

# I.B.O.C. NEWS

NO. 158

FEBRUARY, 1993



THE CIRCULAR OF THE ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB

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 \$15 SINGLE \$10 JUNIOR \$5

\*-\*-\*-\*-\*-\* COMING EVENTS \*-\*-\*-\*-\*-\*

NEXT MEETING: will be held at the Fairy Meadow Senior Citizens Centre, corner of Collaery Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, on **Monday 8th February**, commencing at 7.30 p.m. Our guest speaker for the evening will be **Mrs Dorothy Sefton**. Dorothy has been an IBOC member for the past 13 years and tonight we look forward to hearing her talk on Lapidary as a Hobby in the Illawarra.

NEW YEAR OUTING: The annual outing to the Windang Estuary will be held on **Wednesday, 3rd February**. We will meet at the eastern end of the pine trees on the northern side of the lake entrance at 5.30 p.m. There are usually good numbers of waders, terns, and gulls for you to sort out at this time of the year. We will have a walk around the sand flats and then return to the cars for supper, so bring along your eats and drinks and have a pleasant evening of easy birdwatching by the lake.

NEXT FIELD OUTING: will take place on **Sunday 14th February** (St Valentine's Day for all you romantics), and will cover three areas within a short distance of each other. We will meet at the bottom of Macquarie Pass at 8.30 a.m. for a walk by the creek, and then go to a small rainforest area at Robertson. From Robertson we will proceed to Hoskins Reserve where we will have our lunch stop and take a walk there in the afternoon. Lunch should be at the cars; also bring along morning and afternoon teas and drinks.

MID-WEEK WALK: The first mid-week outing for the year will take place on **Wednesday 3rd March** and is to the Bellambi Beach and Lagoon areas. Meet at the boat ramp at 8.30 a.m.; don't forget to bring something for morning tea.

## DECEMBER MONTHLY MEETING

The club's Christmas meeting, held on 14 December 1992, was a chance to show appreciation to those members who have worked for the good of the club over the year, as well as allowing members to display their talents by entertaining the audience in many ways, including the actions of ourselves as perceived by others during the year.

Brian presented the annual awards to Esme Gay, Betty Ward and Karen Hansen in recognition of their hard work; Ron Almond was presented with only the second club life membership ever bestowed. Congratulations to these members - their contributions to running the club are greatly appreciated. Russell Hales photographed the presentations.

The entertainment began with that well-known bird poet Graham Alcorn, who recited a sample of the poems he had written during his trip to the Kimberleys to find the Black Grasswren by Surveyor's Pool on the Mitchell Plateau. Charlie Cockatoo from IBIS, the Illawarra Bird Investigation Society, then described some of its members' actions and the ritual activities of the IBOCs during their walks, including those of the funny Wal creature. President Brian conducted a swearing-in ceremony for new members Betty Hudson and Bob David; oaths taken on the Simpson and Day 'bible' included one giving full credit to the President for all unusual sightings. Betty and Bob are now 'P' ornithologists.

Brian Hales conducted a quiz with 20 topical (as opposed to tropical - Ed.) bird questions, the theme tending towards puffins. Graham Alcorn won from Nola Williams, with Bob McKinlay and Horrie Ward receiving the consolation prizes. The Guess the Bird Name competition by miming members included Puffin by Dave Thomson, Spectacled Monarch by Olive Rodwell, and Lyrebird (which stumped most) by Suzie Zealey. The eventual winners, selected after much deliberation by the judges, were Flycatcher by Dora Lockrey and Starling by Dora's sister, talent obviously running in the family. Several members filled in the time between scenery changes with ditties, anecdotes and jokes, some of which cannot be published in this newsletter without a 'sealed section'; Wally Hurst presented a Duck's Dilemma.

Wal Emery and Lydia David performed a skit entitled 'Two Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest', and by using a cuckoo's 'Guide to the Nests and Eggs of Australian Birds' Pallid finally found the perfect host nest to satisfy Fantail, although poor Pallid was nearly driven to consider actually building a nest and raising their own brood (very uncuckoo-like) in his effort to please his mate who was left to "Bring the bags".

As Santa could not make the trip himself to the IBOC Christmas function, he sent the next best thing, namely Jingle Bells, who usually lives on top of the Christmas tree. Jingle Bells brought presents for all the good IBOCs, such as masks to enable the Kellys to get into a hotel for the night, a gift to Dulcie Rose for completing another good year, a do-it-yourself dental kit for Jack Hyslop, and citizenship papers for Laurie Williams. Because Santa had been in a hurry this year he left an Australian Tourist Kit at the Williams' for Brian and Barbara Hales which included a mosquito trap shaped like a small rabbit trap.

With the entertainment over it was time to tuck into the Christmas supper and continue to wish other members all the best for Christmas and many good birds for the New Year.

Chris Brandis

We are sorry to have to inform you of the loss of two of our members during the Christmas break - Donald Gay on 19th December and Bob McKinlay on 30th December. Our heartfelt sympathy goes to Esme and Peg and their families at this very distressing time.

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VALE, BOB MCKINLAY

Robert McKinlay - Bob - our own quiet achiever, always there when you needed a hand, always a keen, hard worker for our club.

Setting up the meeting hall, hot water for a cuppa at supper time, clearing away after meetings, newsletters packaged and posted each month, campsite contacts made, camps and walks surveyed, facilities erected, maintained and dismantled, shower attendant, fire attendant, committee member, stand-in treasurer - these were only a few of the things Bob did willingly (as any individual will tell you) for his IBOC friends. He is going to be sadly and greatly missed by all of them as Bob was a fixture at all our Birde activities.

To us Bob also became a very sincere and lovable personal friend, a friend we will always cherish. We spent so many happy, comfortable hours together, birding, camping, walking, talking, laughing, visiting, sharing meals, and playing games of Scrabble! Things can't be the same without Mr Mac but we are very thankful to have so many good memories of time spent with a really smashing bloke.

The Hales Family

DECEMBER MID-WEEK WALK

On Wednesday 2nd December five members met at the entrance to the Minnamurra Rainforest on a mild, calm, sunny morning - a perfect morning for the walk. We set out along the boardwalk from the Visitors' Centre at about 9 a.m. The boardwalk, which was constructed to take pressure off the sensitive forest floor, runs the full length of the walk on the steep hillside. It is so constructed as to make an easy walk, on a very steady incline, up to near the top of the hill through a beautiful part of the forest. Near the top a section of eucalypt forest can be seen above the rainforest. At its highest point the walk sweeps around and a viewing platform with some seats is provided, either to rest or to enjoy the survey the surrounding rainforest. As we arrived there we observed the activity of the birdlife, so we decided to take a tea-break and enjoy the beauty around us for a while. There was a lot of activity high up in the trees; lower down there were White-throated Treecreeper, Grey Shrike-thrush and Yellow-throated Scrubwren. From there the walk zig-zags down the very steep hillside to the Minnamurra Rivulet which the boardwalk follows closely with some crossings back to the Visitors' Centre. Along the way we observed the Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Grey Fantail, White-browed Scrubwren, Crimson Rosella, and Black-faced Monarch.

Although we didn't see a lot of birds in the thick growth, the beauty and diversity of the rainforest vegetation was enough to keep our interest; also in the background was the sound of rushing water cascading down the rocky bed of the rivulet - lovely to watch.

Some of the vegetation we noted on the walk was Native Tamarind, Brush Bloodwood, Coachwood, Pigeonberry Ash, Stinging Tree, Brown Beech, and palms, both Cabbage and Bangalow, in various sizes from small plants to those towering into the canopy. On the forest floor many ferns and lichens green the rocks and fallen timber. The sparkling water of the rivulet falling over the rocky bed, and the quiet pools splashed with sunlight are always an eye-catching experience. From the boardwalk we looked down upon two small water dragons darting and jumping over the sunlit rocks on the water's edge. At the kiosk Barbara hand-fed a Lewin's Honeyeater with small pieces of apple. We had a very enjoyable morning and recorded 21 species.

Horrie Ward

## A REPORT ON THE TRIP TO YERRANDERIE

On the weekend of 28/29 November 1992 some 18 members and guests of the Illawarra Bird Observers Club ventured forth into the Blue Mountains wilderness, courtesy of Bushmobile Tours.

Our vehicle for this trip was a very comfortable six-wheel drive all-terrain coach which caused curious onlookers to stare whenever it stopped - something which is not surprising considering its yellow colour, box-like appearance and huge wheels which lift the cabin high off the ground. A set of retractable steps is needed for embarking and disembarking, but inside it is very comfortable with panoramic views through the windows.

Just after 7.00 a.m. on Saturday morning we departed Wollongong to head over the mountain to Mittagong for a rest stop and refreshments. Our captain/driver and his charming wife proved themselves worthy by the range of delicacies they served so speedily for our enjoyment. Continuing over the mountains we stopped briefly at Goodman's Ford on the Wollondilly River before the long climb out to the park at Wombeyan Caves for a delightful lunch stop.

Soon after leaving Wombeyan we turned off the formed road and onto a fire trail called Limeburners which gradually deteriorated into a narrow, deeply rutted, boulder-strewn track clinging to the side of the hill, with sharp hairpin bends and steep drops to creek washaways where all other vehicles would come to grief, but our seasoned driver negotiated all obstacles with ease.

We all breathed more easily once we emerged onto the Oberon Stock Route that took us to Yerranderie Village by approx. 4.00 p.m. where we were met by John, the English caretaker who showed us our lodgings in the former Post Office which has been renovated and has all comfort and facilities.

After establishing ourselves John led us on a short tour to view the remnants of the town's mining days and some of the remaining buildings which have been restored to recreate a glimpse of a past era.

It is difficult to conceive that 80 years ago 2000 people lived here, mining for lead, silver and zinc. Mining became uneconomic, the population dwindled, and finally access was cut off as lake Burragorang flooded. The name Yerranderie spells magic for those in outdoor pursuits as a place one only reads about because only the hardiest of bushwalkers ever ventured to it.

During pre-dinner drinks John enthralled us with adventurous tales of donkey rides down the Great Dividing Range and of his life at Yerranderie (shared with partner Lyn). After a wonderful roast dinner followed by a spell of spotlighting we were all ready for a comfortable night's sleep.

Early risers on Sunday morning were surprised to see kangaroos grazing contentedly on the lawns surrounding the lodge, undisturbed by our presence. Many people went for an early morning walk birdwatching or just watching the antics of the kangaroos.

After a hearty breakfast we posed for group photographs and said farewell to our hosts before hitting the track soon after 9.00 a.m. We turned off the stock route past huge pine forests into the Kowmung Fire Trail which proved just as hair-raising as the previous day's. We held our breath as Bruce (our driver) inched his way down steep banks or up improbable slopes and thrilled us all with a ringside view of the crossing of the Kowmung River done in style. We also suffered anxious moments as we clung to the side of a steep drop to let a party of 11 4WD vehicles pass, but Bruce is one who always keeps his cool, as he was to prove again later on the way to Jenolan Caves.

Lunch at Kanangra Walls and time to walk the track to the lookout to view the imposing mass of the Walls and the dizzying depth of the valley - the superb Blue Mountains at their grandest.





UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

<u>Status</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Observer</u>
U	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	30	Yowie Bay	9.11.92	R. Saltpeter
U	" " "	20	Ramsgate	13.11.92	"
U	Channel-billed Cuckoo	2	Yowie Bay	15.11.92	"
U	Sooty Oystercatcher	4	North Wollongong	10.7.92	L. Williams
U	Peregrine Falcon	1	Robertson Lookout	7.9.92	"
U	Black-winged Stilt	4	Coniston	7.9.92	"
R	Superb Fruit-Dove (dead)	1	Keiraville	26.1.92	W. Emery
S	White-throated Nightjar	1	Balgownie	22.10.92	"
S	Baillon's Crake	1	Shellharbour Swamp	16.8.92	C. Brandis
S	Australian Crake	1	" "	" "	" "
U	Latham's Snipe	1	" "	" "	" "
R	Glossy Black Cockatoo	3	Cudmirrah	8.8.92	K. Mills
R	Hooded Plover	2	Berrara	9.8.92	"
U	Pacific Heron	1	Jamberoo Pass	12.8.92	"
U	Channel-billed Cuckoo	4	Jamberoo	4.11.92	R. Simcock
U	Rainbow Lorikeet	+++	Mt. Pleasant	Nov 92	D. Thomson
MC	Olive-backed Oriole	1	"	21.11.92	"
S	White-headed Pigeon	1	"	25.11.92	"
U	Brown Cuckoo-Dove	1	"	13,29.11.92	"
U	Common Koel	1	"	27.12.92	"
U	Channel-billed Cuckoo	2	"	Dec,92 10.1.93	"
U	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	2	Fairy Meadow	13.1.93	J. Robinson

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SHOALHAVEN BIRDWATCHING OUTINGS, 1993

- FEBRUARY: Saturday 13, Coolendel, barbecue dinner; meet at Coolendel 2.00 p.m.
- MARCH: Weekend 13/14, Fitzroy Falls; or 9.00 a.m. Sunday 14 at the Information Centre.
- APRIL: Easter Camp 9-12, Copper Cup Point, Culburra.  
Anzac Day weekend, 24-26, Mystery Bay Campground (3 hour drive from Nowra).
- MAY: Sunday 9, Narawallee Creek Nature Reserve; meet at corner Lake Conjola Entrance Road and Aney Street at 9.30 a.m.
- JUNE: Sunday 13, Saddleback to Barren Grounds; meet Saddleback Lookout 9.30 a.m.
- JULY: Saturday 10, Strong's Reserve; meet at the Navy Jet at 1.00 p.m.
- AUGUST: Sunday 8, Mt Keira Track; meet at Virtues' 8.30 a.m.
- SEPTEMBER: Sunday 12, Blackbutt Firetrail; meet at the Navy Jet 9.00 a.m.
- OCTOBER: Sunday 10, 12 Mile Road/Kangaroo Hill; meet at the Navy Jet 8.30 a.m.
- NOVEMBER: Saturday 13, Abraham's Bosun Reserve; meet Reserve parking area, Currarong, at 1.00 p.m.
- DECEMBER: Friday 10, Hales, Pyree; barbecue and walk, 5 p.m.

Contacts: Diana Wright (044) 218426

Barry Virtue: (044) 641389

CLUB ACTIVITIES FOR 1993

FEBRUARY	Wed	3rd	Outing	Windang Estuary
	Mon	8th	Meeting	Guest Speaker Mrs Dorothy Sefton
	Sun	14th	Outing	Macquarie Pass
MARCH	Mon	8th	Meeting	Guest Speaker Mr Terry Outtrim
	Sat	13th	Outing	Mt Annan Botanical Gardens
APRIL -	Easter Camp			Rylestone
MAY	Sat	8th	Film Night	The Hales Residence
	Mon	10th	Meeting	Guest Speaker to be advised
	Sat	15th	Outing	Springwood - Mr Jack Hyslop
JUNE	Sat	12th	Film Night	To be advised
	Mon	14th	Meeting	Members Night
	Sun	20th	Outing	Gerringong Falls - Mrs Betty Hudson
JULY	Sat	10th	Film Night	To be advised
	Mon	12th	Meeting	Guest Speaker to be advised
	Sun	18th	Outing	Mt Brown - Mr Chris Brandis
AUGUST	Sat	7th	Film Night	To be advised
	Mon	9th	Meeting	Guest Speaker to be advised
	Sat	14th	Outing	Mooray Track, Kingfisher Pool - Mr Jack Hyslop
SEPTEMBER	Mon	13th	Meeting	Guest Speaker to be advised
		17 - 19th	Outing	Canberra for 2 to 3 days
OCTOBER		2nd - 4th	Camp	To be advised
		23rd - 30th	Camp	Styx River
	N.B. There is no monthly meeting in October.			
NOVEMBER	Mon	8th	Meeting	Guest Speaker to be advised
	Sat	13th	Outing	Bundeena - Mr Bryan Kelly
DECEMBER	Sat	11th	Outing	Berry
	Mon	13th	meeting	Christmas Cheer

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IBOC WEDNESDAY WALKS, 1993

MARCH	3rd	Bellambi Lagoon
APRIL	7th	Doug Gibson Track
MAY	5th	Bass Point
JUNE	2nd	Mount Kembla
JULY	7th	St Mary's Towers
AUGUST	4th	Robertson Lookout/Scout Camp
SEPTEMBER	1st	Kelly's Falls/Otford Valley
OCTOBER		NO WALK
NOVEMBER	3rd	Minnamurra Rainforest
DECEMBER	1st	Wollongong University

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Brian Hales 39 Lake Parade CORRIMAL EAST NSW 2518 Ph. 844266	Chris Brandis 10 Charlton Street MOUNT WARRIGAL NSW 2528 Ph. 962837	Ron Almond 2 Shoobert Cres. KEIRAVILLE NSW 2500 Ph. 298612	Robyn Wilson 4/18 Smith Street WOLLONGONG NSW 2500 Ph. 291184

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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS:- These are due on 1st January each year  
FAMILY \$15 SINGLE \$10 JUNIOR \$5

## \*\*\*\*\* COMING EVENTS \*\*\*\*\*

NEXT MEETING: will be held at the Fairy Meadow Senior Citizens Centre, corner of Collaery Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, on Monday 8th March, commencing at 7.30 p.m. Our guest speaker will be Terry Outtrim who will speak on the subject of "Peregrine Falcons on the South Coast".

NEXT OUTING: will be on Saturday 13th March, to the Mount Annan Botanical Garden, Mount Annan Drive, Narellan. It is a signposted left-hand turn off the Campbelltown-Camden Road. The botanical garden is a native plant garden covering 400 hectares (Australia's largest) and takes its name from the sandstone-capped hill of Mount Annan, the highest point on the site. There are theme gardens, eg bottlebrush, wattle, banksia, etc, and at the end of May 1991 the bird list stood at 130 species, including Red-capped Robin, Hoary-headed Grebe, Paradise Shelduck, Grey Goshawk, Spotted Harrier, Koel, Brown Gerygone, and Scarlet Honeyeater. Alan Leishman has kindly agreed to lead our walk around the gardens, and as he will be opening the gates especially for us, please be there a little early so that we can move on promptly at 8.30 a.m. We will meet at the gates. Lunch will be at the cars, and there is an entry charge, so it would pay to pool cars on this occasion.

WEDNESDAY WALKS: On 3rd March to the Bellambi Beach and Lagoon areas. Meet at the boat ramp at 8.30 a.m.; bring suitable comestibles for morning tea.

On 7th April there will be a walk along the Doug Gibson Track. Meet at the track entrance, Buttenshaw Drive, Austinmer at 8.30 a.m. Bring eats and drinks for morning tea.

PLEASE NOTE: Owing to the dates of the Easter Camp at Rylestone, the only other activity for April will be the mid-week half-day walk. Camp dates are 9th to 17th April; a map and details of how to get there will be in the April newsletter.

Are you unfinancial?? Please see page 2.

FEBRUARY MONTHLY MEETING

The Club's first meeting for 1993 started with the showing of some of the slides donated to the Club by kind members for use by the Club and its members. Although the slide library is growing there are still gaps that some of your slides may fill. The Club will pay for the copying, and already the slides have been used by Brian Hales in presentations to other clubs and societies as well as to the Scouts.

The speaker for the night was Dorothy Sefton who told us about lapidary in the Illawarra. Dorothy used to accompany her husband, the late Allan Sefton, and while he looked in the trees for birds and the kids played in the creeks, Dorothy fossicked for some of the more sought-after stones for polishing. Like IBOC the Lapidary Club started from a WEA class and has had several meeting sites. It is now situated at Tarrawanna with a well-equipped workshop to tumble, cut, grind and polish stones to bring out their natural beauty.

The Illawarra region is not noted for gem stones but there is a variety of stones in certain areas that can be fossicked because generally these hard, good polishing stones or crystals are formed adjacent to volcanic activity, with the heat and pressure forming an environment for the stones to develop those properties that make them so sought after. This area also has fossil beds, both fresh water series with impressions of leaves and fern fronds, and salt water series with skeletons of shells, often found in road or rail cuttings and on the worn faces of cliffs.

Dorothy has a wealth of knowledge of the geology and history of the area including that of the various mines that existed to extract the valuable minerals and rock of the day. Her interest in Aboriginal relics complements that in lapidary as the Aborigines tended to use for tools the harder stones which are also used for lapidary, and are found at old Aboriginal sites. The area was once rich in middens, many of which have been either totally disturbed or built upon - restrictions are now in place to prevent relics from being lost. It was of interest to all of us that black coral could be found in the deeper waters off the coast and that it could be polished into a very smooth and impressive finish. With the aid of slides and samples of stones and gems in their natural and finished states we gained an insight into the varied and beautiful finishes that can be achieved with time and effort. Apart from prospecting for and preparing the stones some enthusiasts move into the fields of gold and silver work to mount the finished stones, as well as performing enamelling and copper art work.

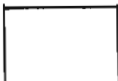
Laurie Williams gave the vote of thanks for a most interesting insight into the geology of the region and the hobbies that can give not only an interest but result in an object of beauty and value.

Chris Brandis

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1993 MAILING LIST

Subscriptions are now overdue and the mailing list will be amended after the March meeting, resulting in anyone who has not paid for 1993 not receiving further newsletters. If there is a cross in the box at the end of this sentence you are unfinancial, and if you intend to renew please do so as soon as possible to avoid considerable work by several volunteers.



FEBRUARY FIELD OUTING

On 14th February seventeen members of IBOC met on a cool dull day - excellent walking weather - a welcome change from the hot humid days of the previous week.

The first walk for the day was along the Cascades Rainforest Track, at the foot of Macquarie Pass, along a well-formed track with few mosquitoes and only a couple of leeches to distract us. The Cascade Creek, which was as clear as crystal, ran alongside the track and provided a musical accompaniment to the bird song as we went along. We saw and/or heard the Cicada Bird, Brown Pigeon, Yellow-throated Scrubwren, and Black-faced Monarch.

Lilly Pilly trees predominated here, along with small-leaved figs, and the giant maidenhair fern was a joy to behold. Alas, almost as common as the maidenhair fern was Crofton Weed and Lantana. This area was logged between 1880 and 1960, eliminating the red cedar, and no regeneration seems to have occurred. We walked past huge blocks of sandstone and small ones, and all sizes in between, some so covered with mosses, lichens and ferns that no rock was visible, yet others were completely bare.

The cascade was 60 feet high and busy deepening the little cleft it had already cut, and, as expected, the water was icy cold, but as we were not going swimming, no-one worried. We returned along the same track, but of course it all seemed different when viewed from the opposite direction.

We had morning tea at the cars and were then off up the pass, seeing red cedars of varying sizes on the way. Although a bird observers club, our interests are many and varied, so we made a slight detour to visit the Robertson Market while on our way to the Robertson Nature Reserve. This is five hectares of cool to temperate rainforest - a remnant of the previously extensive Yarrawa Brush - that flourishes on the rich red volcanic soil. This area was quite different from the Cascade walk, the most noticeable feature being the low light level and the consequent absence of Crofton Weed and Lantana.

The canopy here was mainly Sassafras and Possum Wood, with Featherwood, Brush Pepperbush and Tree Violet (a most vicious-looking shrub with cane-like growth and large thorns) in the understory and a floor covering of fallen leaves, moss, fungi and ferns, ferns, and more ferns, most covering the ground but some (Climbing Fish Bone and Kangaroo Fern) galloping exuberantly up the trees. There were few palms, tree ferns, mosquitoes, rocks, leeches, and no creek. All this vegetation was cobbled together in an almost solid mass by lianes that seemed to start nowhere in particular and end nowhere at all.

