

I.B.O.C. inc. News

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THE CIRCULAR OF THE ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.
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CLUB MOTTO: "ONE GOOD TERN DESERVES ANOTHER"

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THE CLUB'S AIM IS TO JOIN TOGETHER PEOPLE WITH A COMMON INTEREST WHO WISH TO FURTHER THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND ENJOYMENT OF THE BIRDLIFE AROUND THEM

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS due 1st January each year: FAMILY \$20 SINGLE \$15 JUNIOR \$5

NEW YEAR OUTING: as usual, our first outing for the year is to the Windang Estuary and will be held on **Wednesday, 8th 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.** We hope to see good numbers of terns, gulls and waders for you to identify as we walk along the sand flats. Come along, bring your eats and drinks for when we return to the cars for supper, and have a pleasant evening of bird watching by the lake.

NEXT MEETING: will be held on **Monday, 13th February, at the Fairy Meadow Senior Citizens Centre, corner of Collaery Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, starting at 7.30 p.m.** Our guest speaker for the evening will be **Mr. Graeme Chapman** who will talk to us about **Bird Photography**. Graeme has been involved with bird photography for over thirty five years and was employed by CSIRO Wildlife for a time. **He** was also a founder member of the Canberra Ornithologists Group and a writer of the Canberra Bird Notes and was the secretary of what is now the Sydney Bird Observers Club in the 1960's. This should be a very interesting evening as Graeme shares with us some of the bird slides he has produced over the years.

NEXT FIELD OUTING: will take place **Sunday, 19th February** on a private property called The Craggs which is in the Nattai district (3 miles as the crow flies from Mittagong). We will meet at the corner of the old Hume Highway and the Wombeyan Caves Road at **8.30 a.m.** To get there proceed through Mittagong and take the old Hume Highway towards Berrima keeping to the right hand lane as you approach the freeway - this keeps you on the road to Berrima and the Wombeyan Caves Road will be on the right hand side. **DO NOT GET ONTO THE FREEWAY** or you will have to double back through Berrima. Please be prompt as we will drive from here to start the walk. Please share cars where possible and bring along your usual eats and drinks for the day.

!!!ADVANCE NOTICE NEW VENUE FOR MONDAY MEETING NIGHTS!!!

We are due to move to new premises at the old library/baby health centre which is on the western side of the Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow between Cambridge Street and Balgownie Road commencing with our April meeting. The new centre is less than 1 km north of our present address, more details will appear in your next newsletter.

DECEMBER MONTHLY MEETING

The Christmas was again a fun evening with members entertaining members and showing a wide range of talent and imagination. Brian announced the engagement and pending marriage of son Russell who videoed the evening's entertainment from a precarious position in the back corner. Wally Hurst sent Christmas and New Year greetings from Berry to all members. Barbara Hales read out an item from a British newspaper about the antics of twitchers rushing to see a Grey-tailed Tattler, with one fellow being booked three times for speeding en route and considering it worth the trouble. Barbara then read the politically correct version of "Three Little Pigs" showing us what the antidiscrimination laws are doing to the old favourites. I don't think the meaning was quite the same. Betty Hudson, with a little help from four audience members, gave us an Australian animal and bird rendition of "The Twelve Days of Christmas".

Members and friends then dressed cryptically to represent the name of a bird. These included Letter-winged and Square-tailed Kites, Spangled Drongo and Masked Lapwing, with the winner being Dora Lockrey as a Spotted Nightjar. The Hales managed to run the Christmas bird quiz with only minimal references to Puffins. The winner of this difficult quiz was Phil Zealey with 29 correct out of 36, with Robyn Wilson a close second on 28½; items from the highly valued Hales' artefact collection were given as prizes.

The McGregors did a skit on "The Twelve Days of Christmas" with the problems of accommodating maids a-milking amongst lords a-leaping, hens in the microwave, etc, and Paul Matters finally slapping a green ban on the place. Laurie Williams read out an article on bathing habits in the early days - have they changed much for some in the 90s? Barbara read the politically correct "Little Red Riding Hood", not the same ending as I remember. The book containing these and many other tales is available from book stores.

Father Christmas arrived with a bag full of pressies for those who have been good IBOCers over the year. Olive Rodwell received some horse repellent, Jan Stuart a bunch of flowers, a mounted photo of Australia's most fastidious camper to Dave Thomson, medals of service to Kevin McGregor and Bronwyn Wilson, an echidna tea towel for Betty Hudson, and many other presentations. Last but not least, a heap of thanks to Barbara for all the tireless support over the year. A 'thank you' to all and best wishes for the festive season and beyond were followed by a magnificent Christmas supper.

Chris Brandis

BIENNIAL TRIP

It is proposed that this time around we visit Binna Burra in the Lamington National Park on the Queensland Border in the spring (September/October 1995). Binna Burra offers various types of accommodation ranging from cabins or the guesthouse with full board at approx. \$100 to \$145 per person per day to fully furnished on-site tents or caravans and tent sites. For the caravanners and campers this could be a three week trip incorporating other areas with five days spent at Binna Burra to allow those who do not camp to join this trip. We need to know quickly from all interested parties, and a list will be circulated at the February meeting. If you are unable to attend the meeting please contact the Hales if you wish to be included.

For an update on the Binna Burra trip please see page 9.

Many thanks to Barbara for her help in compiling this edition of the newsletter.
Ed.

NEWS OF FRIENDS THREE.

