast area as well as enjoying his hobby at the same time. The theme of the talk was the birds of Tuggarah Lakes, a group of three lakes similar in situation to our Lake Illawarra in both problems and birds. Siltation and excess nutrients are two problems being addressed in the area by siltation traps and the development of reed beds, to slow down sedimentation and absorb nutrients before they enter the lake and cause algae blooms. The lakes have a mainly casuarine nature strip around the edges and with many areas declared wetlands under the semi control of the NPWS, the bird life is quite abundant. There are rookeries of cormorants, pelicans, Little and Cattle Egrets to be found as well as areas for other species to breed in.

It is interesting to hear that many of the birds such as Cattle and Little Egrets are gradually setting up colonies a little further south each time and may eventually reach Lake Illawarra in time if there are any wetlands left intact. Alan has recently had dredged material placed to form islands in an attempt to induce Pied Oystercatchers and Little Tern to breed but as yet only a few Red-capped Plovers have taken advantage of the sites. Alan carried out regular counts at sites around the lakes to monitor population movements and obtain data to allow the effect of various human activities about the lakes to be assessed. The FOC conduct regular outings around the lakes and they are open to all interested bird watchers.

Wal Emery gave the vote of thanks to Alan for this most informative talk and we showed our appreciation in the usual way.

Chris Brandis.

THE COORONG.

On a recent tour of South Australia we visited the Coorong, south-east of Adelaide, where we had some great birdwatching, magnificent scenery and very interesting vegetation and habitats.

The Coorong is a unique inland sea stretching south 50 km from the mouth of the Murray. It is a wetland area of sand dunes (new and ancient), salt lakes, sandbars and creeks, but also mallee scrub. The area is renowned for the number of water fowl that gather to feed on seeds and tubers of water plants that grow in the lagoons. However, birdlife of all sorts abounded all over the area - 238 species have been listed for the National Park.

There are good places to camp in the National Park but no facilities (water, toilets or barbeques) are provided. However there are several caravan/camping parks bordering the N.P. We camped at "Gemini Downs", a holiday centre 3 km from the Salt Creek N.P. Visitor Office. This was also a convenient jumping off point to visit a number of extensive mallee parks in the area. On one afternoon trip to Messent Conservation Park, which is only 6 km from Salt Creek, we had some excellent birding, including a variety of honeyeaters, Hylacolas, Striated Grass Wren, both bronzewing pigeons and Mallee Fowl. This particular park included areas of swamp and lakes and the ancient dune section we walked. This had heath vegetation, low woodland and mallee. We were a little too early for what would be a magnificent wildflower display in Spring.

Apart from clearing for farming the area is relatively unspoiled with a small population and limited tourist development. Some other good sightings for us were the Black-faced Cormorant, Fairy Tern, Purple-crowned Lorikeet, Purple-gaped Honeyeater, Beautiful Firetail and Rufous Bristlebird which occurred all along the coast down across the border into Victoria and along the Great Ocean Road.

Barry & Carol Virtue.

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LATE OCTOBER CAMP - PILLIGA STATE FOREST - PILLIGA - NARRABRI - BARRADINE.

For the late October camp we had a good attendance of 24 members. After the early arrivals set up on Friday we had a free Saturday morning to wander around the immediate area. The day began, as we had previously experienced in 1984, with the early morning bird songs starting at the first signs of day-break. The Rufous Whistler and Willie Wagtail were probably chorus leaders although the Willie didn't really stop all night.

Saturday morning was a clear, calm morning and by 9 am it was quite warm with a light south-easterly breeze. Some other birds which broke the stillness of the morning were the White-plumed Honeyeater, Grey Butcherbird, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater, Little and Noisy Friarbirds. The day turned out quite warm under a cloudless sky, tempered by a light cool breeze. The forest around the campsite was principally Cyprus pine with a mixture of Ironbarks, White Cedar, Angophora, and, along the creek, Red River Gums. Also along the creek were some beautiful red bottlebrush mixed with tea tree all out in full bloom.