Here, despite the poor light, we saw Wonga Pigeon and Whipbird - in this area the female Whipbird is supposed to answer the male with a three-note call but none of us heard it. There were also Rufous Fantail, White-browed Scrubwren and Crimson Rosella. At the edge of the reserve there were a few very large, very old pine trees, their huge trunks and massive lower limbs completely covered with Rock Felt Fern, and looking strangely out of place in a rainforest.

It was lunchtime when we arrived at our third stopping place, the Cecil Hoskins Nature Reserve, between Moss Vale and Bowral. This reserve is on the site of what was the village of Bong Bong which was moved to Berrima to escape the frequent flooding that occurred. A dam was then built to make an asset out of what had previously been a liability.

The countryside was very open here - the most noticeable feature being the Hawthorn bushes, complete, as the name implies, with thorns - large ones. A good track led up to high ground overlooking the backed-up water of the reservoir, and as there were seats/benches provided at convenient spots, we did our birdwatching in comfort, apart from the flies which were persistent and numerous. From these vantage points we saw Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo, Black Duck, Whistling Kite, Reed Warbler, Pelican, White-faced Heron, Eastern Swamphen and a white egret which was either Intermediate or Great, as well as a mob of big, healthy-looking kangaroos. We continued our walk down to the dam but saw no sign of the old village of Bong Bong.

We counted 66 species of birds - an excellent tally - and had an interesting and varied day. Many thanks to all who organised it and attended.

Peggy Merrett

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FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 1992

RECEIPTS

Subscriptions (1992 \$850)	1117.00
Sale of Books	637.00
Sale of County of Camden Books	75.00
Sale of Schodde Lists	3.20
Sale of Car Stickers	2.40
Camp Fees	201.00
Bank Interest	57.89
Sundries	4.00
	<u>\$2097.49</u>
Balance at 31 December 1991	<u>\$1429.47</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$3526.96</u>

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PAYMENTS

Subscriptions	80.00
Purchase of Books	642.50
Stationery and Printing	113.60
Postage & Petty Cash	418.68
Camp Expenses	106.85
Fairy Meadow Senior Citizens	150.00
Equipment	74.95
Government Bank Charges	7.95
Donation to RAOU Birding Hotline	50.00
Awards	27.00
Catering	53.00
Travelling	20.00
Sundries	64.00
	<u>\$1954.93</u>
Balance at 31 December 1992	<u>\$1572.03</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$3526.96</u>

Ron Almond  
Treasurer

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.... contd.

BIRDWATCHING AT HOME

Laurie and I spent the Christmas/New Year period at home and were surprised at just how many "special sightings" we made in our garden.

We had a family of Silvereyes, two adults and four young, flying in and out of the shrubs, and on one occasion I saw a mature bird pick a ripe strawberry from our Irish Strawberry Tree, shake it vigorously while holding the fruit in its beak, until some fell off, and when the right-sized portion was left, it was fed to one of the young.

Another day, on investigating a strange call coming from the garden, we found a Fisher's Lovebird perched in one of the shrubs, and as this bird is a native of Africa, we assume the one in our garden was an aviary escapee. Fisher's Lovebird is a very pretty bird with an orange/red head, mainly green body, red beak and distinctive white eyering, and is a similar size to a Little Lorikeet.

On the morning of January 15, while we were sitting on the patio with Barbara Hales, an immature Fan-tailed Cuckoo flew into the tree opposite us, and shortly afterwards it was fed by a White-browed Scrubwren. This procedure continued at various times during the next seven days, and on one particular day we saw them feeding as late as 7.30 p.m.

Towards the end of January we watched two Galahs sitting on top of our NSW Christmas Bush, biting the red calyces off one by one and appearing to remove the seed before dropping the calyx to the ground.

New Holland Honeyeaters are resident in our garden, but their numbers seem to increase over this period and on more than one occasion we have observed more than twenty bathing in the bird bath or in the spray from the hose.

We started February by catching a very exhausted blue Budgerigar on the path in our back garden, so who knows what will visit next?

Nola and Laurie Williams

\*\*\*\*\*

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members:

- BUTCHER, Robert and Kath;
- PROUST, Susan and family, 7 Yellagong Street, West Wollongong;
- NAPLES, John and Pat, 511 Crown Street, West Wollongong;
- WILSON, Graham, Bronwyn, Simon, Jason, Melissa and Gavin, 3 The Parkway, Balgownie;
- WOUDSMA, Tom, 1 Nioka Avenue, Keiraville.

VISITING NEW AND OLD

It is always interesting to spend some time in a new area of our country and as Laurie and I had never been to the twin towns of Kandos and Rylestone, we were only too happy to accompany Brian and Barbara Hales to survey the area for the 1993 IBOC Easter camp.

The small industrial town of Kandos is well known for cement, and the aerial ropeway built in 1917 to carry product to the works is still in operation. The very comfortable motel overlooks the golf course and excellent meals can be had at the Railway Hotel. The sky at sunset on the day of our arrival was a sight to behold.

Historic Rylestone has lovely stone buildings, some over 100 years old with the area dating back to the 1820s. We paid a visit to Dunn Swamp in the Wollemi National Park, 28 Km east of Rylestone where we recorded 25 species of birds in about half an hour. It is possible to camp there and we all agreed it would be a very relaxing spot to spend a few days.

Another local camping area at Cudgegong Waters Park on Lake Windemere is a few kilometres west of Rylestone and although this site is lacking in trees, 15 species of birds were seen during our short visit. Fishing and water sports are popular pastimes on the lake.

The drive along Breakfast Creek Road into Badgerground was very rewarding with 34 bird species being recorded, including a large mixed flock of Silvereyes, Superb Fairy Wrens, and immature and mature Red-browed Firetails. We were very excited with the property chosen for our Easter camp and on a short walk to the natural spring on the property Brian saw a Lyrebird and we all saw its well-used mound. We also disturbed a Wonga Pigeon and recorded 15 species of birds in a very short time. It was fascinating to see the round mud-brick house built by the property and to hear stories of the lyrebirds coming to the dam to drink, the Satin Bowerbird's bower, and the Powerful Owls. Nearby at a rest area on the Rylestone-Bylong Road we saw Aboriginal hand paintings and had very good views of Bell Miners in a colony along the same road.

We took the long way home via Mudgee, Bylong, Sandy Hollow and the Putty Road thereby skirting the Wollemi National Park on its northern and eastern boundaries, visiting some old haunts along the way while introducing Brian and Barbara to new places.

A morning tea stop was made at Munghorn Gap, a place Laurie and I have fond memories of from a previous IBOC visit. The area where some members camped is now a fenced-off picnic ground with camping not permitted, but still a lovely spot. We went for a short walk and watched a goanna climb a tree while we added the Yellow-tufted Honeyeater and King Parrot to our list; nine other species were seen.

Lunch was eaten at Honeysuckle Creek Rest Area, east of Bylong, a lovely bush spot where we saw Double-barred Finches, Crested Shrike-tit and six other species including a Red-browed Firetail entering a nest.

The drive across to Sandy Hollow was equally as spectacular as that we had enjoyed around Rylestone and Bylong, with beautiful hills and cliffs. We reminisced as we drove along the road into Amesbury Park at Sandy Hollow where some very successful IBOC camps have been held in the past and good birdwatching has been done. However the road has deteriorated and a good deal of improvement would be required to get our caravans in there now.

.... contd.



UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

<u>Species</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Observer</u>
S Osprey	1	Tallawarra	7.2.93	C. Brandis
U Common Koel	1	Keiraville	23.12.92	E. Gay
U Gang-gang Cockatoo	4	"	8.2.93	"
U White Goshawk	1	"	7.2.93	M. Eskdale
U Green Catbird	1	"	27.10.92	"
			15.1.93	"
			10.2.93	"
U Crested Pigeon	1	Beaton Park	21.1.93	P. Robinson
U Common Koel	1	Mt Ousley	26.1.93	J. Robinson
R Red-rumped Parrot	1	Koona Bay	10.10.92	G. Barwell
U Leaden Flycatcher	1	Mt Keira Scout Camp	11.10.92	"
U Ruddy Turnstone	14	Bellambi Point	22.11.92	"
S Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	2	Austinmer	3.12.92	"
S Pacific Gull (immature)	1	Windang	6.12.92	"
			17.1.93	"
U Arctic Jaeger	2	Ocean Wollongong	17.1.93	"
U Caspian Tern	1	Windang	17.1.93	"

Comment

Last month a Superb Fruit-dove specimen was reported as being found at Keiraville; this was incorrect as it was found at Wollongong after it flew into a window. The only other club record is a sighting in a Keiraville garden in 1979.

The Osprey observed by Chris Brandis is the first since 1985.

The Red-rumped Parrot, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet and immature Pacific Gull sighted by Graham Barwell are species not often sighted, according to our club records.

Channel-billed Cuckoos continue to be seen regularly by our members - mostly immature birds with their host Pied Currawongs.

Jim Robinson

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THANK YOU to Athol Stuart, Dave Thomson, Horrie Ward and Bill Scandritt who have volunteered to help with setting up the hall for our monthly meetings.

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\*\*\*\*\* STOP PRESS \*\*\*\*\*

Barren Grounds Bird Observatory is pleased to announce that a new course list is on the way. Titles include "Easter Smorgasbord", "Mammals", "Fun with Fungi", "Birds for Beginners", "Landscaping with Nature", "Murder and Magpies", "Lyrebirds", "Yulefest and Feathers".

Want to know more???

Please ring Jenni Martin or Patric Tap on (042) 360195.

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# I.B.O.C. NEWS

NO. 161

MAY, 1993



THE CIRCULAR OF THE ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB

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

CLUB MOTTO "ONE GOOD TERN DESERVES ANOTHER"

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39 Lake Parade

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WOLLONGONG NSW  
2500 Ph. 291184

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 \$15 SINGLE \$10 JUNIOR \$5

\*\*\*\*\* COMING EVENTS \*\*\*\*\*

Next meeting: Will be held on **Monday 10 May** at the Fairy Meadow Senior Citizens Centre, corner of Collaery Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, commencing at **7.30 p.m.** Our guest speaker will be **Pam Robinson** whose subject will be "Top End Adventure Including Kakadu and the Kimberleys". Pam is a past president of the Illawarra branch of the National Parks Association, and is the current treasurer. She is well-known for her interest in natural history and the environment.

Film night: The first film night for the year will be held at the home of Barbara and Brian Hales, 39 Lake Parade, Corrimal East, on **Saturday 8 May**, starting at **7.30 p.m.** Please bring along a folding chair, if you have one, and a plate of supper for sharing afterwards. Come along and enjoy some excellent entertainment and good company.

Wednesday walks: On **5 May** at Bass Point. Meet in the first car park at **8.30 a.m.**  
On **2 June** at Mount Kembla. Meet under the power lines at Kembla Lookout, at the foot of the Summit Track, at **8.30 a.m.**

Next outing: Will be held on **Saturday 15 May** in the Blue Mountains National Park at Springwood. Travel along the Great Western Highway and take the first left after Valley Heights station. Go under the railway bridge, proceed to the roundabout and turn right. Travel approx. 5.3 Km and turn left into Whitecross Road (beside a shopping centre). Drive to the end of the bitumen and park nearby. Meeting time is **8.30 a.m.**; allow an hour and a half for the journey. The walk will be led by **Jack Hyslop**. Bring a carry lunch.

OUTING TO BELLAMBI BEACH, BUSH AND LAGOON

The midweek outing on 3 March was attended by 15 members who met at the Bellambi boat ramp on a morning which was mild and sunny, with a strong southerly wind blowing. The first part of our walk was around Bellambi Point and along the beach, a spot where a number of birds congregate. The beach at Bellambi Point has a perimeter of rocks which usually are exposed back to the boat harbour. As we walked out onto the beach from the car park, the first sighting was of three Ruddy Turnstones on the rocks at the water's edge. As we walked out to the point we found a large group of birds resting on the rocks, some of which were Silver Gull, Crested Tern, Kelp Gull, and Sooty Oystercatcher. A short distance along the beach, among some Silver Gulls, were three Kelp Gulls, one of which was an immature bird with leg bands. On the left leg the bands were red on blue; on the right leg, blue on metal. It also appeared to be receiving food from a parent bird.

After a short walk there we returned to the cars and drove to the sportsground car park, closer to the bushland we were to walk through. First we had to cross a wide area of grass, where we observed Willie Wagtail, Richard's Pipit, Magpie-lark, Galah, and some 30 Welcome Swallows flying over the area. In the reeds which border the grass area and the bush a Clamorous Reed-Warbler was heard calling; the Eastern Whipbird was also heard there. A number of New Holland Honeyeaters was sighted in the trees as we walked along. Other bird sightings included Superb Blue and Variegated Wrens, and Little Wattlebird. Since our last outing there in July 1989 the area has changed, with a thinner vegetation down to the lagoon on the western side of the walking track. On the eastern side of the track the vegetation is almost exclusively Coastal Wattle growing on the sandhills. The walking track led up over a steep sandhill and out onto the beach, where we could walk around the lagoon to the cycle track on the western side where we observed Pacific Black Duck, Masked Lapwing, Grey Teal, Black-fronted Plover and a Chestnut Teal. The cycle track led back to the car park past some casuarinas where we sighted Yellow Thornbill, Silvereye and Fan-tailed Cuckoo.

We then drove to the Hales residence for a look around Towradgi Creek, and recorded the Purple Swamphen, Dusky Moorhen and Dollarbird. A total of 39 species were recorded for the morning.

Horrie Ward

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SPECIES LIST FOR THE BELLAMBI OUTING

Australian Pelican	Ruddy Turnstone	Clamorous Reed-Warbler
Great Cormorant	Silver Gull	Golden-headed Cisticola
Little Pied Cormorant	Kelp Gull	Superb Blue Wren
White-faced Heron	Crested Tern	Variegated Wren
Pacific Black Duck	Spotted Turtle-Dove	Yellow Thornbill
Grey Teal	Galah	Little Wattlebird
Chestnut Teal	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	New Holland Honeyeater
Australian Kestrel	Dollarbird	Silvereye
Dusky Moorhen	Welcome Swallow	House Sparrow
Purple Swamphen	Richard's Pipit	Common Starling
Sooty Oystercatcher	Red-whiskered Bulbul	Common Myna
Masked Lapwing	Willie Wagtail	Australian Magpie-lark
Black-fronted Plover	Eastern Whipbird	Australian Raven

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## 1993 EASTER CAMP AT RYLSTONE

On Thursday 8 April a group of 12 happy travellers met at Mt Boyce for morning tea en route to Badgerground. We were surprised to see a number of small flocks of Yellow-faced Honeyeaters flying through on their migration north, as we were of the opinion that this doesn't happen until around Anzac/Mother's Day. Our next stop was Rylstone where lunch was enjoyed sitting under an English oak tree in the park prior to our final 20 Km drive into our campsite. Rylstone is a pretty town renowned for its attractive stone buildings constructed over 100 years ago.

Badgerground acquired its name from the early settlers and the many wombats that lived in the area. We were fortunate to share the company of our hosts, Mike and Sue Pridmore, at several of our campfires and we learnt something of the history of the area. During the 1930s depression the property was owned by two brothers who made good use of the natural springs in the area to irrigate their market gardens where they grew 35000 tomato plants. They cleared the surrounding hills of vegetation to allow more water run-off. The present owners are planting local species of native flora to speed the regrowth recovery. The property is surrounded on three sides by hills and cliffs with very interesting caves and rock formations, some looking like the Western Australian Bungle Bungles in miniature. Aboriginal hand paintings were seen in caves not far from the property.

The camp was very well attended with 48 campers, 7 others staying in on-site accommodation and 2 day visitors. This was the best attended camp on record and we enjoyed celebrating three birthdays during the time. Fig and quince trees were loaded with fruit and the birds were having a feast, particularly the Pied Currawongs and Satin Bowerbirds.

Walks were done in all directions around the property and an interesting morning was spent following an old bullock track that eventually joins the Byalong/Rylstone Road and has been graded as a fire trail.

We met a local property owner Mal Stokes, who is a member of the NSW Field Ornithologists Club, and who invited us to walk on his property which has drier vegetation, and we added a pair of Hooded Robins to our bird list. Mal also took us to Ferntree Gully where we had lunch in the picnic area on top of the range prior to walking down into the gully and another world. The change of vegetation was amazing as we entered the rainforest with tree ferns, Sandpaper and Port Jackson Figs and Coachwood trees, and bracken as tall as us in places, with rock orchids clinging to the cliffs.

Mal also took a small group spotlighting one night and several Greater Gliders, a Sugar Glider and possums were seen and a Powerful Owl was heard. Spotlighting was also done behind the camp when several possums, two Tawny Frogmouths and Owlet Nightjars were seen and the Powerful Owl was heard once more. Several campers heard the Powerful Owl calling in the early morning on more than one occasion.

We also visited some other properties in the area including ex-Dural native nurseryman Sid Cadwell's 300 acres on the Byalong Road and we marvelled at the number of native plants, in particular the grevilleas and waratahs Sid has planted there over the last 20 years. Further along the road we stopped to look at the Bell Miners.

A visit to the Rylstone water supply added Black Swans, Musk Ducks, Shovellers and Hardheads to our list.

A total of 111 bird species were recorded during the camp, including Spotted Quail-thrush which was sighted on three occasions and Lyrebirds which were heard calling around the campsite.

Once more a very successful camp was enjoyed by those who attended in a very

Easter Camp (continued)

scenic corner of our world. The drive home, particularly from Badgerground to the Blue Mountains, has to be seen to be appreciated.

Nola and Laurie Williams

#####

PROJECT CURRAWONG: THE COMBINED BIRD CLUBS' CURRAWONG COUNT

Over the weekend of 6-7 March 1993 eighteen persons representing the principal ornithological bodies of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service met at the Shortland Wetlands Centre, Newcastle. This conference was organised and financed by the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union, and was the fourth in a series of such meetings which has taken place over the past year or two. The principal aim of these meetings is to encourage communication and practical interaction between members of the of the various bird-orientated bodies within NSW and the ACT. Discussion on the second day centred around the feasibility of simple interactive projects between the various ornithological and natural history organisations with NSW and the ACT.

In order to assess how YOU, the average birdo, can cope with potential future projects involving multi-club organisation and the recording of simple data, it was decided unanimously to have a test run of a simple project that everyone can get involved with. The context of this project is to count numbers of Pied Currawong Strepera graculina within a given area over a given period, the details of which are given below. The reason this species was chosen is because it is perceived to have increased in urban areas over the last decade, preys heavily on passerine chicks during the breeding season, has been implicated in the dispersal of unwanted seeds, and utters a beautiful melodious call. We have tried to keep this project as simple as possible, while providing at least some useful data on the distribution, broad habitat preference, behaviour and relative abundance of this ubiquitous species. If successful, more inter-bird club projects of this kind will be organised in the near future.

YOUR assistance will help guide the future of ornithological conservation and research in southeastern Australia - please consider.

When is it? You can conduct your count(s) at any time and anywhere in NSW and the ACT between Saturday 17 to Sunday 25 July 1993. You can count as many as 20 sites per person, but can't count the same site twice. No two sites should be closer than one kilometre to each other. Even if you count only one site, your data will help.

What to do: Simply select a site in an urban, rural or bushland area, and record how many Pied Currawongs you can see or hear within a radius of 100 metres over a period of no more than 20 minutes. Try not to count the same birds twice. Your back yard is just as valuable to this project as a natural area. Write the results down as set out below, and at the end of the census period, collate your sightings onto a single sheet of paper and give them to either the club records officer Jim Robinson, or mail them to:

Chris J. Chafer  
Department of Biological Sciences  
University of Wollongong  
Northfields Avenue  
Wollongong NSW 2522



# I.B.O.C. NEWS

NUMBER 162

JUNE, 1993



THE CIRCULAR OF THE ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB

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

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\*\*\*\*\* COMING EVENTS \*\*\*\*\*

**NEXT MEETING:** will be held on **Monday 14 June** at the Fairy Meadow Senior Citizens Centre, corner of Collaery Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, commencing at **7.30 p.m.** This will be our **Members' Night** where we look to as many members as possible to contribute to the evening's programme. Any item of ornithological interest is welcome - art work, tapestry, poetry, jokes, tall tales, and any slides or photographs of birds, birdos or bivouacs all add to the success of the night. This is your night and if you are able to contribute in any way, please do so.

**FILM NIGHT:** will be held on **Saturday 12 June** at the home of Anne & Bill Scandritt, 266 Northcliffe Drive, Lake Heights, beginning at **7 p.m.** Number 266 is on the corner of St Cloud Crescent and it is advisable to park in St Cloud Cres rather than in Northcliffe Drive. Don't forget your camp chair if you have one, and a plate to share in supper afterwards.

**NEXT OUTING:** will be held on **Sunday 20 June** in the Budderoo National Park, Robertson. Travel via the Freeway and Illawarra Highway to the Robertson Pie Shop (7 Km beyond the top of Macquarie Pass). Turn left onto the Jamberoo-Kiama Road and travel approx. 15 Km to the Knight's Hill turn-off where we will meet at **8.30 a.m.** before continuing another 1.5 Km to the Budderoo fire trail where the cars will be parked. The walk is approx. 12 Km of easy, level walking. For those unable to manage this distance, a few cars can drive along part of the fire trail and shorten the walk to a minimum of 6 Km. Betty Hudson will lead the walk; she suggests you bring two morning teas, a carry lunch, with afternoon tea back at the cars.

**MID-WEEK WALK:** will be on **Wednesday 7 July** at St Mary's Towers Monastery, meeting outside the gates at **8.30 a.m.** Turn off Mt Ousley Road along Picton Road, turn right at the T-junction with Wilton Road, then left after about 200 metres into Douglas Park Road. The monastery is on the left hand side of this road. As it is a religious retreat, please keep noise levels to a minimum while in the vicinity. Bring munchies for morning tea.

MAY MONTHLY MEETING

Pam Robinson, a past president of the Illawarra branch of the National Parks Association, shared with us her experiences during a Top End Adventure Walkabout that she and her husband were fortunate enough to go on. The party left Darwin in July, when the days are quite warm and guaranteed fine, to visit Kakadu, Katherine and Litchfield. Pam Had some excellent slides of the regions visited, with some spectacular views from the Kakadu escarpment over Arnhem Land and the drying flood plains. The escarpment has been carved by water over the aeons, resulting in the famous gorges and falls with pleasant pools of water in which travellers can get relief from the heat and dust. Although not specifically bird watching, Pam found the wildlife around the shrinking waterholes to be prolific and easy to see, with good views of jacana, jabiru, herons and ducks as well as the odd crocodile lurking on the banks.

The group then headed west to the Bungle Bungles, stopping at many interesting spots. The boab trees were leafless, showing their multitude of scraggy shapes, and there were plenty of magnetic and cathedral-type termite mounds, many of them hundreds of years old. They drove into the Bungles and took helicopter flights over the area to appreciate fully the vast rock formations and the markings formed by coloured lichens on the rock faces. Other places visited included the Wolf Creek Crater (formed by a huge meteor strike), Echidna Chasm, Timber Creek where Gouldian Finches came to water, flights over the Ord River, and Kununurra where the Hidden Valley National Park starts at the end of the main street.

After an exhausting walkabout they relaxed in Darwin for a week where there many places of interest including the Territory Wildlife Park where you can come eye to eye with a crocodile (through safety glass), and Torres Strait Pigeons fly around naturally.

Laurie Williams gave a sincere vote of thanks from us all for bringing back fond memories for some and stirring up the wanderlust in others.

Chris Brandis

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PROPOSED IBOC TRIP TO FLINDERS RANGES

In our April newsletter we had on page 4 a timetable for a proposed 3 week caravan/camping trip to the Flinders Ranges in August/September this year, with stopovers at Hattah Lakes National Park and Cobar. The response has been such that the trip will go ahead. Of course there's always room for more participants, so if you didn't put your name on the list at the May meeting but want to go, please ring me - we need to know about how many will be involved as that may influence where we stay.