Hullo how are you? I'm writing to tell you more about our travels in Western Australia from Pt Headland to Perth & although we are still in the same state we have travelled through some vastly different scenery from the coast, inland & to the sea again. We stayed north of Pt Headland on the banks of the De Grey River where we had a good view of a large waterhole with plenty of birds and we spent some very relaxing hours sitting in front of the van birdwatching. We could see both the railway & road traffic bridges from our vantage point & watched the huge road trains & even larger iron ore trains crossing the river. We counted 90 wagons on the latter. However, the next day when we drove to Pt Headland we saw trains with more than twice that number of wagons, a sight we continued to see further south at Dampier. Pt Headland is an industrial town reminding us of Pt Kembla & large ships, such as the Iron Newcastle were being loaded in the port. We saw huge salt piles & settling ponds on our way into the town & also our first Sturt's Desert Pea for the trip growing beside the road. We then took to the hills & drove to Marble Bar seeing our first Flock Bronzewing, a bird we had been searching for since Mt. Isa in Queensland. We spent time at the river marvelling & photographing the rock of Marble Bar - red, grey, black & white jasper.

The next morning we drove further east to the Hammersley Range which appeared on the horizon as mauve hills & as we got closer these changed to rich deep rust red mountains sprinkled with golden spinifex & white trunked gums. We drove through Yampire Gorge to reach our camping place - a drive we will never forget for the fabulous ever changing scenery & the red dust! Unfortunately we had axle trouble on the Drifter on the way in & lost 2 tyres as a result - another thing we will never forget and we will be forever grateful for the help & concern we received from our friends & also total strangers. We visited the other gorges & lookouts in the area & noticed the birds seemed to take on a rusty coloured hue as we and our clothes did too. We drove into Millstream/Chichester N/P which was in sharp contrast with its mass of palm trees & large, deep waterholes of the Fortesque River where we found very restful campsites. We visited the homestead, now a display centre & office for the national park & read of the original property owners & also the rangers attempts to rid the area of the majority of date & cotton palms originally planted by the camellers & now choking out the native palms.

The drive to Karratha, on the coast, was spectacular in the early morning light, made even more so by a bank of vivid red Sturts Desert Pea growing over the rusty red rocks as if planted in a rockery garden. We arrived on the highway near Roeburn pleased to be on the bitumen again after having driven 1100 km on dirt roads, with dust seeming to seep into every little crack & crevice, but we wouldn't have missed spending time in that area for all the tea in China! Karratha brought us back to civilization with its large shopping centre which includes K Mart, Woolworths & even Wendy's ice-cream shop. We spent an evening at nearby Hearsons Cove eating & chips & watching the moon come up, shining across the mudflats, creating the stairway to the moon, an event we first heard of in Broome. We then made our way to Cape Range N/P, our most westerly camp where we were very close to the sea & saw many wildflowers & also our first Rufous-crowned Emu Wren - gorgeous little birds. We went on a very pleasant boat trip along Yardie Creek seeing Black-footed Rock Wallabies - cuddly little grey, black & cream animals. Carnarvon has an old one-mile long wharf stretching out into

News of Friends Three (contd.)

the ocean which made for a good walk & the town is also noted for its banana plantations. We then camped at Denham, the most westerly town in Australia & spent time with the dolphins at nearby Monkey Mia. The wildflowers were lovely in the area & we were fortunate to see & photograph the colourful little reptile - the Thorny Devil. Kalbarri is a lovely holiday town where the Murchieson River meets the sea. The floral emblem of Western Australia, the brilliant red & green Kangaroo Paw was in flower along with many other colourful wildflowers. The cliffs south in Kalbarri N/p were fascinating in their formations & we saw our first real surf on the west coast. We were woken each morning by the beautiful Dawn Chorus from our little feathered friends. Coming into Geraldton we were amazed to see paddocks of purple Pattersons Curse & yellow exotic weeds instead of the expected wildflowers, but lack of rain in the northern wildflower area has prevented many from flowering. We did, however, see the fascinating Wreath Leschenaultia flowering in the gravel pit near Mullewa along with other flowering native plants. We were also pleased to see patches of blue Leschenaultia in several places on our way to Perth.

We changed our route to the city of Perth because of the flowers but we still spent time in Cervantes, travelling past crops & paddocks with sheep & cattle - quite a contrast to some of the places we had been. The countryside around there was looking very green but we were assured by a friendly farmers wife, who happened to hear our comments on the radio as we passed by, that they needed rain because the clover & copweed were dying. As it happened it rained the following day - our first wet day of the trip. Fortunately for us the rain only lasted a day & we were able to visit The Pinnacles N/p which seemed like another world to us. Limestone pillars, up to 3m tall, protrude through the sand - someone said it looked like a scene from the science fiction film "Planet of the Apes" - a fascinating spectacle.

Our visit to New Norcia was a complete contrast as we went on a tour of the little town which is owned & run by the Benedictine Monks, originally to service the Aboriginal community later becoming a boarding school for boys & girls. The schools have been closed for 3 years & tourism has become a major attraction. We heard a tape of Welsh boy soprano Aled Jones singing the "Requiem" playing in one of the chapels which was beautiful & the artwork on the ceilings & walls of the Chapel was well worth seeing. We walked by the river in New Norcia & saw the brilliantly blue male Splendid Wren reflected in the water - never before has it looked so splendid.

Yanchep N/P almost made us feel at home as it reminded us so much of our own Royal N/P & we spent a lovely day there walking around the area. Now we are in Perth & our trip is almost two thirds done - it's hard to believe we've travelled over 13,500 km in our car and to date we've seen 280 species of birds, 28 new ones for us included in that number - but more about our Perth visit next time - til then we are thinking of you, all the best,

Nola & Laurie Williams.

UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

All unusual sightings from November/December will be going into the annual bird report which will be published in April.

However, one outstanding record worth mentioning is a Brush Turkey from lower Jamberoo Pass, sighted in January by Roslyn Neilson; this is the most southerly record of this species since the 1920s.