The most common bird in the forest was the Rufous Whistler making it's presence known with its continuous and varied call heard throughout the forest wherever we went. The Willie Wagtail was sighted too in every area we visited. Rocky Creek Bore certainly lived up to its reputation for the birds, where we regularly saw the Spiny-cheeked, Striped, White-eared and White-plumed Honeyeaters, Little and Noisy Friarbirds, Galah, White-browed and Grey-crowned Babblers, Peaceful and Bar-shouldered doves and Common Bronzewing with all their accompanied calls. At night, as we gathered after dinner, the calls of the Barking Owl and Owlet Nightjar were frequently heard.

Sunday, the group had a walk along a trail which led in through the forest 100 metres or so parallel to the creek for about 1 km from the campsite and then we walked out onto the creekbed and back to the camp. The creekbed is about 60 metres wide and consists of beautiful white river sand broken by patches of vegetation or isolated trees or shrubs. The area through which the trail was cut had recently been logged and was not nearly as productive as when we were there in 1984 although the lovely Red-capped Robin was sighted as we walked through. The dry creekbed was much more productive with sightings of the Mallee Ringneck, Restless Flycatcher, Grey Srike-thrush, Jacky Winter, Pied Currawong and Sacred Kingfisher. The walk concluded about 12.15 pm when the sun was becoming rather hot in the cloudless sky. The morning had been cooled somewhat by a light south-easterly breeze. Later, in the afternoon, we visited a small water hole, about 200 metres from the camp, which was probably a gravel pit filled with water from the recent rain. In the hour before sunset some birds came in to drink and we observed the White-eared Honeyeater, Willie Wagtail, White-plumed Honeyeater, Western Gerygone and Sacred Kingfisher. Our friends, David and Mary Johnston, very keen local birdwatchers from Barradine, joined us Sunday night around the campfire. They spoke of the early days when people lived in the area. Mary was born at Rocky Creek when a sawmill was operated on the site and sheep farming was carried out in the district. People who worked the sawmill had their homes along Rocky Creek.

Monday morning the outing was to the Aloes, located back along the Pilliga Forest Way about ten minutes drive. Etoo Creek crosses the road there. The plan was to walk down the creekbed, which is similar to Rocky Creek, a wide flat sandy bed, dry, except after rain, and lined with Red River Gums. The morning was clear and calm, becoming hotter as the day wore on with the reflection coming up from the sand. In this spot, on this walk and other visits, we recorded all six woodswallows, Grey Butcherbird, Mistletoebird, Diamond Firetail, Brown Honeyeater, Buff-rumped Thornbill and Varied Sittella. We believe the Black-eared Cuckoo was near the camp, it was heard a few times but it wasn't located.

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LATE OCTOBER CAMP CONTD.

Tuesday the outing was to Schwagers Bore and Salt Caves. Schwagers Bore, north along Pilliga Forest Way, is a large dam filled from a windmill bore. We stayed about an hour and saw 22 species among the eucalypts and Cypress Pines some being the White-throated and Brown Treecreepers, Weebill, Eastern Yellow Robin, White-browed Babbler and Willie Wagtail which had built its nest in the windmill tower. We then set out for Salt Caves driving along Country Line Road and stopping by some small eucalypts and heath and here we sighted the first Silvereye in the forest. The next stop was at Salt Caves Dam about 1 km from the Caves. The two places are joined by a walking track and most of the group took advantage of this. The dam is in a pretty spot on the Talluba Creek, which eventually flows into the Namoi River, the area around the dam being dominated by some tall eucalypts and some pines. Those who didn't walk drove and met the walkers at the Salt Caves Picnic area which provides well for visitors with a water supply and a large shelter shed. Throughout the forest the wild flowers were beautiful and the area around the Salt Caves was no exception for there we saw the flannel flower in all its glory, about the largest we have ever seen, especially around the top of the hill at the look-out. We returned to camp for lunch.