If you are not able to caravan/camp but would still like to be in it, then the commercial parks we use will have on-site vans, at Hattah there's motel accommodation in Ouyen 40 Km away, and at Wilpena there's the Wilpena Pound Motel. It would of course be up to yourself to make any such arrangements.

So that we can talk about what's ahead of us and maybe modify the timetable, we'll have a brief get-together at the home of Nola and Laurie Williams at 7.30 p.m. on Monday 28 June. Their address is 18 Achilles Avenue, North Wollongong.

Dave Thomson  
Phone 84 2876

=====

QUESTION: What do you call a line of rabbits walking backwards?

ANSWER: A receding hare line.





BARREN GROUNDS BIRD OBSERVATORY - WEEKEND COURSES

**Lyrebirds 25-27 June**

Leader: Iain Paterson Cost: \$140 (RAOU \$130)

Would you like to know more about one of the truly great wonders of Australian birdlife? Through the use of hides Iain will help you to observe lyrebirds displaying and to experience their remarkable mimicry. This will also be a golden opportunity for sound recording and photography.

**Yulefest and Feathers 9-11 July**

Leaders: Jenni Martin and Patrick Tap Cost: \$140 (RAOU \$130)

Escape from the winter and enjoy a weekend of good fun and good fun in cosy surroundings. Participate in a variety of activities including bushwalking and bird watching. On Saturday evening Santa will be arriving and we will be serving a traditional Christmas dinner. Come along and be pampered in true Barren Grounds style.

**Landscaping with Nature 23-25 July**

Leader: Patrick Tap Cost: \$140 (RAOU \$130)

A well planned garden is an asset to any home, but it need not be expensive. Patrick will use the relationships between the trees, shrubs, rocks, water and ground litter of Barren Grounds to illustrate how you can transform your garden (be it large or small) into an interesting and functional landscape, without the exorbitant price tag.

If you are interested in any of the activities at Barren Grounds please phone Jenni or Patrick on (042) 360195.

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MEMBERSHIP LIST AMENDMENTS

We welcome Mrs Pam Robinson of 9 Joseph Street, Woonona who was our guest speaker at the May meeting and has been awarded a gift subscription.

Please note Betty and Bryan Kelly's change of address to 94 Loftus Street, Bundeena.

Lindsay Smith of PO Box 142, Unanderra has renewed his membership.

+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:++

WANTED (preferably ALIVE)

One second-hand spotting scope.  
Please contact Jack Baker on (042) 845740.

+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:++

EDITOR'S NOTE

If you are sending an article by fax (042 201430) please make sure it is typewritten. The transmission process does weird things to even the best handwriting. Thanks.

+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:++

CORRECTION

The "White-browed Treecreeper" reported as being seen on the Doug Gibson Track in the May newsletter should have read "White-throated Treecreeper".

+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:+:++

EGRET WATCH

Wing tagging of egrets has been continuing at the Wetlands Centre at Shortland. If you have seen any please note the date, where the bird was seen and what it was doing, and any details on tags and bands, and report the sighting to Chris Brandis.

"THE RAOU IS NOT FOR ME"

"The RAOU is an elitist clique of bird study professionals remote from the ordinary birdwatcher."

Have you heard such sentiments before? Well, I have, notwithstanding the cooperative projects initiated by the RAOU and involving thousands of "ordinary birdwatchers". Projects such as the Bird Atlas, the Australian Bird Count, the Nest Record Scheme, and the Birds of Prey Watch.

One of the problems has been a lack of local representation in New South Wales, with the organisation seeming to be Melbourne-centred. Things could well change quite a bit in the near future. One possibility under discussion is a move by the Head Office to Canberra. And something that has already happened is the recent formation of an RAOU Committee for southern New South Wales and the ACT. As a member of this committee I have already been involved in discussions of ways in which the local profile of the RAOU can be raised and made more effective.

The message now is CONSERVATION. Conservation of remaining bird populations in the face of the continued onslaught of destructive human activity. The RAOU is now actually taking action, and not just doing the research. The catchwords are "Recovery Plan" and "Action Statement".

I have just returned from the Scientific Day in Melbourne. The theme was "Threats to Birds of Temperate and Tropical Grassy Woodlands", and it was an inspiring day. These woodlands have long been neglected as a conservation issue. We have just started realising what a wealth of species are declining in abundance in this habitat. Not just the obvious ones like the Regent Honeyeater, but birds we think of as secure, such as the Hooded Robin, Jacky Winter and Brown Treecreeper. At the conference we <sup>heard</sup> of action in Victoria to work with Landcare groups and other local bodies to protect and extend remaining woodlands, especially along creek lines and roads. In NSW Beth Williams spoke about the work of her group in liaising with landowners to enhance remaining ironbark habitat for the Regent Honeyeater - with school-children and other volunteers getting into the act with enthusiasm. The RAOU is working in cooperation with the NSWFOC and CBOC to plant ironbarks in the Capertee Valley - one of the remaining strongholds of the species.

I believe this is pointing the way for our bird organisations to head in the future. I look forward to keeping you in touch with developments. For more detailed information about the work of the RAOU, please write to 21 Gladstone Street, Moonee Ponds, Victoria, 3039, or phone 03 3701422. It is worth joining just for "Wingspan" - easily the best bird magazine in Australia.

Richard Jordan  
25 May 1993

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ATTENTION BIRD AND NATURE ENTHUSIASTS

Whether you're an aspiring or expert birdwatcher or nature enthusiast, then join the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union (RAOU). If you join before 31 August you'll have a chance of winning a holiday voucher worth \$1000 or a Kowa Spotting Scope worth \$800.

By becoming a member you will learn a lot about birds and the environment. You can study bird behaviour, observe birds in exotic locations, join in our conservation activities, meet others who share your interest, conduct your own bird project, or just keep up to date with the latest bird news.

All members receive "Wingspan", the quarterly colour magazine, which is full of the latest bird news and activities. Members are also entitled to discounts on optical equipment. The RAOU also publishes "Emu", a prestigious scientific journal, Conservation Statements, and RAOU Reports. The RAOU is currently producing the Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds (HANZAB). This six volume work will provide a comprehensive summary of our knowledge of all the birds occurring in Australasia.

Bird and Nature Enthusiasts (contd.)

Joining the RAOU helps enable it to protect birds and undertake and support projects on endangered species like the Regent Honeyeater, the Orange-bellied Parrot and the Black-eared Miner. The RAOU welcomes everyone interested in the environment and birds, and who is concerned about their future, to join. Annual membership is \$35 (\$22 for students), annual membership and Emu subscription is \$66 (\$45 for students).

Application forms are available from Chris Brandis and Robyn Wilson.

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UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

<u>Status</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Observer</u>
U	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	22	Woonona Heights	19.5.93	J Pollard
R	Red-rumped Parrot	6	Taren Point	6.5.93	R Saltpeter
S	Beautiful Firetail	1	Barren Grounds	1.5.93	G Walker
S	Spangled Drongo	1	Keiraville	21.4.93	M Eskdale
MC	Dusky Woodswallow	several	Port Kembla	23.3.93	M Eskdale
S	Spangled Drongo	1	Balgownie	26.5.93	W Emery
U	Rose Robin	1	Balgownie	May '93	W Emery
S	Spangled Drongo	1	Nth Wollongong	9.5.93	L Williams
S	Spangled Drongo	1	Port Kembla	5.5.93	O Rodwell
MC	Shining Bronze-Cuckoo	1	Port Kembla	26.4.93	O Rodwell
U	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	2	Nth Wollongong	April	L & N Williams
U	White-plumed Honeyeater	3	Nth Wollongong	9.5.93	L & N Williams
R	Black Bittern	1	Towradgi Creek	1.5.93	B Hales
U	Gang-gang Cockatoo	2-6	Mt Ousley	April-May	J Robinson
R	White-tailed Tropicbird	1	23 naut. miles off Wollongong	25.4.93	C Brandis
R	Common Diving-Petrel	1	13 naut. miles off Wollongong	25.4.93	C Brandis
S	White-cheeked Honeyeater	3	Maddens Plains	28.3.93	G Barwell
U	Caspian Tern	2	Windang	4.4.93	G Barwell
U	Musk Duck	1	Killalea Lagoon	9.4.93	G Barwell
U	Australian Hobby	1	Killalea Lagoon	9.4.93	G Barwell
U	Black-winged Stilt	4	Killalea Lagoon	9.4.93	G Barwell
S	White-headed Pigeon	6	Bass Point	9.5.93	G Barwell
S	Bar-shouldered Dove	2	Bass Point	9.5.93	G Barwell
R	Emerald Dove	1	Roadside, bottom Jamberoo Pass	19.5.93	R Jordan

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COMMENTS

The White-tailed Tropicbird is the first sighting since 1986 from the regular boat trips out of Wollongong Harbour.

The Spangled Drongo has been sighted in several areas in the Illawarra district.

Jim Robinson

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# I.B.O.C. NEWS

NO. 163

JULY, 1993



THE CIRCULAR OF THE ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB

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

CLUB MOTTO "ONE GOOD TERN DESERVES ANOTHER"

<u>PRESIDENT</u>	<u>SECRETARY</u>	<u>TREASURER</u>	<u>EDITOR</u>
Brian Hales 39 Lake Parade CORRIMAL EAST NSW 2518 Ph. 844266	Chris Brandis 10 Charlton Street MOUNT WARRIGAL NSW 2528 Ph. 962837	Ron Almond 2 Shoobert Cres. KEIRAVILLE NSW 2500 Ph. 298612	Robyn Wilson 4/18 Smith Street WOLLONGONG NSW 2500 Ph. 291184

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 \$15 SINGLE \$10 JUNIOR \$5

### \*\*\* COMING EVENTS \*\*\*

Next meeting: will be held on **Monday 12 July** at the Fairy Meadow Senior Citizens Centre, corner of Collaery Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, commencing at **7.30 p.m.** Our guest speaker will be **Frank Spolc**. Some members may remember Frank from the IBOC trip to Kakadu - he had won the trip in a photographic competition. He is well-known for his bird photography and we look forward to seeing some excellent examples of his talent.

Film night: will be on **Saturday 10 July** at the home of Brian and Barbara Hales, 39 Lake Parade, Corrimal East, starting at **7.30 p.m.** Please bring along a folding chair, if you have one, and a plate of supper to share after the films. Come and enjoy some excellent entertainment and convivial company.

Wednesday walks: On **7 July** at St Mary's Towers Monastery, meeting outside the gates at **8.30 a.m.** Turn off Mt Ousley Road along Picton Road, turn right at the T-junction with Wilton Road, then left after about 200 metres into Douglas Park Road. The monastery is on the left hand side of this road. As it is a religious retreat, please keep noise levels to a minimum while in the vicinity.

On **4 August** to Robertson Lookout and the Scout Camp. Meet at the entrance to Mount Keira lookout at **8.30 a.m.**  
Both these walks are half-day, so bring eats and drinks for morning tea.

Next field outing: will be held on **Sunday 18 July**. The advertised walk from Mount Brown has not been permitted by the Water Board and a walk to O'Hare's Creek via the 10B and 10R fire trails has been arranged. Meet at the top of Bulli Pass on the Appin Road just after the crossover from the expressway at **8.30 a.m.** We will then drive to the turn-off and down to the start of the walk which should finish at about afternoon tea time.

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JUNE MONTHLY MEETING

The Club's June meeting was our Members' Night - a chance to show others a selection of slides, both to confirm that there is an abundance of talent in the club, and to reminisce about some of the IBOC outings of the past.

Peg McKinlay showed us some scenes from a group trip to Menindee Lakes, down along the Darling River, through Pooncarie (with McKinlay Street a prominent thoroughfare) and on to Mungo National Park to see the Walls of China.

Ron Imisides presented a range of his excellent bird shots from his most recent sightings of Yellow-nosed Albatross off Wollongong, Wood Sandpiper near Adelaide, Spangled Drongo in his backyard, to a Rufous Owl sighted up north during the last IBOC trip to Cape York.

Wal Emery gave members a glimpse of what is in store for those who are going on the late October camp by the Little Styx River. The range of habitat in the New England and Dorrigo National Parks, including the beech forest, make this camp a must.

Dave Thomson took long-time members down memory lane with slides of early IBOC activities, including the first camp held at Coolendel, and of some of the local inhabitants of the areas visited. These included a large Brown Snake, peaceful koalas and the most vicious of all, the Tiger Burr of the Pilliga Scrub. Some of the slides included that favourite IBOC activity after a hard day's birding, the sit around the campfire, as well as some shots of early meetings which showed that some members have hardly aged at all, just matured.

Chris Chafer displayed his talent for bird photography with slides ranging from the Northern Territory to Wollongong, with some interesting Bush Stone-curlews, comparisons of Whimbrel to Eastern Curlew and Bar-tailed to Black-tailed Godwit, a Great-billed Heron, and what is to many the most attractive Australian bird, the Crimson Rosella in full adult plumage.

Barbara Hales chose to show a beautifully carved kookaburra instead of the most valuable item in the Hales' collection, a piece of china Puffinry.

Laurie Williams had some slides donated by the University of Wollongong, reportedly of birds and animals seen on campus, but they turned out to be from southern Africa. Although unfamiliar to some, they were instantly recognised by anyone who has been on one of Richard Jordan's Emu Tours to that area.

Brian Hales finished the evening off with a variety of slides of British birds and topical cartoons, interspersed with - you've guessed it - Puffinry!

Thanks to all participants in making it such an enjoyable evening by bringing back memories and getting us to look forward to good birding once the weather improves.

Chris Brandis

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CLASS QUESTION: What did the scientists call the near-sighted dinosaur?

ANSWER: A doyouthinkhesaurus.

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MIDWEEK WALK AT BASS POINT

On Wednesday 5 May, a brisk sunny morning, 12 members of IBOC met at Bass Point for our half-day walk. The birds were keen to be seen. New Holland Honeyeaters and Variegated Wrens sat and waited for us to admire them - which we did with pleasure.

We started our walk along the Middy Beach track, past Coastal Banksias, Lantana and Lomandra, and down to the beach. There was fireweed growing in pure shell grit and further down towards the water's edge one little fireweed plant was surviving in a crack in the latite where it must have had salt spray over it at least twice a day - not only surviving but managing to flower and fruit as well. I didn't have the heart to pull it out; such tenacity deserves reward. Later on I removed quite a few plants growing in more favourable conditions to soothe my conscience.

Here on the beach we were protected by Coastal Wattle and Coastal Tea Tree, and it was delightfully warm. We saw martins, Sooty Oystercatchers, pelicans and fishermen. The fishermen were waiting hopefully to catch fish, the pelicans were waiting hopefully to eat the scraps, and the bird watchers were waiting hopefully to watch the pelicans eat their breakfast. There were a lot of hopes around Bass Point that morning; some were realised and others were not.

By now it was morning tea time and we were at the main car park where we were entertained by the Variegated Wrens and by one member who hand-fed a magpie that obviously was used to such attention.

After a quick detour to visit the Boston Shipwreck Memorial, the 50th anniversary of which was commemorated recently, we were off up the road to look for the Powerful Owl which used to live in a patch of rainforest close to the road. We saw Eastern Yellow Robin, Lewin's Honeyeater, Red-whiskered Bulbuls and a White-headed Pigeon, but no owls, powerful or otherwise, not even their droppings.

The forest here looked parched, the trees all dry and dusty, and no sign of the lush green usually associated with rainforest, but we did see what we thought was a large plum pine (*Podocarpus elatus*). Where are you when we need you, Wal?? It was in full fruit, a strange rich purplish black in colour. Some of the more adventurous (or more hungry?) members ate the fruit but no-one went back for seconds.

After this little sortie we ambled along the road and finally reached the cars after an enjoyable morning during which we sighted 26 species.

Peg Merrett

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CONGRATULATIONS

Long-time club member Don Rodgers was recently recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours List with a Medal of the Order of Australia in the General Division (OAM) for services to Surf Life Saving.

Don holds numerous lifesaving awards including the Association's 25 and 50 year Service Awards. He was Secretary of the Illawarra Branch Board of Lifesaving Control for 21 consecutive years. Don and his wife Vera now live in Tarnagulla, Victoria, where they run the Australia Post agency.

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PROJECT CURRAWONG REMINDER

The Combined Bird Clubs' Currawong Count will be held during the period of Saturday 17 to Sunday 25 July 1993.

Full details of what to do and how to record your observations were given in the May 1993 newsletter.

Further information can be obtained from Chris Chafer, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Wollongong.

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JUNE MONTHLY OUTING - BUDDEROO NATIONAL PARK

On Saturday 20 June twenty members met at the Knight's Hill turn-off on the Robertson-Jamberoo road, at 8.30 a.m. On getting out of the car we were blasted with a cold, strong westerly wind. Fortunately the sky was clear and the sun was out all day, taking the bite out of the wind. When all had turned up we moved to the Budderoo Track to begin our day's walk. We set out walking into the wind, catching its full force as it blew over the open ground of stunted heath. To the left of the track a fire in recent times had rendered the area devoid of any life. Because of the strong wind birds were not to be seen until we came to an area of scattered eucalypts with a bracken ground cover which offered some protection for wildlife. Some birds were heard but were difficult to see among the moving branches. We soon passed into another heath area where a Southern Emu-Wren was observed. The quickly changing vegetation there may have something to do with variations in soil quality in the various areas. The heath gradually gave way to a sparsely wooded area which became taller as we moved along the track, until we were in a really beautiful forest of eucalypts with bracken, tree ferns and reedy grass forming a ground cover. This was a much more productive area for bird life. Birds seen there included White-browed Scrubwren, White-eared Honeyeater, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Silvereye, Brown and Striated Thornbills.

We turned right off the main track and headed towards Gerringong Creek. Along this track the vegetation changed again to a different type of heath, varying in height. One beautiful species was *Banksia ericifolia*, flowering profusely, growing up to 4 metres, and occurring right through the area. In some places the eucalypts were stunted, while towards the creek they were quite large. This area attracted a large number of birds, although the number of species was quite low. The Little Wattlebird was observed on a couple of occasions, but Eastern Spinebill, White-naped and New Holland Honeyeaters were there in large numbers. It was a delightful walk through this area with birds all over the place, flowering banksias and tea trees, not to mention being sheltered from the wind.

Near Gerringong Creek we had a wonderful view into a deep thickly-wooded ravine, an offshoot of upper Kangaroo Valley, which we could see in the distance. A few minutes further along the track we came to the creek crossing, where a Gang-gang Cockatoo was sighted, and where we stopped for lunch.

We each found a spot to sit on the rocks, in the sun, with water trickling between the rocks into lovely clear pools, the creek surrounded by tree-covered hillsides. New Holland and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters and Silvereyes were constantly seen and heard while we had lunch. Some of the group took a short walk to view the Gerringong Falls before we continued on the loop back to the main track. The track led through dry sclerophyll forest, dodging over and around the many trees which have been lain across it to discourage 4WD vehicles and trail bikes (with limited success). After about an hour and a half we had returned to the spot where we'd had morning tea. It was then another 3 Km back to the cars, some walking and some (oldies) getting a lift back from a couple of drivers who returned in their cars to pick us up, which we appreciated. We had a great day; thanks to Betty Hudson for leading the walk. We recorded 28 bird species for the day.

Horrie Ward

Footnote: The deceased mammal found near the beginning of the walk was identified as a Dusky Antechinus (*Antechinus swainsonii*). While not as common as the Brown Antechinus (*A. stuartii*), it has been found in Barren Grounds Nature Reserve.

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After a wet night I decided to go to Mount Kembla when the rain stopped and the sky looked a little brighter, and I was pleased that I did. It was a cold, cloudy, still morning when I arrived at the lookout under the power lines at about 8.30 a.m. I got out of the car and walked across the mown wet grass to the fence and was confronted by the stunning beauty of the early morning scene, looking south over the Brownsville-Dapto area and Lake Illawarra, with some vivid cloud patterns being reflected from the lake. Part of the landscape to the west was covered by fog, and towards the escarpment the fields of brown and green were interspersed with wooded areas, while beyond were the cloud-capped mountains.

While absorbing all this, a chorus of rainforest birds rang out, filling the air. The lyrebirds were going through their repertoire; the Wonga Pigeon and Brown Cuckoo-Dove were calling, along with the Lewin's Honeyeater, whipbird and raven. The beautiful surrounding rainforest was freshly washed after the night's rain, but in the dull light with its deep shadows it was difficult to see the small birds; however, the lovely Eastern Yellow Robin showed itself in the low branches, a few metres away at the end of the grass area.

After about 30 minutes a rain shower slowly obscured the view, leaving only a vague outline of the lake through the mist as I left. In the short time I was there I recorded a total of 12 species:

Brown Cuckoo-Dove, Wonga Pigeon, Galah, Crimson Rosella, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Superb Lyrebird, Eastern Whipbird, Eastern Yellow Robin, White-browed Scrubwren, Lewin's Honeyeater, Pied Currawong, Australian Raven.

Horrie Ward

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CANBERRA TRIP 17, 18 & 19 SEPTEMBER - PROPOSED ITINERARY

Fri 17th: Book into your accommodation in time to meet at the Canberra Motor Village community kitchen/lounge at 12.45 p.m. We will then make the short drive to the Canberra Botanic Gardens where we will spend the rest of the day. Evening free to do as you please.

Sat 18th: We will spend the day at the beautiful 5500 ha Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve which offers a variety of walks and habitats as well as wildlife enclosures, viewing hides, an audiovisual centre and we hope to have the services of a park ranger for a couple of hours, too. With inside information it shouldn't take us too long to find the koalas along the Red or Yellow tracks. Dinner to be arranged in the evening at the motel's restaurant.

Sun 19th: Half-day outing, possibly to Campbell Park which turned up such a variety and abundance of birds on our last visit; maybe we'll revisit the swamp and sewage works.

Canberra Motor Village, Kunzea Street, O'Connor, ACT; Phone 008 026199

Motel Double	\$84 per night + \$10 extra person
Exec Cabin Double/4 bunks, en suite	\$75 per night + \$5 extra person
Std Cabin Double/3 bunks, ensuite	\$60 " " + \$5 " "
Caravan Double/4 bunks	\$39 per night + \$5 extra person; no linen
Caravan site Double power	\$18 per night
Tent site	\$13 per night

We intend making a group booking and if you wish to be included in this you will need to contact Barbara or Brian Hales (phone 844266) with a firm commitment on or before the meeting on 12 July.

As you will be providing your own transport you can join or leave this excursion whenever it suits you best; in that case you will need to make your own accommodation plans, but you must contact us for dinner bookings on the Saturday evening. We chose this motel for its lovely bushland setting, variety of accommodation and extra facilities, e.g. a meeting room for a get together after the day's outings, etc.

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A TRIP TO DARWIN, KAKADU AND KATHERINE

We arrived at the Casino Hotel, Darwin early on 23 May 1993. Rufous-banded Honeyeaters coming onto the balconies at the hotel. Brown Honeyeaters in the garden, along with Silver-crowned Friarbirds; the hotel has a resident goanna. White-breasted Woodswallows common in the evening.

In the mall at Darwin White-gaped Honeyeaters were gathering insects from spider webs under the eaves.

Driving to Kakadu there were numerous Black Kites and some Whistling Kites. In the garden at the Crocodile Hotel a Bar-shouldered Dove was nesting (later deserted). Rufous-banded and Brown Honeyeaters were common in the hotel grounds. They probably feel protected by the two-storey building.