Chris Chafer
Records Officer

NEWS OF FRIENDS FOUR

Well, we only have a couple of days to go until we are home again, it's really hard to believe, the time and the miles have gone by so quickly! We enjoyed our time in Perth, it's a lovely city, rapidly expanding and they have a very good road system which makes for easy travelling. There are lots of lakes & swamps around Perth which are good bird watching areas & there are beautiful native shrubs flowering along the side of the freeways. We spent time wandering around Kings Park, a very large botanic garden in the heart of the city, enjoying the display of flowers & trees & we saw a very interesting art exhibition in one of the buildings in the gardens. The paintings were done by Helen Leitch, very cleverly portraying rare & endangered plant species of Australia which we found fascinating. We visited the Edith Cowan University Julie is associated with at present & enjoyed a meal at Sizzlers & also at McDonalds, Freemantle, overlooking the beach. Of course we went to Rottneest Island by ferry for the day & saw the famous Rottneest Island Quokkas, the rare little marsupial that lives there, during our tour of the island by bus. We (I) were very fortunate to be in Perth at the time of the Western Australian Embroiderers Guild exhibition held to celebrate their 25th birthday and also to visit the building they have recently purchased for their headquarters.

As we left Perth to drive to Dryandra S.F. there were signs of Spring everywhere - blossom trees & wisteria blooming & new growth on the Weeping Willows & grape vines as we passed. There was great excitement at our camp at Dryandra as we all saw several new birds while searching for the elusive Numbats which were seen by a lucky few. We all saw the Brush-tailed Bettong - another small native animal & we all got our share of ticks to aggravate us - one of the "benefits" of walking through the bush! The little town of Williams was personally interesting to us but the origin of the name is unsure & when asked the locals seemed to have 2 stories - one, the town was named after King William or, more likely, a surveyor Williams - we'll never know.

From Dryandra we moved on to Dwellingup S.F., another enjoyable place to camp, where we added 2 new birds to our list. The nearby town of Wannerup with its gardens of beautiful exotic flowers was a picture of Spring as we drove through on our way to Boranup Forest. Here we camped for 3 nights & at times we might have been the only people in the world, it was so peaceful, but then we were joined by 30 teenage girls & their teachers from Perth away on a campout & we found we weren't alone at all! The forest was beautiful, huge trees towering up to the skies with an understorey of creepers, mauve Hardenburgia with long trails of pea shaped flowers looking like wisteria & cream Clematis climbing everywhere. The nearby town of Augusta was the most south-westerly town we visited & while there we went to Cape Leewin lighthouse where it was extremely windy & the Indian & Southern Oceans meet. Nearby Hamelin Bay was picturesque with the contrast of very green paddocks & hillsides covered with low growing yellow flowering wattle.

On our drive to Pemberton we wandered through the Blythe family garden, a lovely home garden open for exhibition with the invitation "Take a Walk on the Quiet Side" inscribed above the garden gate. Pemberton is the home of the massive Karri Tree & we visited the timber mill learning that Karri timber from the area has been used in the underground tunnel between England & France & also in the dykes in Holland. We enjoyed a trip through the forest on a tram where the trees sparkled with raindrops and glowed with the colours of the flowering shrubs. The Gloucester tree is famous as the highest fire lookout tree in the world, with a viewing platform 60m above the ground, which can be climbed. There are some very interesting craft shops in the town featuring excellent woodwork & enjoyable meals. We visited the Berry farm & were delighted to see Red-eared Firetails in the garden, a bird gazetted as a rare species. Northcliffe Forest isn't far from Pemberton & we went on a lovely walk looking at the towering tree, flowers & moss & even discovered several species of native orchids. We also spent time at Windy Harbour, a well named little fishing village with incredible limestone rock formations & wild flowers.

The sw corner of Western Australia is well known for its Marron & Trout which we enjoyed for dinner one night. The rain we had in the area followed us to Albany but didn't stop us from visiting the Valley of the Giants, an area where I am sure the goblins & gnomes live in the buttresses of the huge Tingle Trees. The sun shone again while we were in Albany & we were able to see some of the sights of the area, including the Whaling museum & the fascinating granite rock formations along the coast. Our main objective was to spend time at Two Peoples Bay in the hope of seeing 3 rare species of birds & although we didn't get to see them we got very close to the Noisy Scrub-bird & listened to its loud song for over an hour. We also heard the other 2 birds calling in the distance & were able to enjoy seeing some of the wildflowers of the area.

I have seen many spectacular photos of the Stirling Ranges & flowers peculiar to the area, so it was exciting to move north from Albany to spend a couple of days in the ranges & see some of the scenery & flowers for ourselves. We found several beautiful native orchids & both species of grass trees & were rewarded with incredible views from

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the lookouts & our climb up Bluff Knoll. We then made our way further north into the wheatbelt again to visit Hyden & to our amazement found the camping ground right beside Wave Rock which is a spectacular granite formation 15m high & over 2,700 million years old & was our reason for going to that area. We spent the morning wandering over the rock in the sunshine marvelling at the courage of the native orchids we found growing in little hollows with little apparent soil for support & we were also fascinated at the speed of the little lizards living there. A concrete block wall has been built around the top of the rock reminiscent of the Great Wall of China in miniature, to direct the rainwater into a dam at the base of the rock for use as the town water supply. Much to our amazement we found a shop exhibiting the largest display of lace in the Southern Hemisphere, with pieces dating back to the 17th century. Also included in the display are a number of old wedding dresses, a lace jacket worn by the famous Australian soprano, Dame Nellie Melba & to add to the display, a beautifully restored 1924 Dodge motor car & all this superbly housed and displayed in a building alongside Wave Rock near the little town of Hyden which doesn't even have a chemist shop! There was a beautiful golden yellow Grevillia flowering around Hyden along with several other native flowering plants & lots of Mallee scrub. There are also a lot of salt lakes in the area amongst the bush & wheat fields & wheat bins used to store the harvested crops.