Tuesday afternoon we met David Johnston and drove to the "Ranch", a property some 17 km north from Barradine. We found the property quite productive and sighted some new species for our bird list. It was mostly grazing land with some large eucalypts where we were when a Spotted Bowerbird's bower which has been in use for about 15 years. The bird didn't show up but we did see the Brown and Rugged Songlark, Cockatiel, Hooded Robin and Richard's Pipit. We then drove into Barradine and had a very pleasant evening with David showing slides of birds eggs and nests. Some were shown of the Black-fronted Plover where, in different locations, the mottled colouring of the eggs matched the surrounding colours, for instance gravel or blue metal on the roadside.

Wednesday was another hot day with the sun shining from a cloudless sky. We drove to a private bushland property a few km south of Barradine where David and his son were working and they demonstrated the art of sleeper cutting from ironbark logs and we also did some birdwatching in the surrounding bushland. On our way to Barradine the Square-tailed Kite was seen, low over the tree tops and then it soared away up high and out of sight. The Noisy Miner was added to our list near the sawmill. Wednesday afternoon we visited Dunwerian Dam, 8 km from Rocky Creek, just off Ironbarks Crossing Road where we had a good time watching the birds come in to drink. The dam had a shallow approach at the eastern end with some good sized trees along the end and only a few metres away giving the birds shelter as they came in. The rest of the dam had a bank of earth a few metres high all round, which gave us a good viewing position, with the sun at our backs, late in the afternoon. The Bar-shouldered Dove and Common Bronzewing were drinking and wandering around for quite a while and the colours of the Common Bronzewing were beautiful in the late afternoon light. The Noisy Friarbird came in quickly, dived in and away a number of times. The Galah and Mallee Ringneck came in to the shallow end for a drink followed by the Grey Butcherbird and Pied Currawong. Then, to our surprise and pleasure, the Glossy-black Cockatoo began to arrive at the dam, a few at a time and then down from the trees to drink. We counted 21 cockatoos as they came in. To add to the excitement, Wal Emery came a little later and said that he had found the spot where the Barking Owls were perched, near the camp on the other side of the creek in a Red River Gum.

Thursday dawned calm and clear and remained that way all day. As the owls usually perch in the same spot each day we planned to go and look for them. As soon as we could get going we had a walk down the creek about 100 metres and there they were, two beautiful owls resting high up in the same tree, but when someone mimicked their call, one of them flew off to another tree down the creek a further 100 metres. Most of the group were able to see them. Later they were not sighted at all but we heard them that night as we sat in a group after dinner.

LATE OCTOBER CAMP CONTD.

Thursday afternoon we had a late trip to the Aloes which is a favourite place for the woodswallows, and spent about an hour there in the cooler time of the day. There were a number of koalas along Etoo Creek in the tall trees. Some of the birds seen were White-breasted, Masked, White-browed, Black-faced, Dusky and Little Woodswallows, Sacred Kingfisher, Rainbow Bee-eater and Peaceful Dove.

Friday morning we visited another sawmill where Cypress pine floor boards were made and after which we spent some time looking around the mill area at Kenebri on Barradine Creek where there were some birds but nothing new to add to our list. Late Friday afternoon we visited Dunwerian Dam again to spend another hour watching the activity. It was much the same as the previous visit but 31 Glossy-black Cockatoos came in. On the first visit, as we were seated on the bank at the end of the dam, a Brown snake slowly went past between us and the water, entertaining us for a time.

Saturday was our last day and we each did as we wished, taking it easy and preparing for our departure on Sunday morning. About 9 am Bill and Ann decided to go to the Salt Caves and took a few of us with them. Near the caves a bird flew out of the grass and up into a tree not far away. It turned out to be an Australian Kestrel, bringing our total to 111 species for the camping week. We stopped at the caves for a while then went on to the Dam for a quick stop before going back to the camp for lunch. The hot afternoon was spent quietly around the camp preparing to leave the next morning and the camp was fully vacated by 9.30 am Sunday.