At Nourlangie Rock were a pair of Chestnut-quilled Rock-Pigeons, Partridge Pigeons and Red-tailed Black Cockatoos. Peaceful Doves called continuously around Kakadu. Red-collared Lorikeets flocked in the Jabiru shopping centre. Yellow Waters had many Magpie Geese, all the egrets, Black-fronted Dotterel, Masked Lapwing, Wandering Whistling Duck, Sacred and Straw-necked Ibis, Tawny Frogmouths and Nankeen Night-herons.

Jacanas were seen at Fogg Dam; lots of White-breasted Sea-Eagles. At Obirr Rock we saw a Banded Fruit-Dove, Red-winged Parrots and a Pheasant Coucal (very close); Finches were Crimson and Double-barred.

Near the Nourlangie Rock billabongs there were Lemon-breasted Flycatchers, Mangrove Golden Whistler, Rufous Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Leaden Flycatcher, and a female Shining Flycatcher.

Willie Wagtails were common in all areas; Grey-crowned Babblers in the drier scrub. The only Fairy Wren seen was the Red-backed.

White-throated Warbler, Black-tailed Treecreeper and White-throated Honeyeater were seen at Nourlangie.

At the Adelaide River Hotel Great Bowerbirds and Blue-faced Honeyeaters came to feed at the outside tables. A Spangled Drongo perched nearby.

Katherine Gorge produced one White-faced Heron, Pied Butcherbirds and Australian Magpie-larks were at the boat ramps.

Back in Darwin there was a Reef Heron near the fish-feeding platforms at Doctor's Gully. Mangrove Herons had recently nested in the adjacent mangroves - ten metres from the shop.

The bird curator at the Territory Wildlife Park, Mr Dave Irwin, told us that Rainbow Pittas had nested in the park - one in the compound, the other outside the wire - but there had been no offspring.

Other birds seen: Royal Spoonbill, Red Goshawk, Orange-footed Scrubfowl, Silver Gull, Crested Tern, Galah, Little Corella, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Rainbow Bee-eater, Dollarbird, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Little Cuckoo-shrike, Grey Shrike-thrush, Striated Pardalote, Figbird, Magpie-lark, Pied Butcherbird, Torresian Crow, Pied Heron.

It was good to see so many Rufous-banded Honeyeaters instead of sparrows in the built-up areas; no starlings and no Indian mynas.

An enjoyable trip - we missed the expertise and conviviality of the IBOC excursions, however.

Bryan and Betty Kelly

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GROUND PARROT CENSUS

**Sunday 5 September 1993**

Lots of volunteers needed to assist.

If interested, please phone Barren Grounds Bird Observatory on (042) 360195 or arrive at 9 a.m. Bookings are being taken for overnight accommodation on Saturday 4 September; casual rates apply - \$55 per day fully catered, \$40 per day evening meal only, \$25 per day uncatered.

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## UNUSUAL RECORDS SCHEME - TEN YEARS ON

In 1983 IBOC, under the guidance of Wal Emery, initiated an unusual records recording scheme (URS). The basis for this scheme was to record, on a regular basis, those species which were considered to be rare, scarce and uncommon in the County of Camden. The general idea was to generate a data base from which the club could expand on the knowledge accumulated in the monumental work compiled and published in 1977 by J.D. Gibson (The Birds of the County of Camden. 'Australian Birds' Vol. 11; 42-80).

This scheme was run by Wal for several years before I took over the job in 1986. At this time it was decided to update Gibson's work with the voluminous data the scheme had already generated to that date. The enthusiasm of IBOC members to record data on the more uncommon species in the region was supplemented by a biannual censusing of particular areas within the County, organised by Kevin Wood. These data, and those obtained from our monthly field outings, annual camps to various locations within the County, and the, now, world-renowned pelagic boat trips off Wollongong, provided the material necessary for producing an updated version of the region's avifauna. The collection and collation of this huge data base culminated in the 1989 publication of a fully revised booklet 'The Birds of the County of Camden (Including the Illawarra Region)' Second edition, by (posthumously) J.D. Gibson. This work was begun by Wal Emery and Dave Thomson, later being joined by myself and Lindsay Smith, and diligently word processed by Alison Smith.

This synthesis of the Illawarra's avifauna is now the standard reference on the region's birdlife. It is referred to throughout the ornithological literature; from species accounts by local and extra-local authors; in biogeographic studies on the distribution and abundance of a number of species and genera; is used in species accounts for the RAOU's 'Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds' (HANZAB); is used extensively by regional industry, councils and consultants in the generation of Environmental Impact Statements and Fauna Impact Statements; is used in course work at the University of Wollongong; and of course is the basis from which the current status of species reported in IBOC's unusual record scheme (now run by Jim Robinson) is obtained.

I have noticed over the past several months that interest in recording and relaying the occurrence of interesting (and not just unusual) species has waned. Why has this occurred? Over the years two questions have often been asked of me, both while I was collating material for IBOC and also in my current role as a collator for the NSW Field Ornithologist Club: Where does the data go? and Why do we need to continue recording data when we have a perfectly good reference guide to the region?

In an effort to re-stimulate interest in the URS, and ascertain the importance of recording unusual records in a central location, I will attempt to answer these questions. The first is easy to answer. Various types of data bases have been kept by the persons collating the IBOC URS data. Mostly this was done on a card system, later material being recorded on a computer data base. From there monthly reports appear in the IBOC newsletter, highlighting the more unusual and interesting sightings. The more exotic records make it into the NSW FOC newsletter (which has a world-wide distribution), and this can attract visitors to our region, providing a small but valuable stimulus to the local economy, and has on several occasions led to long-standing friendships between visiting and local birdos. The second question, however, is the more important. Although we have an excellent regional tool on basic avian ecology in 'The Birds of the County of Camden', the data will only be useful for perhaps a decade. The regional landscape is continuously changing with the great urban sprawl, destruction of woodland areas on the coastal plain, creation of few new conservation areas, increasing recreational pressure on our waterways and parks, a perceived change in global climate and the temporal variation in species distribution and abundance due to a variety of reasons. Only a continuously updated data base can maintain an overview of the changing distribution and abundance of the region's avifauna in response to any of the above-mentioned

Unusual Records Scheme - Ten Years On (contd.)

factors. For example, in Gibson's (1977) publication Common Koel and Channel-billed Cuckoo were listed as rare and uncommon respectively. In Gibson (1989) they were both listed as uncommon. The number of observations I know about of both these parasitic cuckoos over the last five years suggests that status may now even be modified to moderately common! Why is this so? Could it be due to an apparent increase in the local populations of host species (Red Wattlebirds and Pied Currawongs)? When was the last time you heard a Pallid Cuckoo, supposedly moderately common? Why has the Sooty Owl become known from so many locations (2 in 1977, I know of 10 in 1993), has the rainforest increased? Where have all the Emerald Doves gone?, once uncommon (1977), now certainly scarce (1989) and probably rare. What's happened to the Brush Turkey population along the escarpment? Successful breeding occurred in the late 1980s, where are these offspring! These are just a few of the myriad of questions that could be asked of the region's avifauna. Whilst some require detailed studies, others can partially be solved by the reporting of sightings.

I hope this note encourages you to again enthusiastically report unusual records. No matter how trivial an observation may seem at the time, or how insignificant a single observation, rest assured that every piece of data is useful in its own right. There are several ways to record your sighting - see Jim Robinson's comments at the end of the Interesting Sightings. The key point is to make sure that, if you think something is worth recording, then report it. 'The Birds of the County of Camden' is a guide to what we knew up to 1988. It is not the last word in regional ornithology, and hopefully a 3rd edition will be forthcoming in the future. Many members have notebooks filled with observations they have recorded and not passed on. In order for our collective knowledge to grow, we need a central receptacle that adequately channels the combined accumulation of members' observations. This facility exists at IBOC and it's there for you to use. Many records reported to the IBOC URS cumulatively end up in the New South Wales Annual Bird Report (published by the NSW FOC). I urge all club members who have contributed in the past, and allowed their enthusiasm to become lackadaisical, as well as those newer members unaware of the scheme, to reconsider/find out about contributing. It only takes a few moments to write down a record, and indirectly you will be contributing to the conservation, ecological and biogeographical understanding of our precious and beautiful bird life.

Chris J. Chafer

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ENVIRONMENTAL COURSES AT BARREN GROUNDS

10-12 September	SPRING COMES TO BARREN GROUNDS	Jenni Martin & Patrick Tap
24-26 September	RAPTORS AND REHABILITATION	Fred Spiteri & David Brown
1-4 October	ORCHIDS, FERNS AND WILDFLOWERS	Leo Cady & Denise Black
15-17 October	ART IN NATURE	Nicholas Day
29-31 October	WEB OF LIFE	Patrick Tap
12-14 November	BUSH FOODS	Pat Jordan
26-28 November	BIRDS OF THE BUSH	Richard Jordan

Weekends \$140 per person; long weekends \$180 per person. All meals included. Contact the wardens, Jenni Martin and Patrick Tap on (042) 360195 or write to P.O. Box 3, Jamberoo, NSW, 2533.

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"NEVER AGAIN"

'I recently observed several sparrows eating fermented fruit; this one leaned against a wall for ten minutes while it recovered.'  
These words (from 'Birds' magazine) were accompanied by a photograph of the said sparrow, legs to one side, leaning against the brick wall, looking decidedly drunk.

Barbara Hales

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6.3.84

LIST OF HABITAT ABBREVIATIONS FOR RECORD CARDS.

Rainforest	R/F
Wet Sclerophyll	W/S
Dry Sclerophyll	D/S
Grassland	G/L
Creekside Vegetation	C/V
Park & Gardens	P & G
Lagoons	L
Reed Beds	R/B
Wetlands	W
Dams	D
Sand Flats	S/F
Mud Flats	M/F
Mangroves	M
Lake Margins	L/M
Coastal Sedges	C/S
Coastal Rockshelf	C/R
Beach	B
Coastal Dune Forest	C/DF
Heathland	H/L
Sandstone Heath	S/H

SPECIES LIST FOR RECORDING SCHEME.

Gt. Crested Grebe	Whistling Kite	Curllew Sandpiper	Boobook Owl	Eastern Bristlebird
H/hooded Grebe	Brown Goshawk	Sanderling	Barking Owl	Pilot Bird
Little Penguin	Coloured Boarwhawk	B/billed Sandpiper	Barn Owl	Rock Warbler
Wandering Albatross	Grey Goshawk	Arctic Skua	Masked Owl	L/billed Scrubwren
B/browed Albatross	W/bellied Sea-eagle	Pomarine Skua	Sooty Owl	Y/throated Scrubwren
Y/nosed Albatross	Wedge-tailed Eagle	Pacific Gull	Tamny Frogmouth	C/rumped Hyalocola
W/capped Albatross	Little Eagle	Black/backed Gull	Owlet Nightjar	Speckled Warbler
S/giant Petrel	Swamp Harrier	Whiskered Tern	W/throated Nightjar	W/throated Warbler
N/giant Petrel	Peregrine Falcon	Gull-billed Tern	S/ine-tailed Swift	Varied Sittella
Cape Petrel	Little Falcon	Caspian Tern	Fork-tailed Swift	R/browed Treecreeper
G/winged Petrel	Brown Falcon	Common Tern	Azure Kingfisher	Brown Treecreeper
Fairy P-rien	Stubble Quail	White-fronted Tern	Rainbow Bee-eater	Nolay Friarbird
F/footed Shearwater	Brown Quail	Little Tern	Dollar Bird	Little Friarbird
Fluttering Shearwater	Painted Button Quail	Tooknot Pigeon	Tree Martin	Regent Honeyeater
Little Shearwater	Banded Land Rail	White-headed Pigeon	Fly Martin	Bell Miner
W/faced Storm Petrel	Lewins Rail	Brown Pigeon	W/B Cuckoo Shrike	White-plumed H/eater
Australian Gannet	Marsh Crane	Bar-shouldered Dove	Cicade Bird	Black-chinned H/eater
Darter	Spotted Crane	Emerald Dove	White-winged Triller	Brown-headed H/eater
Pied Cormorant	Pied Oystercatcher	Common Bronzewing	Sally Thrush	White-necked H/eater
W/necked Heron	Little Egret	Brush Bronzewing	Blackbird	Brown Honeyeater
Plumed Egret	Grey Plover	Crested Pigeon	Rose Robin	Crescent Honeyeater
Reef Egret	Golden Plover	Wonga Pigeon	Glossy Robin	White-checked H/eater
Mangrove Heron	Red-kneed Plover	Glossy B/Cockatoo	Scarlet Robin	Tamny-crowned H/eater
Nankeen Night Heron	Mongolian Plover	Y.T./Black Cockatoo	Red-capped Robin	Scarlet H/eater
Little Bittern	D/banded Plover	Gang-gang Cockatoo	Hooded Robin	White-fronted Chat
Black Bittern	Large-billed Plover	S/crested Cockatoo	Crested Shrike-tit	Beautiful Firetail
Brown Bittern	Oriental Plover	Rainbow Lorikeet	Rufous Whistler	Diamond Firetail
Glossy Ibis	Red-capped Plover	S/breasted Lorikeet	Rufous Whistler	Zebra Finch
Royal Spoonbill	B/fronsted Plover	Musk Lorikeet	Black-faced Monarch	Double-banded Finch
Y/billed Spoonbill	Pied Stilt	Little Lorikeet	Spectacled Monarch	C/breasted Mannikin
Freckled Duck	Ruddy Turnstone	Ground Parrot	Satin Flycatcher	Olive-backed Oriole
Australian Shelduck	Whimbrel	Swift Parrot	Restless Flycatcher	Figbird
Mallard	Grey-tailed Tattler	Turquoise Parrot	Rufous Fantail	Spangled Drongo
Chestnut Teal	Wandering Tattler	Pallid Cuckoo	S/tailed Chowchilla	Green Cebird
B/winged Shoveller	Common Sandpiper	Brush Cuckoo	Spotted Quail-thrush	White-winged Crough
Pink-eared Duck	Greenshank	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Read Warbler	Masked Woodswallow
White-eyed Duck	Japanese Snipe	Rufous T/Bronze Cuckoo	Little Grassbird	W/B Woodswallow
Musk Duck	Black-tailed Godwit	Shining B/Cuckoo	Rufous Songlark	Dusky Woodswallow
Osprey	Red Knot	Indian Koel	Brown Songlark	Grey Butcherbird
B/shouldered Kite	Great Knot	Channel-billed Cuckoo	Variegated Wren	Grey Currawong
Crested Hawk	Factoral Sandpiper	Powerful Owl	Southern Emu-wren	

INTERESTING SIGHTINGS

<u>Status</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Observer</u>
U	Crested Pigeon	24	Primbee	7.6.93	R Imisides
R	Brahminy Kite (flying)	1	Mount Ousley	11.6.93	J Robinson
MC	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	1	Mount Ousley	21.6.93	J Robinson
U	Rose Robin	1	Keiraville	7.5.93	M Eskdale
R	Little Corella	2	Balgownie	2.6.93	W Emery
U	Blackbird	2	Towradgi Beach	6.6.93	W Emery
U	Australian Hobby	1	Tarrawanna	14.6.93	W Emery
U	Peregrine Falcon	1	Figtree	21/22.5.93	J Zealey
U	Peregrine Falcon	1	Mount Warrigal	13.6.93	C Brandis
U	Fuscous Honeyeater	2	Mount Warrigal	6.6.93	C Brandis
S	Pacific Gull (immature)	1	Windang Beach	7.6.93	C Brandis
U	Rainbow Lorikeet	Few	North Wollongong	May, June	L Williams
U	Crested Shrike-tit	1	Rhododendron Park	31.3.93	D Thomson
S	Lewin's Rail	1	Rhododendron Park	31.3.93	D Thomson
R	Emerald Dove	1	Rhododendron Park	31.3.93	D Thomson
U	Brown Cuckoo-Dove	1	Rhododendron Park	20.5.93	D Thomson
U	Large-billed Scrubwren	6	Rhododendron Park	20.5.93	D Thomson
U	Brown Goshawk	1	Rhododendron Park	20.5.93	D Thomson
S	Little Eagle	1	Mount Pleasant	24.5.93	D Thomson
U	Rainbow Lorikeet	2	Mount Pleasant	1.6.93	D Thomson
MC	King Parrot	15	Mount Pleasant	2.6.93	D Thomson
U	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	13	Mount Pleasant	11.6.93	D Thomson
S	Striated Heron	1	Mullet Creek	19.1.93	K Mills
U	Pacific Heron	1	Curramore	12.3.93	K Mills
U	Varied Sittella	3	Audley	19.4.93	K Mills
U	Stubble Quail	2	Curramore	20.4.93	K Mills
R	Sooty Owl (heard)	1	Jamberoo Mountain	25.6.93	R Jordan

COMMENTS

The sighting of a Brahminy Kite by myself was exciting, this following on from the two sightings on 29 May and 6 June last year at Bellambi, by Doug Rickers. Prior to this the club has no records of this species, although there were unconfirmed sightings; one member recalls seeing a bird at Lake Illawarra in the early sixties.

Rainbow Lorikeets have made regular appearances in several areas over the last few months, such as at North Wollongong, Mount Ousley and Mount Pleasant. Laurie Williams commented that this is the first year of regular sightings at North Wollongong.

Please keep records of your bird sightings coming in. Sighting Record cards are available at the monthly meetings or I can post them out to you. Or just ring me at home (042 294213) and tell me the details while they are fresh in your mind. If you can't be bothered with cards, fill in the details in the Special Sightings book on the table at the back of the hall at the monthly meetings. A list of birds of particular interest to the Record Scheme is included with this newsletter, although the list is by no means complete. Each member can readily monitor the species around the house and immediate vicinity on a regular basis and note the presence of new species, changes in bird population, or disappearance of species. Such data are useful in assessing the spread of or increase in a particular species, or even the decline or disappearance of a species.

So please help in keeping us up to date.

Jim Robinson

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There are also available record sheets which list the species most likely to be found in the Illawarra Region. These are for recording ALL species found during a particular outing. See Jim Robinson for copies.

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# I.B.O.C. NEWS

NO. 164

AUGUST, 1993



THE CIRCULAR OF THE ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB

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 \$15 SINGLE \$10 JUNIOR \$5

**\*\*\*\* COMING EVENTS \*\*\*\***

Next meeting: will be held on **Monday 9 August** at the Fairy Meadow Senior Citizens Centre, corner of Collaery Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, commencing at 7.30 p.m. Our guest speaker will be **Trevor Quested**, a member of the Cumberland Bird Observers Club. Trevor, who has been a keen bird observer since 1968, has travelled throughout most of Australia and has visited many overseas countries including South America, Greece, England (did he see the puffins?), Malaysia, Kenya and Zaire. Tonight he will share his 'Trip to Venezuela' with us - it promises to be very interesting.

Film night: The final film night for the year will be held on **Saturday 7 August** at the home of Brian and Barbara Hales, 39 Lake Parade, Corrimal East. As this month's film is slightly longer than usual, please be in your seats for a prompt start at 7.30 p.m. The film is 'Wild Voices, Quiet Waters', featuring American loons and other wildlife. Please bring a folding chair, if you have one, and a plate of supper to share afterwards.

Wednesday walks: On **4 August** to Robertson Lookout and the Scout Camp. Meet at the entrance to Mount Keira lookout at **8.30 a.m.**

On **1 September** to Kelly's Falls and Otford Valley. Meet at the car parking area at Kelly's Falls at **8.30 a.m.**

Bring eats and drinks for morning tea on these walks.

Next field outing: will be held on **Saturday 14 August** to the Mooray Track and Kingfisher Pool, Heathcote National Park. Take the National Park turnoff from the Princes Highway - that is a left turn into Bundarra Street just before the overhead bridge at Waterfall. Turn right into Warabin Street and meet in the cul-de-sac at the end of the street. at **8.30 a.m.** The walk will be led by **Jack Hyslop**. Bring a carry lunch.

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REPORT OF THE JULY MONTHLY MEETING

The speaker for the evening was Frank Spolc whom some members first met when he won a seat on the IBOC-organised Bert Bolton trip to Kakadu back in July/August 1985. This was only one of the many awards and prizes Frank's photographs have won over the last 15 years or so, and the slides we saw demonstrated the quality of his work and the innovations in technique used to meet his exacting requirements. Frank won the 39th seat to join 38 twitching birdos rushing in all directions to see as many new species as possible in the short periods the bus stopped - all this activity was at odds with the quiet approach required to obtain a photographic opportunity with wildlife. As the two hobbies are not completely compatible Frank left the group at Darwin to pursue his interests at his own pace.

The main theme of the evening was nature photography which requires various methods of approaching the subjects without detection. These varied from travelling hides to finding favourite flowers of insects, as well as other innovative ways of ensuring the subject is in the frame, in focus, large enough to be the point of attention, in an interesting pose, in correct light, is covered by the depth of field and meets all the other criteria to produce a result that the photographer (and, hopefully, others) is satisfied with. Some of the equipment used was either built by or modified by Frank to meet his own requirements and the results illustrated the differences between just a good shot and an excellent one. Not only were the slides excellent but with many of them came a story, and Frank had the members' complete attention with his adventures, including having his canoe blown away from a small island in the middle of a lake while his attention was diverted photographing pelicans.

There was a wide range of subjects: birds, animals, reptiles, plants and insects. We learnt that big bugs grow from little bugs, while beetles do not change in size one they have metamorphosed from larvae. During the patient wait for a chance to obtain a photograph many sides of nature are seen by the photographer while the creatures do not know they are being observed, but the appearance of a pair of eyes looking through a hole in a hide is often all that is required to bring to an end hours of interesting, if uncomfortable, viewing.

Jim Robinson gave the vote of thanks from us all for a most entertaining presentation of quality work. We are relieved that Frank appreciated the problems of his first meeting with IBOCers and we look forward to welcoming him back in the future.

Chris Brandis





OUTING TO ST MARY'S TOWERS

For the midweek walk on 7 July five members plus a grandson of Peg and Russ Merrett met at the entrance to Saint Mary's Towers. The weather was dark and threatening, but it remained fine for the morning. As usual the birds were there in the trees and around the small dam; we recorded 15 species there, including Purple Swamphen, Pacific Black Duck, Maned Duck, Grey Teal, Laughing Kookaburra, Willie Wagtail, Grey Butcherbird, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Noisy Miner and Australian Raven. We drove into the grounds and parked our cars to begin the walk. The dam nearby was the first stop where we recorded 11 Dusky Moorhens among the reeds. As we walked into the open grassland, past the sheds, a flock of about 30 Maned Duck flew into the area near another dam 200 metres away. We sighted Eastern Rosella and Crested Pigeon in the same area.

We walked across to the western side of the property along Brother South's Track which led into some tall eucalypts, at first only scattered trees which soon became more dense with a ground cover of mainly wattles and casuarinas, and a mixture of grasses occasionally broken by some rocky outcrops. Along this part of the walk we observed Pied Currawong, Grey Shrike-thrush, Grey Fantail, Brown Thornbill, Golden Whistler, Eastern Spinebill and Eastern Yellow Robin. About midmorning we found a log to sit on, still wet after the rain, and had a cup of tea while we admired the lovely bushland around us. This part of the track was on the verge of a gully which led eventually to Allen's Creek on the border of the property; it was a beautiful area with dense bush and the birdlife was active there. We walked on a little further before turning around where the track began to descend rather steeply into the gully along a rough, rocky trail. Down in the gully the Eastern Whipbird could be heard. Upon hearing some activity just off the track we investigated and sighted Buff-rumped Thornbill, White-throated Treecreeper, Superb and Variegated Fairy Wrens, and White-browed Scrubwren, all in a small open rocky spot surrounded by low vegetation. Walking through the open grassland which we had passed through earlier was a group of 6 Masked Lapwings. As we passed by the sheds and buildings there were some 20 Welcome Swallows flying about. We arrived back at the cars at about 11.40 a.m. after a short but very pleasant walk, during which we recorded 35 species.