Our trip to Fitzgerald N.P. was not without it's excitement if for no other reason that the number of snakes we saw on the road that day. Several had met their doom but one in particular was alive and well. We had seen lots of Shingle-backed Lizards crossing the road on the whole trip but only a couple of snakes until that day. Unfortunately we didn't have the opportunity to explore the park as it rained fairly heavily during the 2 nights & day we spent there & the roads were closed so we moved on to Esperance further east along the coast & while we were eating lunch at the beach front we saw the sailing ship "The Endeavor" moored in the harbour which we seen previously at Albany & Freemantle. We drove along the scenic route & were fascinated by the wind farms- huge windmills making use of the "Roaring Forties" to generate power for the town.

Nearby Cape le Grande N.P. was another good place to camp with lovely white sand & the bluest of blue water & we were lulled to sleep at night by the sound of the waves gently lapping the shore. At Thistle Cove we watched a whale lazily playing in the water while we ate our morning tea - another special day. We saw some lovely wildflowers & also hundreds of stumpy W.A. Christmas trees, some in bud while others already had the yellow of the flowers breaking through. Then we headed north to the goldfields of Kalgoorlie & back to civilisation with a shock as everywhere there is a sense of urgency & evidence of mining both past & present with predictions well into the future. We visited the very interesting mining museum & once again marvelled at the courage & fortitude of our forefathers &, while Laurie went to Hannan's Tourist Mine, where he saw a gold ingot poured to the value of \$15,000 & then went underground to see how the ore was mined, I drove to the neighbouring town of Boulder & saw the antique & beautifully painted Town Hall stage curtain which is being restored to it's former glory. I was thrilled later in the month on my birthday when Laurie gave me a necklace containing a very small sample of gold, a truly lovely souvenir of our visit. Many of the very old buildings in Kalgoorlie have been restored & add a certain charm to the city, however, we were very happy to leave the hustle & bustle of the city life & head bush again.

This time it was further north to the little old town of Leonora to visit another museum brought to life by our tour guide, Maxine, who made our visit very entertaining with her stories of the Sons of Gwalia, the "REAL MEN", miners of yesteryear, Several of the Welsh miners little corrugated iron homes are still standing awaiting restoration to add further interest to the area. A day trip to Laverton, still further inland, showed us just how dry & unyielding our country can be as we looked for birds & ended up at the sewerage treatment works - don't laugh! - it's a good spot to look for birds in any town - & we weren't disappointed here as we saw the brilliant blue of the Splendid Fairy Wrens. We also saw a sign in Laverton saying on 1587km to Alice Springs - the centre of our continent - but we weren't tempted to go there this time!

On our way south again we crossed Lake Raeside just out of Leonora, the lake has the reputation of being the longest lake in Australia - 270km in length & it is often dry as it was when we saw it. Lake Lefrey at Kambalda is a salt lake & was glistening white in the sun as we stood at the lookout to photograph it. Then we were at Norseman & turning to the east to make our run across the Nullarbor Plains for home! It was rather warm there but the gardens were lovely, beds of Pansies, beautiful roses & flowering eucalypts. We stayed overnight at Newman Rock, another expanse of granite protruding from the earth with a small pool of water at it's base. Laurie & I went for a walk early the next morning in the hope of seeing some birds drinking at the water but it was being guarded by 3 birds of prey & no small birds came near. Our trip to Cocklebidy took us along the longest straight stretch of bitumen in Australia - 146km - & we experienced first hand the speed with which a bush fire can advance. We drove down Madura Pass & travelled along the Eyre Highway with the Hampton Tablelands risings on our left * saw the Royal Flying Doctor Service landing strip marked on the road in several places. We visited the

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old telegraph station at Eucla, almost covered by the advancing sand dunes & wet our hands in the waters of the Southern Ocean at the western end of the Great Australian Bight. Then we drove up the Eucla Pass on toward the Nullarbor, stopping at several lookouts where views of the Bight with its massive cliffs are very impressive. We stayed 2 nights in the caravan park at Nullarbor Road House spending a day driving 107 km across the treeless Nullarbor Plain to the railway station of Cook where the maintenance men of the Indian Pacific railway live with their wives and families a total population of 100 with 30 children attending Cook School. There were no trees on the plains, only low grey saltbush & patches of bulldust on the road that sprayed up over the cars like water as we drove through. We saw a couple of dingos beside the road that day & also some birds of prey but very little else until we reached some small trees & there we found a few little birds. From Mullabor Roadhouse we travelled 19 km further east to a sign that said we had reached the eastern end of the Plain & 36 km from the sign denoting the western end. We noticed a change of scenery with low trees appearing on sandy dunes & the further east we travelled the higher the trees grew until we came to cleared land, crops & our first wombat for the trip unfortunately lying dead on the side of the road. We also saw starlings and flocks of sparrows for the first time in 4 months. There are no imported birds in W.A. apart from a few Feral Pigeons & the 2 Turtle Doves about half way down the coast & it is a pleasure to see our native birds sitting on the power lines replacing the starlings, mynahs & sparrows that seem to be taking over in the east.

We followed the coastline of the Eyre Peninsular in South Australia passing through some lovely little towns & spending a night at Smoky Bay. We walked along the wooden jetty & watched the people fishing & it reminded us of the patience of the aboriginal women fishing from similar jetties up north all day to supplement their diets, firstly for bait & then for their meal. We passed paddocks filled with stone & divided with stone fences similar to the ones we see at Kiama & we wondered how the sheep found enough to eat. Our destination of the Eyre Peninsular was Lincoln N.P., 35 km from the bustling city of Port Lincoln & another lovely place to camp. I celebrated my birthday with the sighting of a new bird - The Fairy Wren & meeting up with an old friend - the Superb Fairy Wren. We had a waterfront view from our van in the N.P. watching sailing boats speeding along in the wind & we saw a brilliant rainbow over the water while we ate our dinner together & reminisced over the past 4 months.