While we were camping at the Pilliga we were fortunate to have the company of Mr. Graham Alcorn from Meadlow Bath, in the Blue Mountains, a very enthusiastic bird observer, who volunteered to keep the breeding records for the camp. At the end of the camp he had a list of 33 birds either building, feeding young, sitting on the nest. Of that total, 15 were located in the close vicinity of the campsite with a few of these in the trees overhead within the camping area. We would like to thank Graham for his fine effort recording the nesting sightings for us.

Horace Ward.

NOVEMBER MONTHLY MEETING.

Election of Officers for 1991.

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|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Brian Hales | President unopposed. |
| Joan Zealey | Vice-president by a majority. |
| Ron Almond | Treasurer Unopposed. |
| Chris Brandis | Secretary Unopposed. |
| Laurie Williams | Activities Officer Unopposed. |

VACANCIES + VACANCIES + VACANCIES + VACANCIES + VACANCIES + VACANCIES

We desperately need someone to volunteer to take on the responsibility of listing the INTERESTING SIGHTINGS for our records and for publication in our monthly newsletter and also editor and typist for the newsletter. If you feel you can help in any way, please contact any committee member or the president. Your efforts will be greatly appreciated.

ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS CLUB CAMP

It certainly was a pleasure to be
Away for a week with the I.B.O.C.
Camped in the bush at Rocky Creek Bore,
In spite of the heat I could have had more,
Watching the birds of the Pilliga

Striped Honeyeaters and Grey-crowned Babblers,
Noisy Friarbirds and White-throated Warblers -
Just round the camp over twelve species nest,
All these feathered ones doing their best
To increase the birds of the Pilliga

We saw Koalas, a White-backed Swallow,
Two Little Lorikeets entering a hollow.
We were shown a Spotted Bowerbird's bower,
Found a Wagtail's nest on a windmill tower,
While watching the birds of the Pilliga

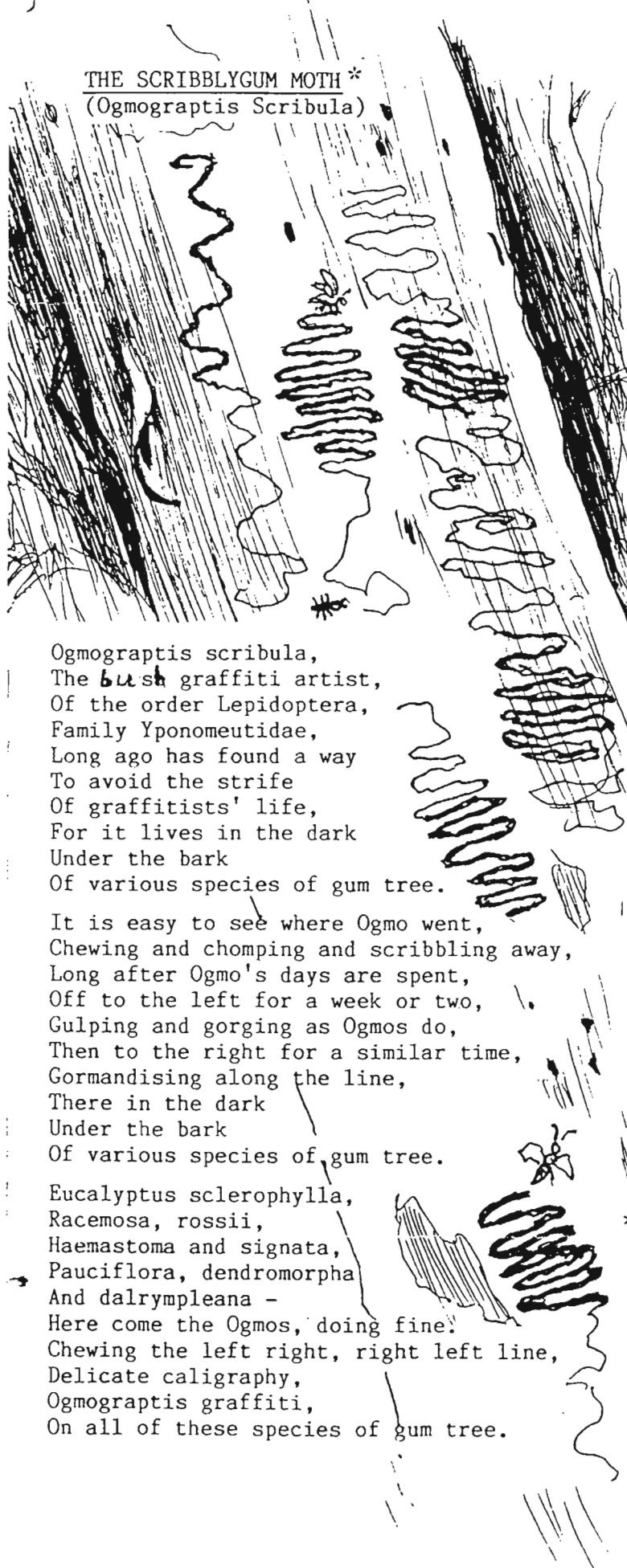
Wal found a pair of Barking Owls
Perched in a River Gum, cheek by jowl,
Jim found the nest of an Oriole
And Marj found a Peewee's, a neat mud bowl,
While watching the birds of the Pilliga