Horrie Ward

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SPECIES LIST FOR ST MARY'S TOWERS

Pacific Black Duck	Eastern Whipbird
Grey Teal	Superb Fairy Wren
Maned Duck	Variegated Fairy Wren
Dusky Moorhen	White-browed Scrubwren
Purple Swamphen	Brown Thornbill
Masked Lapwing	Buff-rumped Thornbill
Crested Pigeon	White-throated Treecreeper
Galah	Noisy Miner
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Eastern Spinebill
Eastern Rosella	House Sparrow
Laughing Kookaburra	Common Starling
Welcome Swallow	Common Myna
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Australian Magpie-lark
Eastern Yellow Robin	Grey Butcherbird
Golden Whistler	Australian Magpie
Grey Shrike-thrush	Pied Currawong
Grey Fantail	Australian Raven
Willie Wagtail	

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OUTING TO O'HARES CREEK

A brilliantly fine sunny morning on 18 July saw a small party of nine members gather at the beginning of the Appin Road at Bulli Tops. From here a short drive took us to the start of the 10R fire trail in the Waterboard catchment area, where the cars were left.

The track wound through open woodland where many heath-leaved banksias were in flower, grass trees were beginning to flower, and a few boronias, grevilleas, lambertia and vanilla-scented wattles made a splash of colour along the way. The track then skirted a large swampy area and continued until it reached the gorge of O'Hares Creek, which it descended in steep muddy sections to a natural rock barrier across the creek.

Although thirty different species of birds were seen during the day, birds were scarce and very patchy in distribution - with many birds in one small area and none for the next 15 minutes or so. Apart from two currawongs, no large birds such as ravens, rosellas, kookaburras or raptors were seen. A total of seven different honeyeaters were sighted, along with both the Spotted and Striated Pardalotes, Southern Emu-Wren, Rufous and Golden Whistlers, and Mistletoebird. And of course the Rock Warbler appeared right on cue as we descended the gorge. Disappointingly not a single bird was seen while we were at the creek itself.

Lunch was partaken of in an idyllic spot at the top of a small waterfall, looking down a small side valley to O'Hares Creek. One again not a single bird was seen.

The highlight of the day for three members was watching one or possibly two White-eared Honeyeaters collecting fluff from an old rag buried in the road surface. The birds were completely unafraid as they collected the fluff only one metre from the members' feet. Further evidence of nesting activity was exhibited by a Spotted Pardalote seen at its nesting site in a low bank of earth.

A very enjoyable day was had by all, even though birds were scarce. Such a contrast in the weather to last month's windblown day.

Betty Hudson

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ENVIRONMENTAL COURSES AT BARREN GROUNDS

10-12 September	SPRING COMES TO BARREN GROUNDS	Jenni Martin & Patrick Tap
24-26 September	RAPTORS AND REHABILITATION	Fred Spiteri & David Brown
1-4 October	ORCHIDS, FERNS AND WILDFLOWERS	Leo Cady & Denise Black
15-17 October	ART IN NATURE	Nicholas Day
29-31 October	WEB OF LIFE	Patrick Tap
12-14 November	BUSH FOODS	Pat Jordan
26-28 November	BIRDS OF THE BUSH	Richard Jordan

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GROUND PARROT CENSUS

**Sunday 5 September 1993**

Lots of volunteers needed to assist.

If interested, please phone Barren Grounds Bird Observatory on (042) 360195 or arrive at 9 a.m. Bookings are being taken for overnight accommodation on Saturday 4 September; casual rates apply - \$55 per day fully catered, \$40 per day evening meal only, \$25 per day uncatered.

=====

GOSH, WHAT WAS THAT THUD?

At half past seven on a Thursday morning (25.3.93) my breakfast was disturbed by a tremendous thud on our front lounge room window; because of a number of window collisions in the past by King Parrots, Crimson Rosellas and Spotted Turtle-Doves, I guessed the casualty must have been a much larger and/or faster-flying bird.

At first I couldn't spot it in the garden below, its brown upper plumage blending in with the shrubs and dullness of the morning. It lay stunned and huddled at the foot of the steps: a young female Australian Goshawk of about 50 cm in length, judging by the width of the steps. Leaning forward, she stretched out her tail feathers to form a fan, and I held fears that she was about to keel over and die. However, I was thrilled then to watch her make short takeoffs to different parts of the garden, firstly at ground level and then rising somewhat clumsily into the pittosporum and higher still into the eucalypt beside the road, before becoming fully airborne with the added pressure of Pied Currawongs in pursuit.

Before a scheduled late start for work, I walked the dogs into the nearby disused Excelsior Colliery area three hours later and was pleased to glimpse what I guessed was the same goshawk, mobbed again by currawongs.

Since that day there have been further sightings of a/the goshawk. Oh that it had been banded! On 13 April agitated calls drew my attention to some eucalypt canopies in the Excelsior, as it was being harried by Pied Butcherbirds. On two late afternoons in June it settled for a while on my neighbour's TV aerial and on top of my aviary.

Then on 8 July at nine in the morning in the wet sclerophyll gully of Flanagan's Creek in the Excelsior, I experienced another thud. Barely a couple of metres from where I stood to look around, something dropped to the ground with a bounce from high up in a eucalypt, with the simultaneous sound of some flapping movement up above. The object was the hindquarters of a dead ringtail possum, which I can only assume was the breakfast leftovers of my goshawk.

Over the 13 years I've been studying the wildlife of the Excelsior and the neighbouring residential part of Thirroul I've regularly come across the remains of Domestic Pigeons, usually in clearings in the old coal mine area, which I've strongly suspected to have been raptor kills. My neighbour across the road, who over time has lost a few of his racers, might feel inclined to call the goshawk "pigeon hawk" rather than the popular name "chicken hawk". For myself, this year this bird of prey has made an impact greater than its thudding window-strike.

Mike Morphett  
11 July 1993

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MEMBERSHIP LIST UPDATE

We welcome **Frank Spolc** of 3 Daintree Street, Wentworth Falls, 2782 who was our guest speaker at the July meeting and who has been awarded a gift membership.

**Mr Ray Beale** of 89 Telegraph Road, Pymble, 2073 has renewed his membership.

**Chris Chafer's** telephone number has changed. It is now 76 3871.

=====

QUESTION: Why don't the Swedes export their cattle?

ANSWER: Because they want to keep their Stockholm.

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INTERESTING SIGHTINGS

<u>Status</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Observer</u>
U	Restless Flycatcher	1	Jamberoo	10.4.93	E. Simcock
S	White-headed Pigeon	up to 14	Jamberoo	March to July	E. Simcock
S	Australian Bittern	1	Jamberoo	Resident	E. Simcock
R	Black Bittern	1	Jamberoo	17.7.93	E. Simcock
MC	Royal Spoonbill	1	Mount Ousley	5.7.93	G. Robinson
R	Arctic Tern	1	20 nautical miles	27.6.93	C. Brandis
R	Common Diving-Petrel	5	off Wollongong	27.6.93	C. Brandis
R	Red-rumped Parrot	2	Tallawarra	17.7.93	C. Brandis
R	Osprey	1	Tallawarra	17.7.93	C. Brandis
U	Little Egret	1	Thirrourl	20.6.93	M. Morphett
U	Brown Goshawk	1	Thirrourl	15,24.6.93	M. Morphett
U	Gang-gang Cockatoo	2	Thirrourl	14.6.93	M. Morphett
U	Rainbow Lorikeet	6	Thirrourl	30.6.93	M. Morphett
U	Logrunner	2	Thirrourl	30.6.93	M. Morphett
U	Large-billed Scrubwren	2	Thirrourl	2.7.93	M. Morphett
U	Pied Cormorant	14	Tramway Ck Bulli	10.7.93	M. Morphett
U	Kelp Gull	2	Bulli	10.7.93	M. Morphett
U	Little Egret	11	Bulli	10.7.93	M. Morphett
U	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	16	Rhododendron Park	7.6.93	R. Almond
U	Rose Robin	1	Minnamurra Falls	25.6.93	G. Walker
U	Azure Kingfisher	1	Minnamurra Falls	15.5.93	G. Walker
U	Crested Shrike-tit	1	Minnamurra Falls	15.5.93	G. Walker
U	Varied Sittella	few	Toolijooa	22.5.93	G. Walker
U	Yellow Spoonbill	1	Gerringong	25.6.93	G. Walker
S	Figbird	1	Gerringong	25.6.93	G. Walker
S	White-headed Pigeon	1	Berry	29.4.93	J. Parker
U	Little Egret	1	Gerroa	5.6.93	J. Parker
U	Sooty Oystercatcher	1	Gerroa	5.6.93	J. Parker
U	Pacific Heron	1	Berry	8.6.93	J. Parker
U	White's Thrush	1	Bendeela	8.6.93	J. Parker

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COMMENTS

We are still trying to track down details of a report of a road-kill involving a Pheasant Coucal at Mount Warrigal, also of a further report of a sighting at West Corrimal.

Had a phone call from Elissa Simcock re the sighting of a Black Bittern in Minnamurra Creek, Jamberoo - a first sighting in this area.

The drought in Queensland obviously affects bird populations and it is considered as one of the reasons for recent sightings of Black Bittern and Pheasant Coucal, and for a noticeable increase in the Rainbow Lorikeet population.

Birdos, keep your eyes open for more interesting sightings.

Jim Robinson

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# I.B.O.C. NEWS

NO. 165 SEPTEMBER, 1993



THE CIRCULAR OF THE ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB

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

CLUB MOTTO "ONE GOOD FEARN DESERVES ANOTHER"

<u>PRESIDENT</u>	<u>SECRETARY</u>	<u>TREASURER</u>	<u>EDITOR</u>
Brian Hales 39 Lake Parade CORRIMAL EAST NSW 2518 Ph. 844266	Chris Brandis 10 Charlton Street MOUNT WARRIGAL NSW 2528 Ph. 962837	Ron Almond 2 Shoobert Cres. KEIRAVILLE NSW 2500 Ph. 298612	Robyn Wilson 4/18 Smith Street WOLLONGONG NSW 2500 Ph. 291184

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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS:- These are due on 1st January each year  
FAMILY \$15 SINGLE \$10 JUNIOR \$5

## \*\*\*\* COMING EVENTS \*\*\*\*

Next meeting: will be held on **Monday 13 September** at the Fairy Meadow Senior Citizens Centre, corner of Collaery Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, commencing at **7.30 p.m.** Our guest speaker will be **Denise Black** who is well-known as a botanist and conservationist. Her topic for this evening is 'The Minnamurra Sand Spit - its vegetation and conservation.'

Next field outing: is the 3 day trip to **Canberra** on **17, 18 & 19 September** as advertised in the July newsletter. If you would like to join us, book directly to the Canberra Motor Village - phone 008 026199 - and please let Barbara Hales know (phone 844266) if you wish to be included for dinner on the Saturday evening. We will meet at the communal kitchen/dining hall on site at 12.45 p.m. on 17th.

October Family Camp: will be held on the long weekend of **2, 3 & 4 October** at **Kangaroo Valley**. The campsite is at the foot of Barrengarry Mountain, about half a kilometre along Bunkers Hill Road, this road being about 6 Km from Hampden Bridge. Our IBOC signs will start here at the turn-off. Bring your own drinking water. We had an excellent camp here in 1984 and we will have the usual first class amenities. Come for the whole weekend if you can ; day visitors will be most welcome. Please see the map on page 4.

Late October Camp: will be at Styx River from 23 to 30 October. Please read Wal Emery's article on page 4.

PLEASE NOTE. Because of the camps in October, there will be NO newsletter, meeting, Wednesday walk or monthly field outing for that month.

Please submit articles/items for the **November** newsletter by **20 October**.

🎵 AN ENVIRONMENTAL NOTE: Members are invited to bring their own cup or mug to the meetings and take it home for washing. This will result in a reduction in the number of polystyrene foam "cups" we now use and throw away for disposal. It may also result in some members receiving a larger cuppa!

AUGUST MONTHLY MEETING

The evening started with a presentation of a few tokens of gratitude to Laurie Williams on his retirement. The Club wished both Laurie and Nola all the best and a birdo future with enough time to travel Australia in the (t)rusty Subaru and the solar-powered camper trailer.

The speaker for the evening was Trevor Quested who gave an informative and entertaining presentation of his birdwatching trip to Venezuela in January and February 1992. Although Trevor spent 8 months learning Spanish the locals refused to understand him and he had to rely on other people and hand signs during the 6000 Km tour that zig-zagged across the country over three and a half weeks. The group hired a car and although it used a bit of petrol, at 11 cents a litre that didn't matter too much; the huge national debt and banana republic economy have resulted in the roads falling into a sad state of disrepair over the last 11 to 15 years.

The bird life was prolific with many and varied habitats across the country with species differing on opposite sides of rivers and every few kilometres up hillsides. An excellent field guide is available for the 1200 species, some of which are very difficult to see in the dense jungle, but Trevor managed an incredible 491 ticks while taking a number of excellent slides of the country, including many of its favourite statues and spectacular wildlife. The main problems were Chicas, the Venezuelan equivalent of all our biting, itching and annoying insects rolled into one species, which made camping out almost impossible, and the local drivers in their disintegrating Yank tanks, charged up on 11 cents per litre beer. The country is very popular for birdwatchers and with many tour groups operating, booking for hostel beds is a must; accommodation and food are very reasonably priced.

There is a large number of night birds, so spotlighting was the order of the day (night?); Trevor had slides of nightjars and owls as well as oilbirds roosting deep in caves. During a visit to the Atlantic Ocean shore the group observed skimmers and included a new bird for the country, the Lesser Black-backed Gull. Trevor and his wife finished the tour with a few days in Argentina where the toilets work, and added another 80 new birds to their list.

Chris Chafer gave the vote of thanks from us all for a thoroughly enjoyable evening with the slides, the commentary giving some a yen to go birding OS.

Chris Brandis

BIRDS AND RUBBER BANDS

Member Rosalia Salpeter has raised the problem of discarded rubber bands and the effect they can have on our wildlife. It has been noted by the Australian Wildlife Ambulance Rescue Emergencies Inc. that rubber bands dropped by posties and paper deliverers are getting tangled on birds and being eaten in mistake for worms. This problem is similar to that of blue milk container tops and Satin Bowerbirds. If you see any rubber bands on the ground pick them up before the birds do and if you know who discarded them, write to the company concerned voicing your disapproval.

NSW FOC BIRD LINE

The FOC is now operating a Bird Line from Sydney with news on unusual sightings and NSW ornithological activities; the number is (02) 267 8961. Ring and if you have any suggestions on improvements or content please let me know.

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

The NSW FOC is conducting its Australian bird photographic competition; entry forms are available on request.

BIRDS AND WATTLES

The Bird Observers Club of Australia is conducting a survey on what birds use which wattles for what purpose. Forms are available to record data.

Chris Brandis

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AUGUST MONTHLY OUTING - HEATHCOTE NATIONAL PARK

The August field outing was attended by 13 members and a 4 year old grandson of Lydia and Bob David. We met at the northern end of Warabin Street, Waterfall at 8.30 a.m. on a rather cold, cloudy morning - the clouds were to stay with us all day. The Mooray Track where we began the walk passes the northern end of Warabin St.

The walk was one of Jack Hyslop's typical up hill and down dale walks, but it was a very pleasant one, through some rainforest in the gullies along the creeks, to dry sclerophyll forest and heath habitat with a thin topsoil on the sandstone areas. The wildflowers of the area, showing their beautiful colours, heralded the oncoming spring.

After a few minutes walk along the track we followed a firetrail down a steep hill to Yellow Pool. Here we turned off to the left along the eastern side of Heathcote Creek, and, after a short walk, came to a weir. It was then time for morning tea so we found a pleasant spot on some rocks overlooking the weir. In the reeds along the bank we observed the Australasian Grebe and a Pacific Black Duck. Over the water of the weir a few Welcome Swallows were observed flying. The vegetation of the area was interesting and beautiful, with many wildflowers giving colour in abundance to the understorey of the eucalypt forest; flowers included hakea, darwinia, wattles, banksias, and grevilleas, as well as some grasses and ferns which filled in the ground cover.

The early part of the walk produced Eastern Whipbird, Rose Robin, Little Wattlebird, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Yellow-faced and New Holland Honeyeaters, Striated Pardalote, and Laughing Kookaburra.

The beautiful bushland was wonderful to walk through with its many variations in habitat. The rocky slopes were richly enhanced by the many angophoras with their beautifully coloured and distorted trunks, combined with the light trunks of the scribbly gums among the darker coloured eucalypts. After we left the weir the track led up the hillside a little way, then above the creek before rejoining the firetrail which then led through the scout camp, across Heathcote Creek, and up over a steep rocky road along the western side of the creek. Near the top of the hill one of the group caught sight of a Pheasant Coucal. After a long walk descending the hill we came back to Yellow Pool where we branched off on a detour to Kingfisher Pool. It was a delightful walk through some beautiful heath-type bushland, along a narrow hillside track, with casuarinas, tea-trees, and a number of species of banksias which were in flower. We found a beautiful spot in a rocky valley overlooking the creek near Kingfisher Pool in which to have lunch. After lunch the group walked around to a waterfall before returning to the firetrail.

On the return walk we had great sightings of the Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo. The flock flew over and perched in the trees over a wide area, munching on banksia seed cones. One large eucalypt had 30 cockatoos in its branches while another 20+ were counted flying about. We came back to the firetrail and crossed the creek at Yellow Pool, then straggled up the long, steep hill and on to Warabin Street.

For the day we recorded a total of 27 bird species, along with one large black snake and a brown snake at different spots beside the track.

Horrie Ward

MEMBERSHIP LIST UPDATE

We welcome **Trevor Quested** of 82 Rochford Road, Erskineville, 2043. Trevor was our guest speaker at the August meeting and has been awarded a gift membership.

**Dr Kevin Mills** of Lot 222 North Curramore Road, Jamberoo, 2533 has renewed his membership.

WANTED!!!

A willing volunteer is required to help with the December newsletter. Please ring Robyn Wilson (phone 291184) for details if you would like to assist.

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OCTOBER CAMP - STYX RIVER STATE FOREST, 23 to 30 OCTOBER

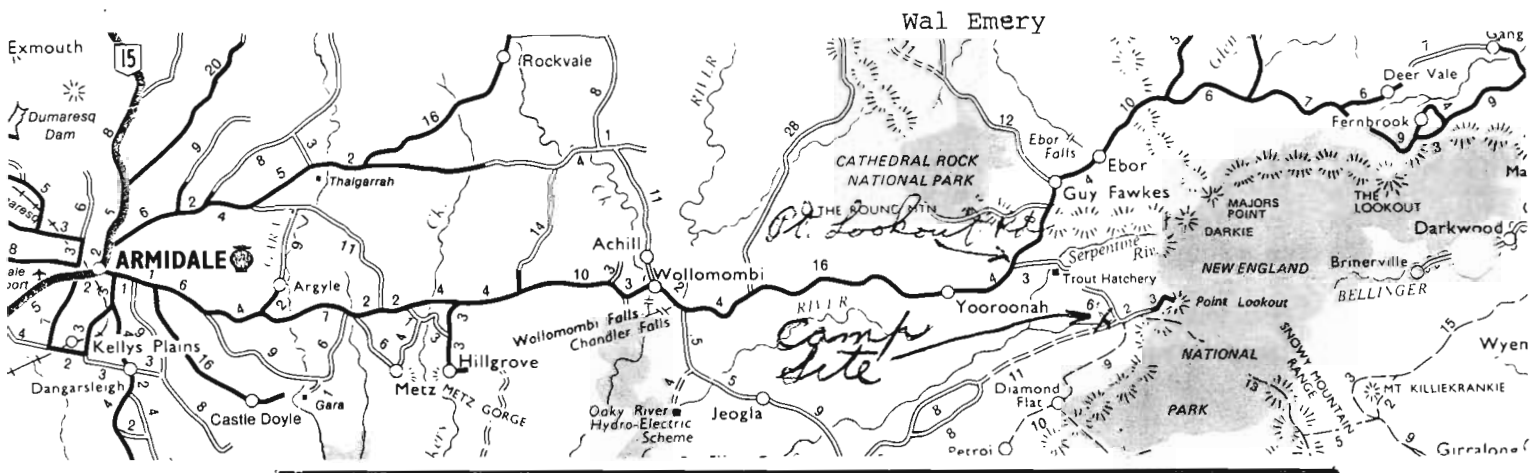
This year our late October camp will be in the Styx River State Forest which adjoins the New England National Park. As well as traversing the walking tracks within the State Forest and National Park it is envisaged that we will use the camp as a base to explore some of the surrounding areas, namely Dorrigo N.P., Cathedral Rock N.P., Ebor and Wollomombi Falls. Habitats throughout these area range through wet and dry sclerophyll, subtropical, warm and cool temperate rainforest, pasture, heath and swamp, so it should be possible to find a wide variety of birds.

The camp is best approached from Armidale, a distance of around 600 Km from Wollongong, depending on which route you choose. At about the centre of Armidale the New England Highway turns right at Central Park and becomes part of Barney Street for two blocks before turning left again. **DO NOT TURN LEFT**, but continue straight ahead along the road marked Coffs Harbour/Grafton Route 78 for a distance of 65 to 70 Km.

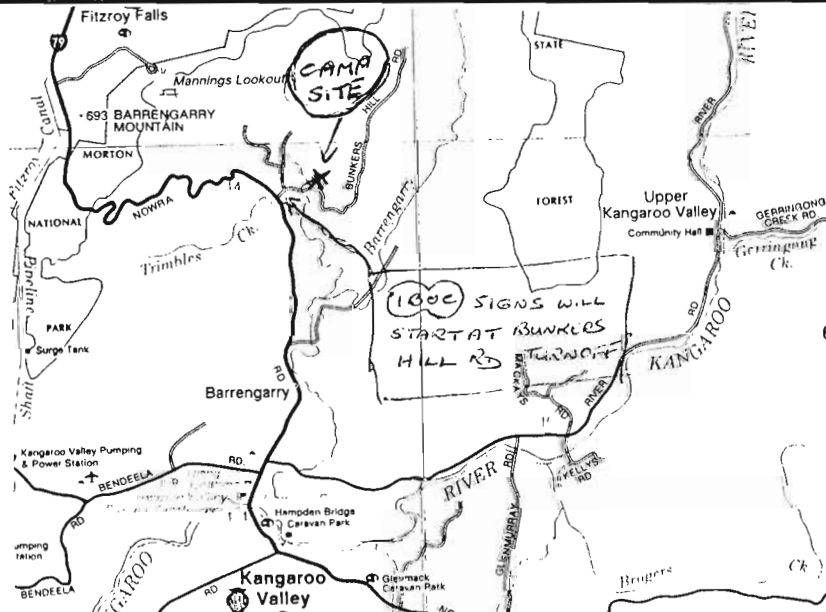
At this point you will find a sign saying New England National Park and a dirt road turning right marked Point Lookout Road. Proceed along Point Lookout Road for 9 or 10 Km to Styx River Camping Area on the right. The sign is partly hidden. If you find another New England N.P. sign and the Styx River Forest Way, you have gone 100 metres too far. Watch out for the usual IBOC camp signs.

We will be using the Forestry toilet and our own shower. Water is available from the adjacent Styx River or containers can be filled from the taps in the National Park 2 Km away. This is a high altitude area and the night temperatures could get down to 7°C or 8°C so bring warm bedding. On the positive side, October is rated as the best month to visit the park.

NRMA map of the Mid-North Coast covers all the areas we will visit, but for anyone wanting more detail the Forestry Commission's Kempsey map covers all the forests and National Parks in the area.