Then we headed NE along the eastern side of the peninsular passing through Whyalla with it's blue painted buildings, BHP signs & chimney stacks & we were reminded of home as we drove through "little Port Kembla", & as we neared Pt Augusta we saw the folded mountains of the Flinders Range in the distance and our thoughts went back to the exciting 3 weeks we spent last year visiting the area. We passed by a pink salt lake, beautifully coloured in the afternoon sun & in such contrast to the equally blue "Bird Lake" on the opposite side of the road. It was a sunny morning as we left Wilmington the next day to make our way across the Murray River & the crops, sheep and even the many ruined farmhouses we passed looked good in the early morning light. We had Devonshire tea in the lovely little National Trust town of Burra, served with clotted cream on Willow Patterned china & we enjoyed seeing the beautiful roses, lilac & irises in the gardens as we walked to the creek bed to view the Cornish miners dugouts - what hard times they must have been!

We left the show of flowering red callistermons & the lovely stone & mud brick houses in towns such as Hallet & Riverton to drive past miles of saltbush until we arrived at the lush irrigated area of vineyards & citrus orchards along the mighty Murray & we spent a night near Renmark where we had rain & still more wind. For most of the following day we travelled through rain, at times the sky looked black and angry & we felt the farmers must be hoping those clouds would spill their contents onto the parched earth to green it up again. We were surprised to see the signs of irrigation from the Murrumbidgee River across the treeless Hay Plains & beyond & it was great to set up camp on green grass in a nice little caravan park at Hay.

As I finish this letter to you we are camped at Wagga, a big city of shops compared to it's neighbours of Hay & Narrandra. We are at Wagga Beach - hardly a beach compared to what we have at home on the east coast & to the many beautiful ones we've seen on our trip but from spending holidays here as a child I know what a popular picnic & swimming spot this place beside the Murrumbidgee River is in the warm summer months. However, it is November now and far from warm & we have grey skies overhead hopefully bringing more rain to this drought stricken country. Nearly everywhere we have been the story has been the same - "we haven't had enough rain this year". It has certainly affected the wildflowers & no doubt the birds but we have enjoyed every minute seeing lots of incredible scenery during the 25,500 km we have travelled, realising that no 2 places are the same, there is always something new to see & enjoy & we are extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to explore some of this vast continent of ours.

It's been fascinating to watch the sun set in the Indian Ocean & to enjoy many beautiful sunsets & we've been

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surprised at the strong southerly winds along the southern coast while the ocean looks hardly ruffled. We've seen lots of beautiful flowers both native & exotic & a great variety of flowering gum trees. It's been great to be with friends & to share so many wonderful experiences & we've learnt a lot from each other about flowers, birds, trees, rocks and even electricity supplies!

As a group we've seen 370 species of birds & probably the most memorable would have to be the sighting of 26 Letter-winged Kites sitting quietly in the trees beside the highway on the Barkly Tablelands - a bird we have all wanted to see for over 17 years - since the club began - & there they sat letting us photograph them & look at them while they dozed in the sun without a care in the world! with seven human beings doing hand springs down the highway!!

Our constant companion along the way has been our dear little friendly bird Willie Wagtail recorded on almost every day of the trip & we've seen hundreds of kestrels. So many beautiful things to see and do, each with it's own special quality & if we had one comment to make it would have to be that next time round we'll take more time but it's been a wonderful experience.

Nola Williams

A SUNDIAL AND AN ASSORTMENT OF SCAVENGERS

It's about half past three. My new Seiko watch tells me so. So too does the Sundial of Human Involvement, where I'm standing. According to the blurb handed out at the entrance to the Mount Annan Botanic Garden, this particular sundial is analemmatic and the only one of its kind in Australia. My body acts as the gnomon, a word of Latin and Greek roots meaning 'that which knows or indicates'. My shadow becomes the indicator, falling across the figure-of-eight scale on the ground and pointing between the two sculptured stone hour markers numbered 3 and 4. Despite its new construction, the elliptical formation of stone markers suggests to me a mini Stonehenge the ancient monument thought to indicate the solar and lunar eclipses as well as the seasons. It is also believed to have had great religious significance.

Up here on Sundial Hill I feel a strong sense of spirituality, a vestige perhaps of that which the earlier occupants, the Tharawal aborigines, would have experienced on this land. In spite of the drought the landscape is still inspirational. I look down on my Subaru parked beside Caley Drive, named after an explorer of this area nearly 200 years ago, and then across the busy F5 freeway towards the sprawling city of Campbelltown. From here and up higher on the Mount Annan sandstone summit I can survey the whole of the botanic garden, where I and other IBOC members had earlier driven and walked. The different native plant gardens taking shape over the last six years remind me of Wollongong's botanic garden in its infancy.

Northwards lie the small lakes. The second one is Sedgwick, where I had thought a raven was attacking a snake-necked tortoise at the water's edge, flipping it over on its back and pecking at it. Chasing off this black marauder, however, I discovered it had only been scavenging, for the decomposing reptile had only a little flesh remaining between the shells and behind the leg holes; it had been doing a useful clean-up job.

Further back and to the left I make out the picnic spot near the visitors' centre, where Noisy Miners, White-winged Choughs and a pair of Pied Butcherbirds had jostled for sandwich scraps. One Noisy Miner had alighted on my raised knee, while others had behaved more like Silver Gulls with their heads thrown back and tails stuck up, warding off competitors for the food. Still younger ones, with flickering tongues, had begged for morsels from parent birds.