One day we had a magnificent sight
A beautiful long winged Square-tailed Kite,
An exciting new record for me,
Just one of the splendid things you see
Watching the birds of the Pilliga.

Well, good times end. We break camp tomorrow
And head off back to the Illawarra.
But we'll always cherish the memory
Of the friendship and warmth of the I.B.O.C.
Watching the birds of the Pilliga

Graham Alcorn
November 1990

THE SCRIBBLYGUM MOTH*
(Ogmograptis Scribula)



Ogmograptis scribula,
The bush graffiti artist,
Of the order Lepidoptera,
Family Yponomeutidae,
Long ago has found a way
To avoid the strife
Of graffitists' life,
For it lives in the dark
Under the bark
Of various species of gum tree.

It is easy to see where Ogmo went,
Chewing and chomping and scribbling away,
Long after Ogmo's days are spent,
Off to the left for a week or two,
Gulping and gorging as Ogmos do,
Then to the right for a similar time,
Gormandising along the line,
There in the dark
Under the bark
Of various species of gum tree.

Eucalyptus sclerophylla,
Racemosa, rossii,
Haemastoma and signata,
Pauciflora, dendromorpha
And dalrympleana -
Here come the Ogmos, doing fine:
Chewing the left right, right left line,
Delicate calligraphy,
Ogmograptis graffiti,
On all of these species of gum tree.

Some chew up and some chew down,
This the philosophers might explain,
But the thing that causes me to frown,
The thing that I'd dearly love to learn
Is what makes every Ogmo turn?
Off to the left, then to the right,
Another about turn, very tight,
Chomping a track,
Forward and back,
On various species of gum tree.

Very young Ogmos tend to wander,
Skittish, no doubt, as young folks are,
Filled with the spirit of adventure.
Suddenly they get much fatter.
Adventurings no longer matter.
But what I yearn and yearn to learn
Is how they now know just when to turn
There in the dark
Under the bark
Of various species of gum tree?

At last there comes that glorious day
When this gyrating artistic grub
Turns into a moth and flies away.
No more chewing and scribbling and shoving,
Now is the time for dancing and loving.
Having thus drained life's cup to the dregs,
Before it dies it lays its eggs
Into the dark,
Beneath the bark
Of its chosen species of gum tree.

Although the new Ogmos can't be seen,
Next year when the gum tree sheds its bark,
It becomes quite obvious where they've been.
Off to the left for a week or two,
Gulping and gorging as Ogmos do,
Then to the right for a similar time,
Gormandising along the line,
There in the dark
Under the bark
Of various species of gum trees.

*A COLLECTIVE POEM! A number of Society members contributed to "The Scribblygum Moth" composed over several weekly bush outings - David Thomas the amusing scientific name; Jill Dark the scientific names of scribbly gums; Carol Proberts, Deirdre Morton, Mick Dark & Shirley Brown gave unflagging encouragement. I wrote it all down --

Graham Alcorn.