MAP OF THE AREA  
FOR THE CAMP OF  
2 to 4 OCTOBER



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BREAD-DUNKERS AND HEAD-HUNTERS

Since my article 'Excelsior's Avenue-Builders' in the April 1991 edition of the IBOC newsletter, Satin Bowerbirds have continued to be a major feature of my wildlife study at home and in the Excelsior No. 2 coal mine area in Thirroul.

Twelve months ago I first became aware of the birds' custom of dropping pieces of bread, taken from the front feeder and which had become too dry and hard to eat, into the birdbath; then they would consume the softer and more palatable food item. Just in the last month or so I have noticed the Indian Mynas adopt the same strategy. The two species are often present together at the feeder and the bath without any apparent bone of contention.

Over in the Excelsior I have periodically been monitoring the three bower sites, where in each case new bowers have been constructed within a metre or so of the old ones; the current western bower is clearly visible from the main through-track.

The list of assorted objects collected by the bowerbirds as 'stage props' has continued to grow, particularly of colours other than blue. As before, blue clothes pegs, straws and rings have dominated the scene. New blue items that have been gathered include children's toys such as an anchor, ring, screw and nut, helicopter propeller, workman in blue overalls, magnetic letters and shapes, marbles, crayon, and art paintbrush. Among household goods have been adhesive tape reel, paste brush, shoelace, hair comb, toothbrush, disposable razor, and baby teethers. There was one interesting plastic acquisition, the size of a 50 cent coin, which seemed like an advertising gismo: an electric drill with woodpecker features.

Non-blue items have ranged in colour from yellow, cream, and bone to pale brown. The human-made ones have been yellow pegs (one bower indicated a definite grouping from the rest of the paraphernalia), fragments of rope, venetian blind cord, and foam rubber, woodshaving, elastic band, part of an electrical plug, and a dirtied foil strip that once contained throat lozenges. New natural objects have comprised leaves, flowers, fungi, dried grass, and onion skins. In February last year I came across 15 cicada larva shells at the western bower.

During this past week on my rounds I have felt more like an anthropologist researching cannibal tribes, for at two sites I have come across what looked like head-hunting trophies of magico-religious, rather than courtship, significance: the western bower had the skull of some small passerine bird and the eastern one two mammals' skulls - a bandicoot and a ring-tailed possum.

While the male bowerbirds reputedly pay more attention to their bowers than their mates or nesting activities, with all the collecting, recycling and rearranging of so many different objects as part of the courtship ritual, they can't be considered bone idle.

Mike Morphett  
22 August 1993



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## UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

Status		No.	Location	Date	Observer
S	Aust. Brush-turkey	1	Keiraville	Jan 93	M. Bosman
R	Osprey	1	Vangi, Myuna Bay	10&11.7.93	J. Blomstedt
U	White's Thrush	1	Austinmer	9.7&7.8.93	D. Lockrey
U	Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	32	Mount Pleasant	7.8.93	D. Thomson
U	White-fronted Chat	2	Coomaditchy Lagoon	1.8.93	B.&B. Hales
U	Musk Duck	2	Tallawarra Ash	22.5.93	G. Barwell
			Ponds		
U	Australasian Shoveller	c.30	"	"	"
U	Hardhead	c.50	"	"	"
U	Pink-eared Duck	27	"	"	"
U	Australian Hobby	2	"	"	"
S	Red-kneed Dotterel	3	"	"	"
U	Black-fronted Plover	6	"	"	"
U	Black-winged Stilt	5	"	"	"
U	Zebra Finch	2	"	"	"
U	Kelp Gull	3	Austinmer	"	"
R	Long-billed Corella	5	Stanwell Park	23.5.93	"
U	Rose Robin	1	Albion Park Rail	13.6.93	"
S	White-headed Pigeon	2	Bass Point	13.6.93	"
U	Australian Hobby	1	Austinmer	6.7.93	"
U	Musk Duck	2	Killalea Lagoon	8.8.93	"
U	Little Grassbird	1	" "	"	"
U	White-fronted Chat	1	" "	"	"
U	Zebra Finch	2	" "	"	"

Comments

The IBOC field outing to Heathcote National Park on Saturday 14.8.93 yielded a sighting of a Pheasant Coucal; this makes the third record over recent months.

Jim Robinson

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**Rare to Uncommon Birds, Illawarra - June-July 1993**  
**Kevin Mills, Lot 222 North Curramore Road, Jamberoo NSW 2533**

Date	Species	Status	Location	Habitat	No.
June 1993					
2	Crested Pigeon	U	Calderwood	Rural	15
18	Ground Thrush	U	Minnamurra rainforest	Rainforest	1
19	Rose Robin	U	Bundanoon	Forest	1m
19	Crescent Honeyeater	U	Bundanoon	Forest	Few
26	Crested Pigeon	U	Curarong (Jervis Bay)	Urban	1
26	Black Cockatoo	U	Curarong (Jervis Bay)	Overhead	52
26	Pacific Heron	U	Pyree, near Nowra	Paddocks	3
July 1993					
2	Black Cockatoo	U	Curramore	Overhead	19
16	Black Cockatoo	U	Curramore	Overhead	5
16	Pacific Heron	U	Rose Valley (Highway)	Paddock	1
24	Crested Pigeon	U	Parma Road, Nowra	Rural	1
24	Crescent Honeyeater	U	Newhaven gap (Budawang)	Heath to forest	Many
25	Bar-shouldered Dove	U	Fountaindale Road, Jamberoo	Roadside	2

# I.B.O.C. NEWS

NO. 166 NOVEMBER 1993



THE CIRCULAR OF THE ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB

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 \$15 SINGLE \$10 JUNIOR \$5

**\*\*\* COMING EVENTS \*\*\***

**Next meeting:** will be on **Monday 8 November** at the Fairy Meadow Senior Citizens Centre, corner of Collaery Avenue & Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, commencing at **7.30 p.m.** The election of office bearers for 1994 will take place at this meeting. The positions of President, Vice-President, Treasurer & Secretary will be declared vacant and nominations for all positions will be welcomed. Our **guest speaker** will be our very own **Mike Morphett**; continuing his keen interest in birds and words, the theme of his talk will be "A Bird by Any Other Name". Steering a middle and light-hearted course between the academic specialities of taxonomy and linguistics, he comes up with a different method of classifying Australian birds with the wide variety of names that have been given them. He aims to show that, just like migrating or resident birds, some names have travelled from overseas, whilst others have been created in this country; furthermore that by the use of such names we perceive not only birds but also ourselves as a living and multifaceted species.

**Next outing:** will be on **Saturday 13 November** in the Royal National Park. Meet at the timber bridge at Audley at **9.30 a.m.** (this is near the Natl. Park Shop). The leader for the day will be **Bryan Kelly**. Bring suitable comestibles.

**Mid-week walk:** will be on **Wednesday 3 November** at Minnamurra Rainforest. Meet at the entrance to the reserve at **8.30 a.m.** Bring some munchies for morning tea.

**CHRISTMAS MEETING:** Our strictly informal December meeting this year will take the form of a **Beak 'n' Bill** night. Simply attach some sort of pecking device to your person in order to represent an easily identifiable (?) avian species.

**DECEMBER NEWSLETTER:** Barbara Hales has very kindly volunteered to compile the newsletter for December - many thanks, Barbara. Would all contributors please forward their articles to her at **39 Lake Parade, Corrimal East.**

**MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

We are pleased to welcome the following new members:

**Denise Black**, P.O. Box 72, Kiama, 2533. Denise was our speaker in September.  
**Paul & Narelle van den Bos and family**, 22 Padbury Street, Chipping Norton, 2170.

SEPTEMBER MONTHLY MEETING

The speaker for the evening was Denise Black, a botanist and conservationist, who talked on the vegetation along the Minnamurra River. Denise is a very active member of the Minnamurra Environment Group, MEG. MEG is regenerating the Minnamurra Spit area and generally bringing it into a more natural condition by removing noxious weeds such as bitou and cleaning up rubbish, as well as studying the current state of the vegetation using transect surveys through the area. Although the area is classified as State Recreational, its control is in the process of being handed over from the National Parks & Wildlife Service to the Department of Conservation and Land Management, with the current caretaker having a degree in bulldozer driving, mainly over patches of endangered plants and rainforest!

Denise is also active in the educational area, conducting sessions with school-children at the Minnamurra Rainforest Reserve where some 1500 visitors per week come to experience an example of local rainforest. Although this area was set aside as a reserve in 1903 it is only in the last few years, as visitor numbers increased, that the development of board walks, regeneration, and a new visitors centre have ensured its survival and made it a pleasure to visit.

The banks of the river between the escarpment and the spit area have been mainly cleared for farming but there are still some patches of bush, and in the entrance tidal zone a good stand of mangroves exists. At the entrance there is evidence of bank erosion, but no obvious cause is evident. A hydraulic study is required to determine the cause and the required corrective action as the erosion is affecting the residential southern bank as well as the reserve.

Denise illustrated her talk with slides of the area and the vegetation found at our back door; we can see why it is so important to maintain these areas to ensure diversity of habitat and hence birdlife.

Laurie Williams gave the vote of thanks, and as we all use this area, it is to our benefit that we understand that there are hard workers behind the scenes who make such areas for bird watching possible.

Chris Brandis

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IBOC OCTOBER FAMILY CAMP: UPPER KANGAROO VALLEY

After a week of clear blue skies and increasing heat, it was no surprise when a weather change came over the long weekend, bringing a mixture of breezes, sunshine weakened by cloud cover, and gentle, sometimes persistent, rain; but this didn't dampen the spirits of family campers of all ages in an assortment of temporary dwellings. Instead, leeches and ticks got under some folks' skin.

There was a last minute change in venue, too: because of grazing problems (evidently Keith and Barbara Sharman's cattle aren't averse to ploughing through tents), a switch was needed from the 1984 Barrengarry site to a location (if anything, better) 8 Km along Upper Kangaroo Road, over the bridge and in a triangular paddock, with fine views of the cliff-faces of Hindmarsh Ridge to the west and Budderoo Plateau and Maynard's Falls to the east, at times obstructed by lazily paced clouds of mist.

Half-day walks were taken along the river, through the neighbouring paddocks, and up the eucalypt woodland slopes and into rainforest gullies. In profusion grew rock lilies and thumbnail orchids, plus the less welcome crofton-weed along the river banks. On Sunday morning, after giving a wide berth to Siegfried, the vigilant German shepherd dog, the group climbed a fair distance up the steep and winding track which leads to Walsh's Pass up to Budderoo.

As for the 63 bird species seen or heard, there were really no surprises, but as always they were a pleasure to encounter. The area seemed alive with Superb Blue Wrens; a pair was nest-building in the roadside blackberry at the approach to the

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campsite. Day and night came the calls of Fan-tailed Cuckoos and Shining Bronze-Cuckoos with competition from Boobook Owls. (It's interesting that early settlers called the boobook the "cuckoo-owl".) Other cuckoos recorded were the Pallid and Brush. There were good sightings of the Dollarbird, Black-faced Monarch and Azure Kingfisher; a flock of about 50 Topknot Pigeons flew eastward high over the campsite. Despite the evidence of eyries on the Budderoo cliff-face, no raptors were seen in the area until a kestrel was spotted on the way back to the township.

Of the non-avian species, a wombat, red-bellied black snake, and platypus were glimpsed.

Our thanks go to the organisers, especially for quickly arranging a safe tent site, to the amenities setters-up, and to our hosts, the Sharmans, whose presence we missed around the convivial campfire, over which the stars made just fleeting appearances in the night sky. Whatever the weather, though, for me Kangaroo Valley continues to be one of the most beautiful and peaceful spots in this country.

Mike Morphett  
6 October 93

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DEPOSITING OURSELVES AT DEPOT BEACH

To make up for the disappointing weather over the October long weekend, three quarters of our family camped overnight the following weekend at Depot Beach, situated roughly in the centre of Murramarang National Park, which lies along much of the coastline between Kioloa and Batemans Bay. For the last weekend of the school holiday the tiny village was surprisingly quiet, with just a handful of campers and cabiners, so there was no jostling for the amenities.

At the campsite there was a resident group of a dozen or so Eastern Grey Kangaroos. At about 7 p.m., before a beautiful night sky filled with stars, a brushtail possum, with a penchant for tinned peaches, descended from its tree to dine at our barbecue table. We later heard tales of robbery: a kangaroo that cleaned up someone's meat pie (not a Murramingue pie!), and a goanna that gulped down someone else's carton of eggs left unattended in their open vehicle. At other locations there were NP&WS signs urging people not to feed bread to the kangaroos so as to avoid causing diet and digestion problems.

The coastline at Depot Beach, with only a few dwellings visible among the trees, seemed undisturbed and unspoilt, giving us an idea of how the Australian coastland must have looked before the whites' invasion. The late afternoon sun highlighted the colours of the tall, straight spotted gums and the rock formations as we walked across the sand dunes, along the rock platform and round the headland, noting nesting Welcome Swallows on the cliff face. There we had a clear view of Grasshopper Island, one of four nearshore islands included in the park, and several resting Black Cormorants. The next day in unbroken sunshine we drove to Durras North and Pebbly, Pretty and Merry Beaches via the forest roads. With the exception of the Red Wattlebird, the 17 passerines and 11 non-passerines we observed have all been recorded in our home suburb of Thirroul, but we had the added pleasure of regular sightings of the sweeping White-bellied Sea-Eagle, both adult and immature.

On the way home along Murramarang Road just outside Bawley Point a motorist almost drove into the back of our vehicle when I had to brake suddenly to avoid driving into one of a pair of wood ducks having a roadside argument with a magpie. Another magpie had earlier shown further aggression when it dive-bombed an unsuspecting young Japanese visitor with jet black hair on her way back to her car at Pebbly Beach; she thereupon picked up a stick and waved it from side to side like a windscreen wiper.

We would strongly recommend Murramarang National Park for an IBOC stay and survey, and I myself want to walk the 285 metre high Durras Mountain, inspect some of the rainforest gullies, and find out the origins of the names of Depot Beach and Mount Agony and Dangerboard Roads next time I go there.

Mike Morphett  
10 October 1993

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A TRIP TO THE FLINDERS RANGES

As I sit and attempt to put pen to paper to tell you about our travels to the Fabulous Flinders a song keeps running through my mind and it goes something like this: "Where do I begin to tell the story?" We travelled nearly 6000 Km through very diverse country, ever-changing scenery, camped at a lot of interesting places, saw over 200 species of birds and shared very warm friendship; is it any wonder I hardly know where to begin? Another song comes to mind and it says "Let's start at the very beginning", and yes, that is a very good place to start!

Saturday 21 August was the first day of the 1993 IBOC adventure to the Flinders Ranges and bird records for the trip commenced at the Penrose State Forest near Marulan with the sighting of Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos. Our first camp was set up in the Wagga Tourist Caravan Park on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River at a spot known locally as Wagga Beach. As a child I had enjoyed picnics there and I know how valuable the beach is to the residents of the area, but staying there made me realise just how fortunate are we of the Illawarra to live so close to the beaches of the NSW south coast.

Laurie and I arrived in Wagga a couple of days early, allowing us to combine some extra sightseeing with our birdwatching which commenced there by being welcomed with several of Laurie's favourite bird - the Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike - so we knew we were going to have lots of good days. We visited the large walk-in aviary in the Wagga Botanical Gardens where we were able to see several Australian birds, including some of the parrots we were to see in the wild later on, and also some we would have loved to see but didn't.

On Sunday morning we set off full of enthusiasm to drive approximately 300 Km to our next camping spot. During the morning there was some confusion with a lack of road signs near The Rock. The group we were travelling with missed the turn-off to Lockhart, finally realising we were heading for Henty instead; however, as a bonus, we found a swampy area with several beautiful Chestnut-breasted Shelduck - always great to see. We travelled on to the lovely little town of Pleasant Hills for morning tea before driving through Urana and on to Jerilderie, enjoying our lunch break beside the man-made lagoon watching a Masked Lapwing with 3 chicks. Feeling refreshed we set out to drive towards Conargo and it wasn't long before we had to negotiate a drover with a large flock of sheep on the road. Three sheep very suddenly decided to change direction, leaving the silver Subaru bearing signs of the encounter and causing the driver some heartache; however, the sighting of the first Banded Lapwings for the trip soon saw him smiling again. The drive through Deniliquin was reasonably uneventful and it wasn't long before we arrived at Mathoura where we left the Cobb Highway to head for our overnight stay on the Murray River in Moira State Forest at Poverty Point. It was the first meeting place for all 14 travellers and proved an ideal camping place, one we voted well worth visiting again.

Monday dawned bright and sunny as we packed up and set off for Wyperfeld National Park - another day, another adventure. We crossed the Murray River at Echuca to enter Victoria and travelled along the Murray Valley highway towards the Kerang area which is noted for its lakes, swamps and the promotion of birds. Hird Swamp proved a very worthwhile morning tea stop with several species of birds being seen, including White-fronted Chats running along the dirt road, and a pair of Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoos sitting on the lower strand of a wire fence. A quick call was made to the Kerang bakery on the way to Reedy Lake at Fairley, where we enjoyed our lunch while we sat in the large wooden hide watching the birds. Some of our party called into other lakes in the area where good sightings were made. We left the highway at Lake Boga and travelled through open farmland to Sea Lake and Hopetoun before our final drive for the day to Nypo and into Wyperfeld N.P. Our 3 nights stay gave us the opportunity to have a look around and appreciate the area which we can recommend as an excellent place to spend a few days. The camping ground is quite extensive with toilets, an information building and several marked walking tracks, while plenty of emus and kangaroos roam free. A good way to explore the area is to take the highly recommended Eastern Lookout Nature Drive which runs through representative sections of the park on a 15 Km route. In true IBOC fashion several stops were made along the way to view the birds of the area, the highlights of the morning being the beautiful male Splendid Wren and the Mulga Parrot, as well

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as the 360° view of the area from the lookout. We visited a Malleefowl mound during the afternoon and all sat very quietly behind the brush screen, hide waiting patiently for a view of the star performer. We were so quiet some of the party dozed off, probably dreaming of the Chestnut Quail-thrush we had seen on the track to the mound; however, the elusive Malleefowl didn't put in an appearance while we were there. During the time we sat so quietly (impossible, you say??) we heard the distant drone of a vehicle which gradually got louder until a 3 wheel motor bike arrived, driven by a young park ranger who was bringing a hardwood stool for installation behind the screen.

We woke on Wednesday to another beautiful sunny day, and after breakfast the majority of the group drove to the parking area and set off on a 6 Km walk along the Desert Walk Circuit. The track passes through typical mallee vegetation and stands of native pine, giving excellent views of the Big Desert, and according to the brochure, should take 2.5 to 3 hours to walk. That estimation doesn't allow for birds, as the first 2 Km took us 1½ hours to negotiate because of the numerous birds in the woodland area. At one stage a male Splendid Wren and male Red-capped Robin were sitting on a branch together while (Black-capped) Sittellas were busy doing their run down the tree trunk. Great excitement was caused by Jim seeing an Owllet Nightjar which flew frustratingly from tree to tree until it finally sat on a branch long enough for everyone to have a really good look.

Leaving Wyperfeld with a brilliant blue sky we passed by green paddocks and golden wattle as we drove towards Morgan. Our lunch stop that day was at Peebinga Conservation Reserve, not far from the Victoria/South Australia border and a long way from anywhere. The scenery changed dramatically as we approached Loxton where we met the Murray River and the orchards and vineyards of the area, followed the river to Waikere and on to our overnight camp beside a beautiful lagoon at Morgan Conservation Park. Great difficulty was experienced setting up camp with the arrival of local birdo Anne Green who told us there were Regent Parrots and Purple-crowned Lorikeets in the trees overhead. As these were new birds for most of us, birdwatching won the day as we downed tools and picked up our binoculars; all had the pleasure of seeing the birds. Anne and her husband Roger joined us around the campfire that night accompanied by Sue the Roo - a joey Anne was caring for after its mother had been killed on the road.

Our departure from Morgan was slightly delayed due to some mechanical problems but we were soon queuing up for the ferry to cross the mighty Murray and to head for the Flinders Ranges. Leaving Morgan the vegetation changed instantly to saltbush, yellow-flowered eucalypts and casuarinas. The scenery changed constantly from flat and open farmland to hilly as we approached the Tothill Range near Eudunda and then moved onto the wine-growing areas of Auburn and Clare, a lovely town with stone buildings and lots of flowering blossom trees. We ran into rain at Crystal Brook and then very strong winds as we drove between Spencer Gulf and the southern Flinders Ranges. There was a 'feeling of home' driving along Highway 1 between the mountains and the sea. At Stirling North we turned and made our way through the Pichi Richi Pass to head for Hawker and our last visit to the shops for a few days. A strong headwind and light rain slowed our progress along the road to Wilpena, and the Flinders guarded their secrets well, shrouding the mountains in cloud.

Our five days in the Central Flinders were unbelievable! One magic sunny day we drove to the Bunyeroo and Brachina Gorges, Parachilna and Blinman, visiting some fantastic 360° view lookouts on the way and taking endless photographs. We saw the famous Cazneau Tree that Dick Smith's grandfather photographed, winning many awards for his efforts. Another day we walked up Wangarta Hill to the lookouts, enabling us to see inside and outside the Pound, passing old Wilpena Homestead where we marvelled at the courage of our forefathers. The lookout will always hold special memories for many of us as we recall our first sighting of the male Redthroat, a bird we had hoped to see on the trip. We walked into Wilpena Pound for a short distance, expressing our surprise at the large amount of vegetation which included eucalypts and the bright yellow wattle. Five of our members will especially remember the day as, against all odds, they conquered St Mary's Peak! It was exciting to be with Brian and Barbara the day we drove to Chambers Gorge when they saw 3 lifers in as many minutes, near the Barite mine. One was the Little Button-quail which sat frozen to the ground while we took photos and consulted field guides. We have vivid memories of seeing our first Sturt's Desert Peas

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growing in the stony earth beside the track as we walked towards Chambers Gorge - more photographs! A visit was paid to Sacred Canyon and Arkaroo Rock to see the Aboriginal art and of course we found time to sit around the campfire on a couple of nights. There was even an opportunity to do some household chores, meeting friends from Wollongong in the laundry one evening; they were on a coach trip heading for the Birdsville races. The temperature dropped on our last day at Wilpena and the rain set in, so lunch in the motel dining room seemed a good option, even more so when the hail started. We will never forget the ice cream and pavlova we enjoyed to complete our meal and the peels of laughter when Gwen decided what Jim wanted for dessert.

Friday saw us heading north to camp at Aroona Dam near Leigh Creek for a few days, going on day trips into the Northern Flinders and beyond. The drive north to the dam was spectacular, following mountain ranges on the east of the road all the way while we saw wild camels feeding beside the road. It was at Aroona Dam that Laurie and I were woken very early each morning by a strong, mysterious bird call which we finally identified, after jumping out of bed, picking up our binoculars and walking up the track in our night attire (just as well no-one else was around that early!), as the Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater. We had an exciting trip to Marree where we saw the start of the Oodnadatta and Birdsville Tracks, and enjoyed a cool drink in the Marree Hotel prior to phoning home and surprising our grandchildren with our whereabouts. It was a beautiful sunny day and we started the trip with a visit to Copley bakery where we all purchased some goodies. We stopped at the ochre pits just north of Lyndhurst and marvelled at the colours and the enormity of our country. A little brown bird ran across the ground, attracting Lydia's attention and we joined her in following it everywhere, attempting to identify it, until we finally saw it well enough to realise it was a Calamanthus. While trying to direct others to it we saw our first pair of Cinnamon Quail-thrush, which blend in perfectly with their habitat, making them difficult to see. Lunch was in a lovely little camping area at Farina, just off the main road. We wandered around the ruins of the town that was Farina - the bakehouse, the bank - the lost hopes and dreams of the people who settled beside the now disused railway line. We noticed several birds' nests on the telegraph posts beside the line, in some instances two nests had been built on each crossbar. A stop was made at a windmill and dam where Australian Pratincole were seen and a Greenshank and 3 Sharp-tailed Sandpipers gave our identification skills a workout.