The reflective mood I'm in is interrupted, but yet increased, by the presence of a much larger scavenger-cum-raptor in this countryside where rabbits abound. A lone Little Eagle, in light phase plumage, sweeps up from below the arboretum and glides effortlessly over my head, circling round the summit area and then back over the tree

Sundial and Scavengers (contd.)

line and disappearing in a dive into the remnant pastures below. This aerial patrol is repeated a few times before I have to leave this spot, to which, doubtless, I'll be returning.

Back home I delve into the origins of the word 'scavenger', which we in the bird club primarily think of as an animal that feeds on the flesh of dead animals; besides the exotic vulture, the Silver Gull springs to mind, whose diet has expanded as it has capitalised on our throw-away society habits. It comes from the Flemish 'scauwen' via the Anglo-French '(e)scauvage', meaning 'to inspect'. Like 'passenger' and 'messenger', the consonant 'n' crept into our language, making pronunciation easier. A scavenger was both an inspector of imported foreign goods offered for sale in London and other major towns and a collector of tolls levied on foreign merchants. The name was also given to a superintendent responsible for the cleaning of streets and the collection of house refuse and rubbish generally to be destroyed. In London in Elizabethan times kites were protected birds of prey because of their value in cleaning up some of the waste and enhancing public health.

As environmentally-friendly exploiters and as observers rather than inspectors, we IBOCers don't fall into the category of scavengers. Leaving carrion to these opportunistic birds, I'll take this opportunity of expressing the hope that IBOC will carry on for many years to come!

Mike Morphett
November 1994

STOP PRESS BINNA BURRA - UPDATE ON COSTS

	ACACIA	BANKSIA	CASUARINA
Daily per person	\$149.00	\$119.00	\$ 99.00.
Special Sun-Fri per person	\$670.00	\$535.00	\$445.00.
Special 7 days per person	\$935.00	\$750.00.	\$625.00.

Includes all meals, accommodation, activities, entertainment. Acacia Rooms have ensuite bathroom, Tea/coffe making, mini bar. Banksia Rooms have tea/coffee making, fridge, handbasin, share bathroom (amenities block). Casuarina share bathroom facilities budget style bunk beds. There is no sole use available in the Casuarina blocks which hold 4 - 6 so unless you have your own party of 4 or 6 you may have to share if others book in. Acacia and Banksia have sole use with up to 4 in Acacia and 3 in Banksia. On-site furnished tents (2-4 people) are available with pine beds with mattresses, carpeted floors, screened windows, lighting, table setting and verandah, cooking, shower, laundry, facilities nearby, Daily 4 bed \$52.00, 2 bed \$36.00, Sun-Fri (whole tent) 4 bed \$210.00, 2 bed \$145.00, own linen required, no electricity. Tent/Caravan sites, single adult \$7 per night \$42 per week, pensioner \$5 per night \$31.50 per week, powered site \$3 per night extra. Laundry/Shower facilities, tearoom, light meals and camping supplies available. We plan to get a Sun-Fri booking hopefully between Sep/Oct meetings, if available, so we need to have your commitment and type of accommodation required by the February meeting.

PROGRAMME OUTLINE 1995

Feb 8	Wed	5.30 pm	Outing	Windang Estuary
13	Mon	7.30 pm	Meeting	Speaker Graeme Chapman, Bird Photography
19	Sun	8.30 am	Outing	The Craggs, Nattai
Mar 13	Mon	7.30 pm	Meeting	Nine Friends Travelling Western Australia
18	Sat	8.30 am	Outing	Georges River Reserve with J. Hyslop.
Apr 10	Mon	7.30 pm	Meeting	<u>Kris French, Regent Honeyeater Project</u>
14/22	Fri		Camp	Proposed to Putty area
May 6	Sat	7.30 pm	Film Night	Venue to be advised
8	Mon	7.30 pm	Meeting	Speaker Trevor Qusted, Birding in Arizona
13	Sat	8.30 am	Outing	Jervis Bay area with Annette Prehm
Jun 10	Sat	7.30 pm	Film Night	Venue to be advised
12	Mon	7.30 pm	Meeting	Speaker Lindsay Smith, <u>Australian Frogs and Fish</u>
18	Sun	8.30 am	Outing	Barren Grounds, Chris Wilder & Richard Jordan
Jul 8	Sat	7.30 pm	Film Night	Venue to be advised
10	Mon	7.30 pm	Meeting	Members Night
15	Sat	8.30 am	Outing	Bicentennial Park
Aug 12	Sat	7.30 pm	Film Night	B. & B. Hales
14	Mon	7.30 pm	Meeting	Speaker to be advised
20	Sun		Outing	Venue to be advised
Sep 11	Mon	7.30 pm	Meeting	Speaker to be advised
16	Sat		Outing	Venue to be advised
Oct 21/28	Sat		Camp	Proposed to Gloucester area
Nov 13	Mon	7.30 pm	Meeting	Speaker to be advised
18	Sat		Outing	Venue to be advised
Dec 8	Fri	5.00 pm	Outing	Barbecue Minnamurra
11	Mon	7.30 pm	Meeting	Christmas Fun

The Aug/Sep/Oct part of the programme is subject to change dependent upon response to and dates available for the proposed Binna Burra trip. It may be that we can fit in the usual October long weekend local family camp as well as the late October camp. We will give you information as soon as possible.

The Wednesday walks programme will appear in the March newsletter which is when they commence.

VACANCIES

The vice-president's position is still vacant and we are still desperate to appoint an excursions officer. If you feel you could fill or help out with either of these vacancies please contact any committee member.

Members are asked if possible to please bring a plate to share in supper after meetings and feel free to bring your own re-cyclable cup or mug for tea or coffee.

I. B. O. C. News

NO. 179

MARCH 1995



THE CIRCULAR OF THE ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.
POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 56, FAIRY MEADOW, N.S.W. 2519.