There was still more excitement to come that day as we left Marree to head back to camp. Someone saw a flash of brilliant gold fly across the road and the cars screeched to a halt. Up went the binoculars and we focused in on an Orange Chat, then another, and another - oh, what a feeling! On Saturday we drove to Copley to look at the open-cut mine before driving to Lyndhurst and then 27 Km along the Strzelecki Track to look for the elusive Thick-billed Grasswren. Thanks to Graham Alcorn we had good directions as to where the birds could be - and yes, they were there as Hazel Emery saw them well enough to convince Wal he had to go back another day to see for himself. However, to the rest of us they were little 'mice-like' birds that moved and disappeared extremely quickly, making it impossible to find them again. Back at camp that night we all enjoyed a BBQ tea together.

On our final day in the Northern Flinders we travelled to Arkaroola where five of the group stayed for the next couple of days. The sky was overcast but our enthusiasm was as bright as ever and we had another fabulous day enjoying the birds, flowers and scenery. There was great excitement when White-fronted Honeyeaters were observed feeding in a clump of yellow flowering eucalyptus; it proved to be a new bird for most of us. Some of the dry stony creek beds proved good places to see and photograph several brilliant patches of Sturt's Desert Pea, while our afternoon tea stop at Illoowie Gorge will remain in our memory with the sighting of two male Splendid Wrens in one bush and a third close by - they really are splendid birds and it was an excellent way to celebrate Father's Day.

Reluctantly we broke camp the next morning and said goodbye to the Fabulous Flinders as we made our way back to Hawker with a real true blue Aussie sky overhead accentuating the colours of the spectacular jagged mountain ranges. We arrived at Wilmington at lunchtime, which gave us the opportunity to spend some time in the nearby Alligator Gorge. We climbed down the steps from the car park, following the creek downstream to where the gorge narrows, crossing the water and returning via Blue Gum Flat to our cars. The wildflowers were blooming in



profusion, by far the best display we had seen on the trip, and included Hibbertia, Grevillea, Kennedia, Native Hibiscus, and the ever-present wattle. The antics of a flock of Purple-crowned Lorikeets made it difficult to pack up camp the next morning but we were soon on our way to Broken Hill with a few drops of rain keeping us company after a beautiful sunrise.

While enjoying a cuppa beside the road at Yunta the Indian Pacific train passed by - a new sighting for most of us - and a quick walk in the saltbush flushed up yet another male Redthroat, much to our delight.

The towns were few and far between and just past Olary we stopped for lunch at a rest area. Our customary post-prandial walk proved well worthwhile as we had excellent sightings of a large flock of Chestnut-crowned Babblers.

A two-night stop at Broken Hill enabled folk to do their own thing so Laurie and I visited the School of the Air where we saw a teacher conduct a music class for 7/8 year-olds over the radio and we were fascinated by the eager participation of the children. During the afternoon we went to the Royal Flying Doctor base and learnt something of the operation of this wonderful service. Rain fell heavily during the afternoon and night but it had ceased by morning, and although the sky was overcast as we set off for Cobar, it wasn't long before the clouds cleared. A small flock of Budgerigars whizzed by us as we had our morning cuppa, and as we travelled on to our lunch stop evidence of the previous day's rain was seen in many places. The vegetation changed constantly, the trees got taller, a lot of grass was growing and the area was very green. As a result of the rain all the dirt roads were closed which meant we had to stay in Cobar Caravan Park for 2 nights instead of camping on private property as originally planned. However, the following morning we were permitted to drive our cars to Cooneybah and we were delighted to be able to do so. We were thrilled to see Red-winged Parrots on the way and on our arrival at the property the sight of Pink Cockatoos alighting on the bank of the dam made the trip well worthwhile. What a beautiful place! Birds were everywhere, yellow, blue and white daisies were growing in the red soil under a brilliant blue sky! Oh, Cooneybah would make a wonderful place for an IBOC camp! After lunch we drove up to the top of Coronga Peak which is 415 metres above sea level and saw the 360° view of the property and surrounding countryside, oh, what a sight!

Three weeks to the day after starting our trip found us driving to Burrendong Dam for our final camp. It was another beautiful day and we saw several parrots flying by as we drove along. We noticed the country change from flat with long straight roads to more hilly with smaller, cleared paddocks, more cattle and sheep in evidence, and the farmhouses getting closer together. Lunch was enjoyed beside the Macquarie River in the busy city of Dubbo where we surprised to see a Peachface Parrot perched on the wall of the amenities block. Sadly Brian and Barbara had car troubles when we arrived at Burrendong Dam and the NRMA came to their assistance, towing the car back into Wellington for repairs. We enjoyed getting together for a BBQ tea and final reading of the bird list that night.

We woke to the call of Noisy Miners the next morning and they kept us company while we broke camp to set off for home. As we drove over the brow of the hill and into Molong the signs of spring really registered as the streets were lined with beautiful pink flowering blossom trees - what a sight! It was also interesting to note the colour that had appeared on the weeping willows over the three weeks. They had changed from a tracery of green leaves to a beautiful green. The sheep seemed whiter and the paddocks greener the closer we got to our morning tea stop at Bathurst. As we drove towards the Blue Mountains we really began to feel we were on our way home. Some of the group had a final meal together in a park at Blackheath (no, not McDonalds) and recorded the last bird for the trip, the Eastern Yellow Robin; this brought the bird list to a total of 202 species.

There are so many more things I could write about the trip, so many things I feel I have left unsaid. In conclusion my mind flashes to a few significant things I feel it would be remiss of me not to mention:

The kestrels we saw every day, Wedge-tailed Eagles only a few feet away, hundreds of Tree Martins in a flock, the numerous Black Kites and Emus out west, the Southern Whiteface but none of his cousins, lots of Black-shouldered Kites, but no Letter-winged, a male Flame Robin on a grey day in Yass, and the beautiful White-winged Wrens.

There were lots of wild animals: horses, donkeys, camels, goats, pigs, kangaroos, euros, wallabies, possums, lizards, only two snakes, and even an echidna. We felt sad to see all the ruins of homes in the Flinders but found the windmills and tanks great birding spots, and we saw signs of the Heysen trail everywhere there.

We learnt there is much more to life than spending hours in the laundry and grocery shops, but a visit to the local bakery is rewarding. We saw the green and gold of wattle or cassia everywhere we went and marvelled at the stars at night.

We appreciate the work Dave Thomson put into planning the trip and keeping the bird records; we had a wonderful time. We have many happy memories of birds, animals, flowers, scenery and warm friendship, and say Thank You, Dave, for a job well done.

Nola and Laurie Williams

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SEPTEMBER MIDWEEK WALK

The walk on 1 September was attended by four members who met at the Kelly's Falls car park at 8.30 a.m. The weather was mild but a north wind brought over some clouds with a few spots of rain a couple of times. At the car park the Olive-backed Oriole, Spotted Pardalote, Fan-tailed Cuckoo and Sulphur-crested Cockatoo were heard calling when we arrived. We walked down to the Hacking River at Kelly's Falls where we crossed and stopped briefly to admire the view of the valley from the lookout. The track led on above the valley through the thick bush to the north. The vegetation there is predominantly eucalypts, banksias, pittosporum and angophora, with some bottlebrush, tea tree, wattles, ferns and Gynea Lily making up the understorey. The wildflowers were all beautiful too, especially the Native Fuchsia which found a place among the ground cover. Some distance along, we came to a branch track which led back to the falls, close to the rim of the valley, a track which two of us took, it being a shorter walk. The other two went on and descended into the valley through some grassland, crossed the river, and returned along the southern side back to the car park. Some of the birds recorded were the Eastern Whipbird, Eastern Spinebill, Golden Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Grey Fantail, Satin Bowerbird, and Little Wattlebird. As we were returning to the falls, at a point overlooking the valley, we had a great view of a Grey Goshawk, circling as it made its way down the valley, over the treetops. 24 species were recorded for the morning.

Horrie Ward

SPECIES LIST FOR THE KELLY'S FALLS WALK

Maned Duck	White-browed Scrubwren
Grey Goshawk	Brown Gerygone
Masked Lapwing	Brown Thornbill
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Lewin's Honeyeater
Crimson Rosella	Yellow-faced Honeyeater
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Eastern Spinebill
Laughing Kookaburra	Spotted Pardalote
Eastern Yellow Robin	Olive-backed Oriole
Golden Whistler	Satin Bowerbird
Grey Shrike-thrush	Pied Currawong
Grey Fantail	Australian Raven
Eastern Whipbird	Little Wattlebird

IN SEARCH OF THE REGENT HONEYEATER

When we first began birdwatching in 1980 we found identification of birds rather overwhelming, so I decided to photograph every bird I possibly could and use the prints for positive identification. That year I was photographing in Victoria and described a bird I had photographed. "A Regent Honeyeater" was the positive reply. I was pleased, but on having the films developed, I found that by no stretch of the imagination could the honeyeater I had photographed be a Regent. Well over 600 birds later I still had not seen a Regent Honeyeater. This year birding has been limited by teaching during the terms and minding grandchildren during the holidays, but there was one week available in the third term holidays. We thought of our much loved Munghorn Gap and decided to go west and try for ironbark and yellow box flowering areas. So we came to Rylstone. At a local garage the attendant thought us rather peculiar as we only wanted to see birds, but he told us of a farmer not far away who knew all about birds. We went to see the farmer but he only knew how to tell magpies from wagtails. However, his neighbour was a birdwatcher. As he was not at home that afternoon we settled for phoning that night and were given a number of good birding spots. He told us of the Glen Alice cemetery. As our car drove up there so did several other cars of FOC members who were monitoring the Regent Honeyeater. We had, thanks to them, excellent sightings of a Barking Owl and were told of three other likely sites. We explored the last one on the way back to Rylstone, met another birdwatcher, and were told of a location where 12 to 14 Regents had been seen that morning.

Next morning we took the main road to Glen Davis and stopped at a place where a number of ironbarks (not in flower) were interspersed with box eucalypts; immediately we sighted our first Regent. At this site, right on the road, were Noisy Friarbirds, Regent Honeyeaters, one Crested Shrike-tit, and one Striated Pardalote. Along the fences were Restless Flycatchers and Jacky Winters. Where the Regents were there were no starlings or Noisy Miners, although there were plenty in the trees on either side of the ironbarks and box eucalypts. The Regents were constantly on the move. We watched them for almost an hour. Although there was plenty of blossom they did not confine their feeding to blossom, but "lerped" and fed along the trunks and branches. They came down to within a metre of the ground from time to time and explored the forks of branches. As they flew off and returned it was difficult to count the number of individuals but we thought it between six and eight. We were amazed at the exquisite beauty of the birds. Since returning home I have searched all my bird books and can find no photograph which does justice to their colouration, especially when the sun shines on the golden yellow of the tail.

We left this site and explored other recommended sites with no success. In the afternoon we returned and were able to video one bird successfully. Some of the problems for the photographer are that so often there is bright blue sky behind the bird, too much foliage, the bird hanging upside down and presenting only the rear view, or the bird does not stay long enough in one place.

The next day we tried Munghorn Gap and saw numerous other birds but no Regents. Later we visited the Parkes sewage ponds and saw a lone Freckled Duck in breeding plumage. It was some years since I'd seen my last Freckled Duck, so I was delighted. At a service station a very jovial but patronising attendant asked: "And what have you seen to-day in Parkes?" When I told him enthusiastically that the Freckled Duck was the highlight of my Parkes experience, all he said was "Well, we'll have to do something about him. We can't have him in breeding plumage without finding him a mate, can we?"

Joy Parker  
6 October 1993

INTERESTING AND UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

<u>Status</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Observer</u>
U	Gang-gang Cockatoo	2	Keiraville	14.8.93	R. Almond
MC	Tawny Frogmouth	2	Keiraville	July/Aug 93	R. Almond
R	Royal Albatross	1	18 nautical miles off Wollongong	22.8.93	C. Brandis
U	Barn Owl (road kill)	1	Darkes Forest	16.9.93	C. Brandis
C	Fluttering Shearwater	1000s	Off Wollongong	7.9.93	L. Smith
S	Australian Brush-turkey	abandoned nest with 2 eggs	behind Mt Nebo colliery	4.9.93	J. Nowaczyk
S	Figbird	1	Figtree	1.10.93	J. Robinson
C	Noisy Friarbird	1	Thirroul	21.7.93	M. Morphett
S	White-headed Pigeon	1	Coledale Heights	8.8.93	M. Morphett
U	Kelp Gull	2	Sandon Point	13.8.93	M. Morphett
U	Brown Goshawk	1	Thirroul	6.8.93	M. Morphett
U	Brown Cuckoo-Dove	2	Thirroul	22.8.93	M. Morphett
U	Green Catbird	1	Thirroul	20.8.93	M. Morphett
U	Rainbow Lorikeet	4	Thirroul	Aug 93	M. Morphett

Jim Robinson

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**Rare to Uncommon Birds, Illawarra - August 1993**  
**Kevin Mills, Lot 222 North Curramore Road, Jamberoo NSW 2533**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Habitat</u>	<u>No.</u>
7	Crested Pigeon	U	Curramore	Rural	1
8	Black Cockatoo	U	Curramore	Overhead	12
15	Glossy black-Cockatoo	R	Cudmirrah	Woodland	5
14	Reef Heron	S	Berrara	Rocky shore	1
14	Sooty Oystercatcher	U	Berrara	Rocky shore	2
14	Crested Pigeon	U	Sussex Inlet	Urban	3
14	Brown-headed Honeyeater	U	Cudmirrah	Woodland	3
15	Gang-gang cockatoo	U	Berrara	Forest	2
15	Whistling Kite	U	Berrara	Overhead	1
18	Whistling Kite	U	Yattheyattah	Overhead	1
18	Pacific Heron	U	Yattheyattah	Paddock	1
18	Grey Goshawk (white phase)	R	Yattheyattah	Forst edge	1
18	Pacific Heron	U	Bomaderry	Paddock	1
19	Pilotbird	U	Yattheyattah	Rainforest	2
19	Green Catbird	S	Yattheyattah	Rainforest	1
19	Black Cockatoo	U	Yattheyattah	Overhead	3
24	Crested Pigeon	U	Curramore	Rural	8
26	White-headed Piogeon	S	Jamberoo	Urban	1
27	Crested Pigeon	U	Huskisson	Urban park	1

# I.B.O.C. NEWS

NO. 167 DECEMBER 1993



THE CIRCULAR OF THE ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB

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

CLUB MOTTO "ONE GOOD TERN DESERVES ANOTHER"

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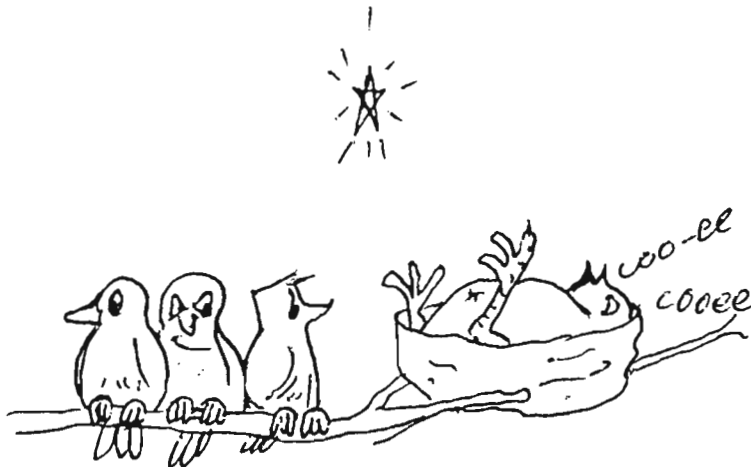
This is to join together people with a common interest who wish to further their knowledge and enjoyment of the birdlife around them.

ANNUAL

SUBSCRIPTIONS:-

These are due on 1st January each year

FAMILY \$15 SINGLE \$10 JUNIOR \$5



THE FIRST NOEL  
OF WE THREE  
KINGS



**GREETINGS\*\*\*\*GREETINGS\*\*\*\*GREETINGS\*\*\*\*GREETINGS\*\*\*\***

Our Christmas meeting will be held at the Fairy Meadow Senior Citizens Centre, corner of Princes Highway & Collaery Avenue, Fairy Meadow, Monday 13th December, starting at 7.30 pm. This will be an informal evening with the emphasis on fun and entertainment being provided by club members. The theme this year is "Beak & Bill" so bring along those imaginative creations and transform yourself into any one of our fabulous birds. Take part in the quiz (don't forget your pen/pencil) and enjoy a gourmet supper afterwards as everyone is asked to bring an extra special plate to share with their I.B.O.C. friends. (You are invited to bring your own drinking vessel).

I.B.O.C. MID-WEEK WALK, WEDNESDAY, 1ST DECEMBER.

This will be around the eastern end of the Wollongong University Campus.

Meet at 8.30 am by the flagpoles near the main entrance at the roundabout junction of Northfield Avenue/Irvine Street. Parking on the campus would cost \$3 but there should be parking available in the nearby streets (Northfield Avenue/Irvine Street/Madoline Street - checking for any parking restrictions).

The outing will only cover the eastern (freeway) end of the campus. At the moment some extensive landscaping and building work is taking place at the western (Mt. Keira) end. It is hoped that once this is complete a follow up outing around this part of the campus can be arranged.

It will be a leisurely outing almost wholly on the flat, and so easy going for any members of the club, morning tea will be taken by the University duck pond. The ducks are ready and waiting and voracious so bring twice your usual number of sandwiches!

**Richard Miller**

DEC EMBER BARBECUE OUTING

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATE & VENUE

Please remember that this outing takes place BEFORE the December meeting and it will now be held at the Minnamurra Rainforest, FRIDAY, 10TH DECEMBER, please note this change of date and venue. We will meet at the gates at 4 pm, there will not be an entry fee as the National Parks & Wildlife People have invited us to hold our barbecue (B.Y.O.) there. We will do some birdwatching and then have our barbcue tea followed by spotlighting after dark. Can you please let me know if you intend being there as the gates will be locked to the general public after a certain time and if you should be arriving late we can arrange for you to be let in.

*P.S. DON'T FORGET YOUR TORCH.*

**Barbara Hales.**

LIBRARY NEWS

Our collection of the National Photographic Index books has grown with the addition of two more books this year.

Titles so far in the series:-

- The Waterbirds of Australia.
- The Seabirds of Australia.
- The Wrens and Warblers of Australia.
- The Shorebirds of Australia.
- Robins and Flycatchers of Australia.
- Honeyeaters and Their Allies.
- Parrots and Pigeons of Australia.
- Birds of Prey and Ground Parrots.

Don't forget the Bird Song Tapes we have. The series now covers birds up to Hall's Babbler.

For those looking for light reading there are many suitable books, a number of which have been donated by club members. Titles include:- Birdman - John Gould - Maureen Labourne. Arnie the Darling Starling - Corbo & Barras. Bill Oddie's Little Black Bird Book - Bill Oddie. Spotty the Bowerbird - E. S. Borenson. Romance of the Lyrebird - A. H. Chisholm. Wildlife in the Suburbs & More Wildlife in the Suburbs - Densy Cline. A Survey of Mammals of Illawarra - Norm H. Robinson.

And of course don't forget to come and look through the Photo Albums compiled by B Hales. You may borrow them to take home to view at your leisure. Come and have a browse next meeting. You might find just the book you have been looking for.

Olive Rodwell.

NOVEMBER MEETING REPORT

ELECTION OF CLUB OFFICERS

<u>PRESIDENT</u>	<u>Brian Hales unopposed</u>
<u>VICE PRESIDENT</u>	<u>Vacant</u>
<u>SECRETARY</u>	<u>Chris Brandis unopposed</u>
<u>TREASURER</u>	<u>Ron Almond unopposed</u>

The speaker for the evening was long time member Mike Morphett who, with the able assistance of his daughter, Diana, gave us a brief insight into what is behind the many and varied names given to birds which we so often use without a thought. Mike has been studying the origin of bird names for some two years and showed members the results of his research in the talk titled "A bird by any other name".

Using visual aids, music, recited poems and other forms of information, we were given another view of birds we watch. Some birds have many common names, the Grey-crowned Babbler, with 22, tops the Australian list, with some birds having the name change across their range as their appearance changes. The name given to a bird often reflected that societies perspective of the species such as their word for good eating, with many good eating species often having the same name. As explorers moved around the world they named many birds after similar birds in their part of the world or their interpretation of the sound of the name in the local language. Thus names are made up of many languages and parts of several languages and delving into these and their meaning has kept Mike quite occupied going through many books and documents, checking and cross checking their authenticity.

Mike has classified the names into some 41 categories that the observer has associated with the bird. These include such diverse topics as names of places, weather, music, money, law and order, death, colour, metals and many others. With single or a combination of names the ornithologists then have the hard task of sorting and classifying the species and coming up with recommended common names so that we do not have to remember, let alone pronounce, those awkward scientific names.

Currently the RAOU is trying to get some concensus on common names but we know not everyone will be happy and a number of different common names will continue to be used by birdos as well as the strange concoctions developed by locals, especially in the country.

Brian Hales led the vote of thanks to Mike and Diana for taking us on yet another fascinating variation in the study of birds and the long chain of events leading to a name we take for granted.

Chris Brandis

FLYING IN TANDEM

A Member of the Blue Mountains Bird Observers, from Blackheath, observed the behavior of parent kookaburras with a baby kookaburra. The parent bird flew off with the baby holding the adult bird's tail in its (baby's) beak. They flew slowly over to another branch in this manner. The parent bird brushed over the branch with its underbody as it passed over. The baby alighted there while the parent continued on, now free of its tandem tow. Flying lessons kookaburra style!

Nola Williams

Happiness is having a Splendid Wren and a Red-capped Robin in your binoculars at the same time.

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CANBERRA WEEKEND

Thirteen members of the club travelled to Canberra on Friday 17th September, & met at Canberra Motor Village. This is in a very attractive setting with bushland surrounding the varied accomodation. After a hurried lunch we went to the Botanic Gardens & walked through some attractive areas, a pair of Crescent Honeyeaters and many Red Wattlebirds were observed. Later we had a lavish afternoon tea at the Cafe', where we saw the unusual sight of choughs feeding from the garbage bins.

The next day we enjoyed the scenic drive to Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, a valley within the Tidbinbilla Range, with a wide variety of flora supporting many birds and animals. Some people chose to walk to a lookout where we had lunch. Then a bush trail was traversed & one Koala was seen high up in a gum. A Swamp Wallaby was also observed from this track.

We walked through the waterbird area seeing three Brolga in the distance, Cape Barren Geese at closer range, one of which appeared to be nesting. On a log in the water there was a pair of Grey Teal with four very tiny young & Chestnut Teal were abundant. It was astonishing to see a Musk Duck being enticed from a pond with bread by visitors. We kept walking the trails through the ponds & another Musk Duck performed a wonderful display, finishing with a whistle, right in front of us. The features of this bird are so extraordinary. I think of him as the 'Platypus' of the duck world. Being only a few feet away was a highlight for me. We were reluctant to leave. The Rangers came to feed the birds as we left the ponds, Sulphur-crested Cockatoos & Crimson Rosellas predominating in the feeding area. There are many Kangaroos and Wallaroos in the reserve augmenting a most enjoyable day.

The next morning we were escorted by three members of the Canberra Ornithologist Group, on a walk to 'Black Mountain North West Reserve'. Sightings included the Australian Hobby, Speckled Warbler, Black-shouldered Kite, Golden Whistler and a Grey Currawong. Late in the morning we thanked our guides for sharing their time and knowledge and left for home.

A lovely weekend with wattles and wild flowers out in most places. Thankyou to those who organised this trip.

Esme Gay

SERICORNIS BRUNNEUS - A FOOTNOTE

In last month's newsletter, Nola Williams mentioned our sighting of the sought-after Redthroat on Wangara Hill at Wilpena Pound. We had hoped to see it in the Flinders but had not expected to see it so often and at so many different locations. For most of us it was a "lifer".

We finished up seeing it at about six places spread over about 150 km. If you're over that way and want to see a Redthroat, these spots might give you a start. Listen for its sweet song and watch for the white tail-tip.

On the Wangara Hill track at Wilpena Pound between the two lower lookout platforms in low eucalyptus regrowth; On the floor of the Pound in a dry creek bed near the junction of the St. Mary's Peak and Edeowie Gorge tracks in stunted eucalypt; outside the Pound at Arkaroo Rock beside the track in light eucalypt woodland (a nest with young); On the road to Chamber's Gorge, 21 km after leaving the Blinman road near a National Park information board, in saltbush/low shrub (actually a few paces past the Little Button-quail and near the White-winged Fairy-wren); Further out on the Chamber's gorge road on the west side and a few hundred metres short of another road to Blinman, near Wirrealpa Homestead and again in saltbush/low shrub (between the Chirruping Wedgebill and Mulga Parrot); Beside a parking bay on the west side of the Peterborough - Broken Hill road 4 km north of Yunta in saltbush.

Dave Thomson

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A big thank you to Barry Virtue for the front page art work at short notice.B.H....



OCTOBER CAMP STYX RIVER NEW ENGLAND NATIONAL PARK

On Saturday 23rd October, 21 members of the club gathered at the inviting campsite beside the Styx River, joining up with Wendy & Ron Hanks on the last leg of their trip around Australia. Four more members arrived on Sunday to spend the week in the rangers residence at Banksia Point. The drive into the area through green paddocks and dense eucalyptus forest gave no hint of the wonders lying close by.

Sunday, we visited Beech Lookout in the Styx River State Forest and Point Lookout which, at 1500m, gave a panoramic view over the endless steep ridges and valleys below - seemingly going on forever to the distant sea. Below us was the ancient Antarctic beech forest covering the floor and sides of the valleys. A rugged path took us down the face of the escarpment to a track scrambling below the cliffs - far inside the beech forest. The greatest thrill of the afternoon was the sound of the lyrebirds and being able to stand and watch them sing only a few feet away. Their stamina amazed everyone - one bird singing non stop for 20 minutes. The 2nd group - lagging somewhat behind the leaders, had the rare privilege of watching 2 male lyrebirds displaying to each other. That evening the promised storms arrived and we sat around the campfire watching an immense and spectacular thunderstorm moving up a distant valley. The lightning was brilliant and non stop before we all beat a hasty retreat from the rain. Later we found out that the Armidale/Tamworth area had been badly affected by a severe hail storm, with birds and animals injured. We were all grateful that it had passed us by.

The next day we had a change of scenery visiting Cathedral Rocks N.P., on the top of the escarpment. This park contains large areas of exposed granite boulders rising from the luxuriant eucalyptus forest. It was a delightful walk through the heath and forest even if birds were scarce - the rain kept away apart from a light shower and the sun appeared. The best thing was the shelter provided from the cold wind, by the rocks. After morning tea half the party set out to scramble to the top of Cathedral Rock - a few chickened out almost of the top - put off by a large hole which had to be crossed, but Barbara was one of those who persisted and even made the climb up the chains to the top - a feat we all became tired of hearing about! Well done Barbara!! The descent from the base of the rocks back to the cars was through eucalyptus forest which showed trees at all stages of development and dense understorey shrubs - a rarity in forests these days. After a late lunch we went back along the road to Ebor and visited Ebor Falls, another of those unexpected surprises of the region. Only  $\frac{1}{2}$  km from the main road the river drops 60m and then a further fall into Guy Fawkes N.P. After a stop to check out Ebor, we returned to camp.

Tuesday was fine, cold and windy for our walk to the Cascades - a series of small waterfalls and rapids on Five Day Creek in the bottom of one of the valleys we could see from Point Lookout. A short drive saw us start the walk along a fire trail and very shortly we were on the edge of the beech forest - immense, tall, ancient trees covered in mosses, lichens, ferns, rose from the forest floor, which was bare except where fallen trees have opened up the canopy. Plenty of White-browed and Yellow-throated Scrubwrens were seen on the edges of the fire trail. Lyrebirds we heard but not seen. As the path wound slowly down the steep slope to the creek, orchids were seen growing on the trees, especially the beautiful and rare beech orchid. Just before the final steep descent to the river, Chris Brandis saw a sparrowhawk fly through the forest only a few feet in front of him. By now we had warmed up as we were out of the cold wind. On reaching the creek we had morning tea and were treated to a display of aerial manoeuvres by a male Rose Robin catching insects over the water with everyone getting a really good look at it. We then scrambled on up the river side track to a small waterfall where we had lunch and everyone looked for a patch of shade to sit in. A large trout was seen in the pool below the falls but not a leech, mosquito or fly was in evidence, although later in the week large horseflies became a problem. After lunch the hard slog climbing up again to the top of the ridge back into the wind. Regaining the fire trail we found more birds than in the morning as it was now in the shade of the cliffs.

That evening saw us all gather at the Rangers Residence for a BBQ, however, due to the biting wind we all squeezed into the cottage to eat and enjoy the warmth, some felt the "heat" of the pot belly stove. It was a well fed group who drove reluctantly back to camp keeping a wary eye out for 'roos on the road.

October Camp contd.

Wednesday dawned fine and clear but again cold for our long awaited trip to Dorrigo. On the way one group braved a herd of beef steers to inspect a dam beside the road with little success. Arriving in Dorrigo we went to the Rainforest Centre and watched a video of the area and its history. We then visited the shop and had morning tea. A short canopy walk leads from the centre and gives an idea of what the forest is like from above. Some of us then walked and the rest drove the short distance to the picnic area. The walk was through the upper levels of the rainforest and has been graded and widened for wheelchairs. A wide variety of birds were seen and several nests found. I was lucky enough to get a good look at a riflebird, which was heard several times by other people. Lunch was shared with several Brush-turkeys, currawongs and Satin Bowerbirds, Ron Hanks receiving a large "present" from a currawong. After lunch we went on the long walk down into the rainforest and the waterfalls, marvelling at the size and height of the trees - this is not tropical rainforest - giant stinging trees, yellow carrabeen, booyong, coachwood, sassafrass and strangler figs towering skywards. At one point, on a ridge on the edge of the rainforest, we came upon blue gums, blackbutt and tallwood 100' or more in height. At Tristania Falls, the brush box were also towering giants. A few palms were present in the more protected areas. Several species were seen in the canopy - literally a worm's eye view - catbirds were frequently heard calling but the main interest was in seeing logrunners. It was a minor miracle but we succeeded in walking in almost total silence for the entire two hours listening for the scratchin of the logrunners. None were seen until we were almost back at the picnic area trying to find the riflebird tree again when a logrunner was spotted and everyone had a good sighting. The riflebird proved more elusive but was heard calling. Some members returned after shopping and saw the riflebird in the same area, I was vindicated, it wasn't a funny coloured bowerbird!

I wonder how long it will be before this incredible area, with its splendid rainforest centre, will become "user pays" and entry fees imposed. Wollomombi Falls was Thursday's excursion. These are the highest straight drop fall, at 423m in Australia. The area is dry eucalyptus forest and heath with bare rock and stunted vegetation in the gorge. Although some water was coming over the falls it was all disappearing in the gravel at the bottom and the river was dry. Leaving the falls, we drove to the village, now bypassed by the main road, and gave the store keeper his best sales for months. A postcard mailed here took one week to reach Wollongong. We then took the Kempsey road to have a look at the Oakey Dam Lake but unfortunately it was dry. At our lunch stop beside the river the forest floor was home to many yellow and a few pink donkey tail orchids and a carpet of button daises. Continuing our drive we crossed the Styx River on a suspension bridge and re-entered the State Forest. Leaving the Kempsey Road we continued on forest roads to the Wattle Flat picnic and camping area where a Satin Flycatcher posed while everyone had a good look and Dollarbirds were conducting their aerial acrobatics overhead. In the middle of the forest we found a herd of Hereford cattle and a little later their calves, all with black faces from foraging in the recently burnt areas. The shower facilities were in great demand on return to camp as that night we had a meal of honey smoked trout at the Ebor Motel. Everyone pronounced the trout superb.

Friday, our last day, saw the people from the cottage depart and the rest of us walk in hot, windy conditions through the heathland on the escarpment and then down into the beech forest below Banksia Point for lunch and a welcome respite from the heat. Back to camp early to clear up ready for an early start. Saturday morning however saw thick fog and misty rain which delayed departure. Tents etc. were eventually packed, wet, at 11 am when the clouds refused to lift and we all went our separate ways.

Over the week, although birds had seemed scarce, 112 species were seen, about the same number as recorded by Wal Emery on previous visits.

Our thanks to Wal for all the work he put into the preparation and organisation of the camp and for leading all the walks.

Our short visit has whetted our appetites for further longer stays, preferably at the same time of the year when insects and leeches were not in evidence.

Thanks Wal for a great camp.

Betty Hudson

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LAKE GLENBAWN

Laurie and I were fortunate to be able to spend two nights at Lake Glenbawn, near Aberdeen, on our way to the I.B.O.C. camp at Styx River. We drove along the Putty Road, a two hour drive we enjoy as we always seem to see something different along the way and we weren't disappointed this time either as flannel flowers were blooming most of the way and several of the eucalypts were loaded with cream blossoms. We made a welcome stop at the Colo River bridge and as usual it brought back memories of an earlier stop sharing the excitement of Antonio Salvadori when he saw his first Koel.

Boggy Swamp rest area, just past the Putty turn-off, is another good stopping place and on this trip we had our lunch there in the company of a family of Superb Fairy Wrens. Just past Aberdeen we took the second turn off the highway to Lake Glenbawn and a few km along the road we came to a wide causeway overflowing with water which caused us some concern until we saw a silver Subaru drive across from the other side, so our trusty Subaru headed onwards and it wasn't long before we arrived at the entrance to Glenbawn Dam and what a lovely area it proved to be.

We set up our little van in the main camping area which has about ten casual sites with hot showers and toilet facilities but we later found a couple of delightful camping spots overlooking the lake with toilet and cold showers and within drivable distance of the main shower block. The area is well provided with very pleasant picnic areas, a tennis court, three hole golf course and a small swimming pool. There is also a rural museum and although it was closed during our stay we could see a large collection of farming implements including a very old International truck with a wooden cabin.

Dave Thomson joined us on the second afternoon and together we went for a drive to do some bird watching. We were thrilled to see seven Great Crested Grebe in breeding plumage in a group on the dam and by staying in the car we were able to get quite close to them. We drove up to the lookouts which overlook the dam and surrounding hills giving spectacular views of the area and we saw a pair of beautiful White-bellied Sea-Eagles soaring above. We were pleasantly surprised at the number of small birds we saw in the vicinity of the lookouts which included Rainbow Bee-eaters, Double-barred Finches and Sittellas, especially as the dominant birds in the camping area were Noisy Miners and Red Wattlebirds. We saw 55 species of birds in total.

Reluctantly we left the area the following morning but we must return one day and spend more time there and we drove toward Styx River for another great I.B.O.C. camp.

Nola & Laurie Williams

A BLANK CHECKLIST

If we had never made use of a name,  
how could we have shown things weren't all the same?  
How could we identify, verify,  
or consider to try to classify  
each person, animal, place, object, thing,  
to make some sense of the world we live in?  
We would have erred and been just too absurd,  
if we lacked a word for each particular bird,  
whose colour, song, courtship, nesting and flight  
appeal so much to our hearing and sight.  
Names like gang-gang, broilga, grebe would be missed,  
leaving a blank on a birdwatcher's list.

**Mike Morphett**

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HEAD NORTH FOR BIRDS

My wife, our 2½ years old son and I recently returned from a 6 week trip to Cape York. I thought it may be of interest to other members to tell of the places we saw birds, which may be useful if planning a trip to Cape York. We recorded 110 species including many new ones for us.

The first place where we saw reasonable numbers of birds was at Mt Warning near Murwillumbah N.S.W. In the caravan park we saw Brown Pigeon, Bar-shouldered Dove, Crested Pigeon and Scaly-breasted Lorikeet. It makes a good overnight stay with plenty of wallabies as well. Heading north the next place we saw birds of interest was at Gladstone where we saw Blue-faced Honeyeater and sunbirds in the park in the middle of town. On the outskirts of Gladstone we saw our first Brolgas, feeding on recently harvested canefield. Whilst in Rockhampton we visited the Botanic Garden which features established palm groves, tropical trees, zoo, playground, roaming peacocks and all for free. Along the edge of one of the main pathways warblers were nesting.

At Mt Elliot N.P., just south of Townesville, we started to get into some serious birdwatching. This is an overnight or several day stop I really recommend, nice camping area, lots of birds, wallabies, kangaroos, possums and nice swimming hole. The camping area borders a creek and lots of birds pass through during the day. The highlight was seeing the Great Bowerbird. Other birds including Rainbow Bee-eater, Scarlet and Yellow Honeyeaters, Olive-backed Oriole, Spectacled Monarch and Azure Kingfisher were seen without too much trouble. We did little birdwatching again until we reached Lakefield N.P. which is north of Cooktown with an area of 537,000 hectares, consisting of vast floodplains backing onto Princess Charlotte Bay.

We spent 4 days in Lakefield but to do it justice a much longer return visit is necessary. As it was the dry season, birds were mainly seen along the creeks and on the lagoons which form in numerous locations throughout the park. We became dedicated lagoon watchers, visiting every lagoon we could in search of new species, and we were well rewarded considering it was mid dry season and there was sufficient water about to scatter the birds. We saw Magpie Geese, Brolga, Sarus Crane, Jabiru, Lotusbird, White-headed Shelduck, Pied Stilt, Glossy Ibis, Darter, Green Pygmy-Goose and Blue-winged Kookaburra. We found the water birds very shy and had to approach carefully or they would all move to the other side making identification difficult. Whilst travelling down a narrow track we had to stop for a flock of Squatter Pigeons, doing just that until they moved out of the way. Patrolling the shallows at Hanns Crossing were Black-fronted Dotterel and during the day Double-barred and Black-throated Finches would drop in for a quick drink. Throughout Lakefield, Whistling and Fork-tailed Kites were our constant companions. Coming from down south it is hard to adjust to seeing 30 birds of prey at a time.

We headed north through Coen then across to Rokeby N.P. in Central Cape York. This park features 4wd access only and they are not wrong. Another very dry park, however, it does feature gallery forest along the banks of the Coen and Archer River. Our drive into the park was interrupted by a flock of Emu crossing the road, even our son Daniel got a good look at them. We didn't find here as good for waterbirds as Lakefield, with the gallery forest becoming the centre of our attention. We found this a difficult spot to watch birds, all the action is high up, the birds move quickly and the light is fairly poor. We did manage to see Yellow Oriole, Figbird, Shining Flycatcher and Pale-headed Rosella. The highlight was a pair of Palm Cockatoo quietly feeding in a tree not far from our campsite on the Archer River, truly magnificent birds.

We left Rokeby heading north across the peninsula to Iron Range N.P., determined to see the Eclectus Parrot. This was one of the most frustrating stays we had. We walked everywhere looking for what the National Parks brochure calls "flocks of Eclectus Parrots", we didn't see one! We caught fleeting glimpses of riflebirds, heard lots of parrots but that was all. Compensation being our first sightings of Orange-footed Scrub Fowl and Yellow-breasted Boatbills.

From Iron Range we headed across to Weipa for fuel and food on the west coast of the Peninsula, whilst here we saw Lesser Frigatebirds, Red-winged Parrot, Mangrove Heron and March Sandpiper adjacent to the caravan park.

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Head North for Birds contd

Heading ever north we eventually arrived at Punsland Bay and the tip of Australia, we were to have two lucky sightings here. A White-tailed Kingfisher, which hadn't the energy to join his mates in Papua New Guinea and a pair of Papuan Frogmouths which perched every night above our camp, hunting moths attracted by our lantern. On a none bird note, it was here that we saw a Northern Quoll in the showers.

Unfortunately, once you reach the tip you have to eventually head south again. On the way down the Peninsula we saw lots of birds that only a few weeks before were all new to us. Near Lakelands Downs, large flocks of Red-tailed Black Cockatoos were feeding on the sorghum fields, numbering 100+ individuals. Heading south via the Daintree Rainforest we saw Dusky and Macleays Honeyeaters, Black Butcherbird and Orange-footed Scrubfowl at Cape Kimberley where we camped. We headed up into the Atherton Tablelands, but wet weather curtailed our bird watching however we spotted a sulky Wompoo Pigeon and, on Lake Barrine, Greater Crested Grebe, White-eyed Duck and Diving Whistling Duck.

We left for Mission Beach in search of Cassowary but all we saw were other people looking for Cassowary, some Cassowary tracks and droppings and a Green Catbird. Next stop, Mt Spec N.P. where we saw Bower's Shrike Thrush, Green-winged Pigeon, White-browed Scrubwren and hungry hordes of scrubturkeys, at the top of the range at Paluma and at the bottom, at Crystal Creek, Blue-winged Kookaburra, Forest Kingfisher and Peaceful Dove. At Yeppon the caravan park was visited by hungry Emus twice a day. On the beach Red-capped Dotterel, Pied Oystercatcher and a Jabiru were busy feeding as the tide fell whilst White-breasted Sea-Eagles and Brahminy Kites cruised overhead. Along the roadside Glossy Black Cockatoos were feeding in the low Eucalypts and on the headland a male Red-backed Wren was enjoying the afternoon sun. Our final Queensland stop was at Burrum Heads where the Burrum River enters Hervey Bay. At low tide lots of birds were prospecting the mudflats including, Whimbrel, Little Whimbrel, Mangrove Heron, White-faced Heron and Pied Oystercatcher. In the Callitris pines along the shore Mangrove Honeyeaters were busy squabbling over something or other. Our breakfast was interrupted by a banded rail looking for crumbs, it was almost tame enough to eat out of your hand. Sadly this was the last of our bird watching days as the next four days we had to drive back to Wollongong.

One word of advice to any potential Cape York travellers, always carry the bird book and binoculars in the front of the car, ready to go, as you always seem to see the best birds when you are driving. Overall for bird lovers of any age, Cape York is paradise, particularly if you have only seen northern birds on the t.v. The bird life is varied and experienced birdos would see many more birds than the 110 species we saw. By way of interest the most sighted bird in our travels was the Magpie Lark which we recorded at nearly all of our stops.

Steve Popple

Happiness is:-

not having to search for 20 years to see a Redthroat  
camping under a tree full of Regent Parrots and Purple Crowned Lorikeets  
climbing St Mary's Peak or Cathedral Rock  
seeing you first camels in the wild  
finding you first patch of Sturts Dessert Pea  
an icecream at Maree or the bakery at Copley  
standing on the edge of the Ochre pits  
driving on the Strzelecki Track and nearly seeing a grass-wren  
being with friends on the Flinders Trip and having noisy meal times.

**\*\*MERRY CHRISTMAS\*\*MERRY CHRISTMAS\*\*MERRY CHRISTMAS\*\***

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INTERESTING AND UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

	<u>Species</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Observer</u>
R	Little Corella	20	Austinmer	23/9	G. Barwell
S	Figbird	1	Windang	6/10	"
s	Figbird	1	Austinmer	23/10	"
S	Scarlet Honeyeater	1	Avondale	30/10	"
U	Crested Shrike-tit	2	Bulli Pass	31/10	"
U	Emu-wren	1	Barren Ground	21/10	G. Walker
S	White-headed Pigeon	4	Willowvale	21/10	"
U	Mongolian Plover	2	Windang Beach	2/11	C. Brandis
R	White-backed form Australian Magpie	1	Unanderra	3/11	L. Smith
U	Koel	1	Mt Warrigal	14/11	C. Brandis
R	Long-billed Corella	6	Albion Park	5/11	L. Smith
R	Crested-Hawk	2	Mt Kembla	2/11	J. Wiley
R	Large Sand Plover	2	Windang Beach	8/11	G. Barwell
S	Sanderling	1	Windang Beach	8/11	"

Please keep the sightings going in to Jim Robinson.

PROJECT CURRAWONG - THE RESULTS (an edited version) Chris Chafer.

A total of 1892 Pied Currawongs were recorded from 368 locations by 124 observers. Majority of records came from Newcastle-Sydney-Wollongong areas but a good scatter of observations throughout NSW.

More urban areas were censused (208) compared to rural (75) and natural bush (85). Fine weather contributed to many counts (241) though overcast (95) and rainy (32) did not deter everyone. Birds ranged from all altitudes, as far west as Coonabarabran and from a wide range of micro-environments: garbage tips, forests, backyards, rocky headland, playing fields and farms. Correctness was high with 95% of returns completed correctly and 71% from women!!! At the time of writing, the 5th BIGNet committee meeting has endorsed a follow up Currawong survey to be conducted in March 1994. Details of this event will appear early in the new year.

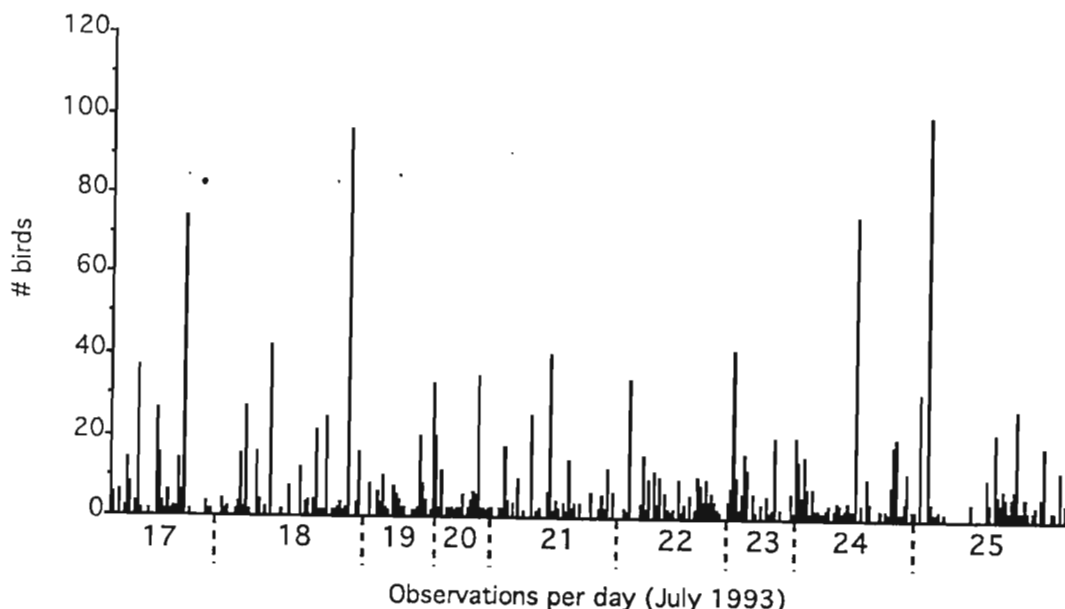


Figure 1. A histogram of the 368 censuses compiled during the study period. Data are separated into observations per day and show the number of Pied Currawongs recorded from each site. No bar indicates 0 birds.