CLUB MOTTO: "ONE GOOD TERN DESERVES ANOTHER"

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THE CLUB'S AIM IS TO JOIN TOGETHER PEOPLE WITH A COMMON INTEREST WHO WISH TO FURTHER THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND ENJOYMENT OF THE BIRDLIFE AROUND THEM

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS due 1st January each year: FAMILY \$20 SINGLE \$15 JUNIOR \$5

***** PLEASE NOTE NEW VENUE COMMENCING WITH MARCH MEETING *****

NEXT MEETING: will be held on Monday 13th March at the Fairy Meadow Community Centre, corner of Cambridge Street and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, (old library and Baby Health Centre opposite Franklins Supermarket) commencing at 7.30 p.m. There is plenty of on street parking in Cambridge Street and limited parking on the Princes Highway - be sure not to park in the bus zone. Please note that all traffic leaving Cambridge Street onto the Princes Highway must turn left, heading north towards Bulli. For those people wishing to travel south, continue down and left along Cambridge Street into Guest Avenue which exits onto the Princes Highway. Our Guest Speakers for the evening will be "Nine Intrepid Travellers" (Lydia & Bob David, Hazel & Wal Emery, Rita & Ron Imisides, Dave Thomson and Nola & Laurie Williams) who would like to share 25,000 kilometres and four and a half months with you as they travelled on a trip to Western Australia.

NEXT FIELD OUTING: will be held on Saturday 18 March to Georges River Nature Reserve. We will meet in Woodlands Road, about 150 metres on the left after turning right at the traffic lights just past where the Appin-Campbelltown road divides into four lanes. From the meeting place we will drive to separate parking spots, then walk to the river from each of these. Bring a carry lunch. Jack Hyslop will lead the walk.

WEDNESDAY WALK: The next one will be on 5 April to Blackbutt Reserve, off Shell-harbour Road. Meet at the top car parking area at 8.30 a.m. Bring morning tea.

Please note: the wrong telephone number for The Hales was shown in the February newsletter, the correct number is 844266 and the correct post code for Chris Brandis is 2528. I would like to blame the computer for these errors but, as I am so frequently told, "You only get out what you put in." (I am still not convinced) B. Hales.

PAYMENT OF FEES.

Subscriptions for 1995 are well and truly overdue. In order to make life easier for the volunteers who are compiling a membership list for distribution, fees **MUST** be paid by the March meeting. Those who have not paid by then will not receive, nor be included in, the membership list.

FEBRUARY MONTHLY MEETING

The speaker for the evening was well known bird and nature photographer Graeme Chapman who retired from the CSIRO a few years ago to spend more time with photography. His theme for the evening was the many factors to consider when taking photographs of birds, and he illustrated his points with examples of slides of birds and scenery. The first requirement is to be a good birdwatcher; Graeme started at age 19 with some of the pioneers such as Arnold McGill and Ellis MacNamara and his skill in finding bird subjects shows in the slides. With detailed knowledge the bird's behaviour can be used to advantage to get into the best position for the opportunity to obtain a good photograph; the rest is up to the person's skills and their choice of equipment.

The use of different brands and types of film and factors such as storage properties and the effect of processing on the published performance of the film have an impact on the longevity of the slide. There is a wide range of lenses available, each with its own characteristics, and some interesting effects can be obtained with their non-standard use; the most expensive is not always the most appropriate. Many effects are noticed only on development of the film, so these hints may save wasted film and give an insight into a possible cause of a problem.

Graeme does not always use a hide but often stalks using a large but stable tripod which can also act as a shield. By walking slowly towards a bird the photographer can take advantage of its poor perception of distance with the absence of sudden movement. Methods used to attract birds include the playing of taped calls, but unless the correct call is used the bird may call all the time or be frightened away if the played call is territorial or alarm. It was interesting to find out that black and white feathers are the most difficult to obtain detail on, and the best lighting is not always compatible with the location, habitat or weather.

Some of the slides were of those difficult-to-find birds such as grasswrens and Banded Whiteface, which I have spent many fruitless hours trying to track down. The range of Australian habitats shown illustrate the extent to which Graeme has travelled to take many of his marvellous slides, some being the result of sheer dogged determination, others resulting from pure chance.

Chris Chafer gave the vote of thanks on behalf of the good turnout of members and friends for a very educational and enjoyable evening which would be of value to both beginners and old hands alike.

Chris Brandis

WINDANG ESTUARY WALK

On Wednesday 8 February 28 members of IBOC and 3 children met at the eastern end of the pine trees on the northern side of the Windang estuary for our first outing of the year. It was a perfect evening, warm and bright, with a cool breeze. We set off quite close to the published starting time and wandered along a paved path, then a sandy track, and then along the firm sand at the water's edge, stopping frequently to identify the various species of bird life, most of which were obliging enough to sit or stand still for long enough to be identified.

We saw Little Terns, Pied Cormorants, Black Cormorants, Little Pied Cormorants, Little Black Cormorants, and a Great Cormorant, Pelicans looking like giants among the smaller birds, and, of course, the ubiquitous Silver Gulls, all with their faces turned to the breeze.

A most noticeable feature of this area was the worm castings, giving a textured look to the otherwise unremarkable flat areas of sand. The shells were few, sun-bleached and mainly broken; there was scarcely any shellgrit, but no matter, who keeps chooks nowadays?

Further out towards the sea there was quite a bit of drying seaweed - Neptune's necklace, coral weed, and float weed but mainly kelp, and while there were some keen gardeners among us, no-one had a plastic bag.

There was no smell from the lake, but a nice fresh sea smell came in with the nor'easter. The lake was not open, the tide was well out and some of the faster walkers went out to Windang Island where they found rusted tramway tracks and in the rocks, cemented there by generations of small tube worms, were several pairs of metal wheels still with parts of their flanges attached, also a lot of latite boulders, transported to their present position on those tracks and wheels to form a breakwater; all of which was part of a grand plan for Lake Illawarra to be the main harbour on the south coast.

These plans, like many before and after, came to nothing, but now plans have been revived to make Windang Island a tombolo by means of a wall from Lake Illawarra South with sand dunes to protect it, a permanent dredged entrance to the north and a 650 metre long retaining wall to the north of the present embankment.

With this work, like most things in life, we have to take the good with the bad: Warilla Beach will not erode so much, Perkins Beach will erode more, the lake will neither smell nor flood so much; the prawns and fish will like it, but the birds won't because of a 16% reduction in the sandy shallows and shoals, the habitat of most of the birds we see on this outing. The species most likely to be disturbed are Little Tern, Sanderling, Great Knot, Large Sand Plover, Mongolian Plover, Pied Oystercatcher, Broad-billed Sandpiper and Terek Sandpiper.

Windang Estuary Walk (contd.)

On our way back to the cars there was an unexpected and interesting sighting of a Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo. Also seen were Masked Lapwing, White-faced Heron and a Black-shouldered Kite. In all we saw 19 species. How many will we see and what progress (?) will have been made on our next Windang Estuary outing?

We had our tea in comfortable, well maintained and, as yet, non-vandalised shelter sheds. There were no ants or flies and only a few mosquitoes on our picnic, and a good time was had by all (including the mosquitoes?).

Peggy Merrett

URBAN BOWERBIRD UPDATE

The urban bowerbird in our garden has shown his ability to follow the latest trends yet again. Forget about dual occupancy, last year he built to a 3 avenue 4 wall design. There is the standard bower, but on the northern and southern sides he has built 2 further walls. Unfortunately the bower is so placed that I, not being a skilled photographer, have not been able to capture the structure clearly on film, so I am providing a simple floor plan.



Mary Eskdale

OBSERVATIONS IN THE RAIN

During the late afternoon of 1 November (after the Melbourne Cup had finished!) a series of thunderstorms passed over Barren Grounds, bringing a couple of hours of (welcome) rain.

In the trees opposite the warden's house, members of a party of 8 to 10 Gang-gang Cockatoos were seen to react quite differently to the rain. The majority were content to perch quietly and let their plumage cope with the downpour, but 2 or 3 birds flew excitedly from branch to branch, and spent several short periods suspended upside-down from small twigs, with their wings widespread.

I've seen galahs and some species of pigeon lifting their wings to 'present' their underwings to the elements while on the ground, but I've never before seen these acrobatics by the gang-gangs. Is it a common phenomenon?

Meanwhile, after several weeks of near silence, at least two of our local Superb Lyrebirds were in fine voice during the rain. Coincidence?

Paul Stubbs

FEBRUARY MONTHLY OUTING

On Sunday 19 February - a cool, sunny day, perfect walking weather - 25 members and 4 children met at the junction of the Wombeyan Caves and Berrima Roads, near Mittagong. From here we played 'follow the leader' past the disused mine washery and down an extremely steep incline and onto the property known as 'The Crags' for reasons which were very apparent. This property was originally one farm but now it consists of a cluster of houses of various styles and building materials, used as weekenders by the owners.

Huge electricity pylons march across this lovely valley but the houses aren't connected; the original owners have a small solar-powered battery which gives them enough electricity to run a few household items plus a small television set.

We started walking along a narrow dirt road, past bright green paddocks and stands of Eucalyptus agglomerata (I know because there was a label on one saying so), heard Eastern Yellow Robins and Wonga Pigeons calling, passed beehives but there didn't seem to be much blossom for the bees to busy themselves with. We walked (quickly) over ant beds and the ants were busy running back and forth, but to what purpose we couldn't tell.

We had morning tea at Gap Creek, in a most attractive spot with flat rocks, clear running water and small dark water skippers - indicators of clear water - which the children caught with glee.

Soon we were off again, across the lovely green paddocks from where we saw, under the power lines, black slippery rocks, as steep as the slippery dip at Luna Park, where four people have slipped to their deaths in very few years, past the houses and through an orchard containing an olive tree which looked strangely alien. All the other trees looked quite at home although they were exotic. Along a track which became progressively steeper and rougher, and guided by the sound of running water, we passed through bracken, maiden hair and spiky lomandra, coming to the Nattai River.

In a pleasant place, shaded by she-oaks, with rocks large and small, small pools of water, small rills and large sheets of water, all looking nice and cool on an increasingly hot day, we decided to explore and then have lunch. Here we saw Rufous Fantail and Azure Kingfisher and heard Brown Thornbill. Some of the more energetic members went exploring and found a small tunnel into the coal seam but the 'coal' looked poor and felt greasy. Here the children saw a snake sheltering under a rock and caught a large yabby; here we dined, though not on crustacea. In this area we also saw Golden Whistler, Leaden Flycatcher and Australian Magpie.

In due course it was time to head for the cars; on the way we saw Crimson Rosellas and Galahs and when we were close to the houses a large goanna made our day. He was 4 to 5 feet long, about 10 feet up a large tree, and had very powerful-looking legs and claws. His tail and legs were most attractively banded with yellow stripes and he moved only his head as we passed by. Past the houses we joined a track and went by a fig tree doing its best to split a large rock in half, went along past huge sandstone cliffs (crags?) in shades of brown-grey and orange, saw what looked like a raptor dropping onto a ledge but couldn't locate it, although we did see a Yellow-rumped Thornbill.

In all we saw 35 species of bird, one yabby, one snake and one goanna, and had a delightful day. Many thanks for it, Laurie.

Peggy Merrett

..... contd.

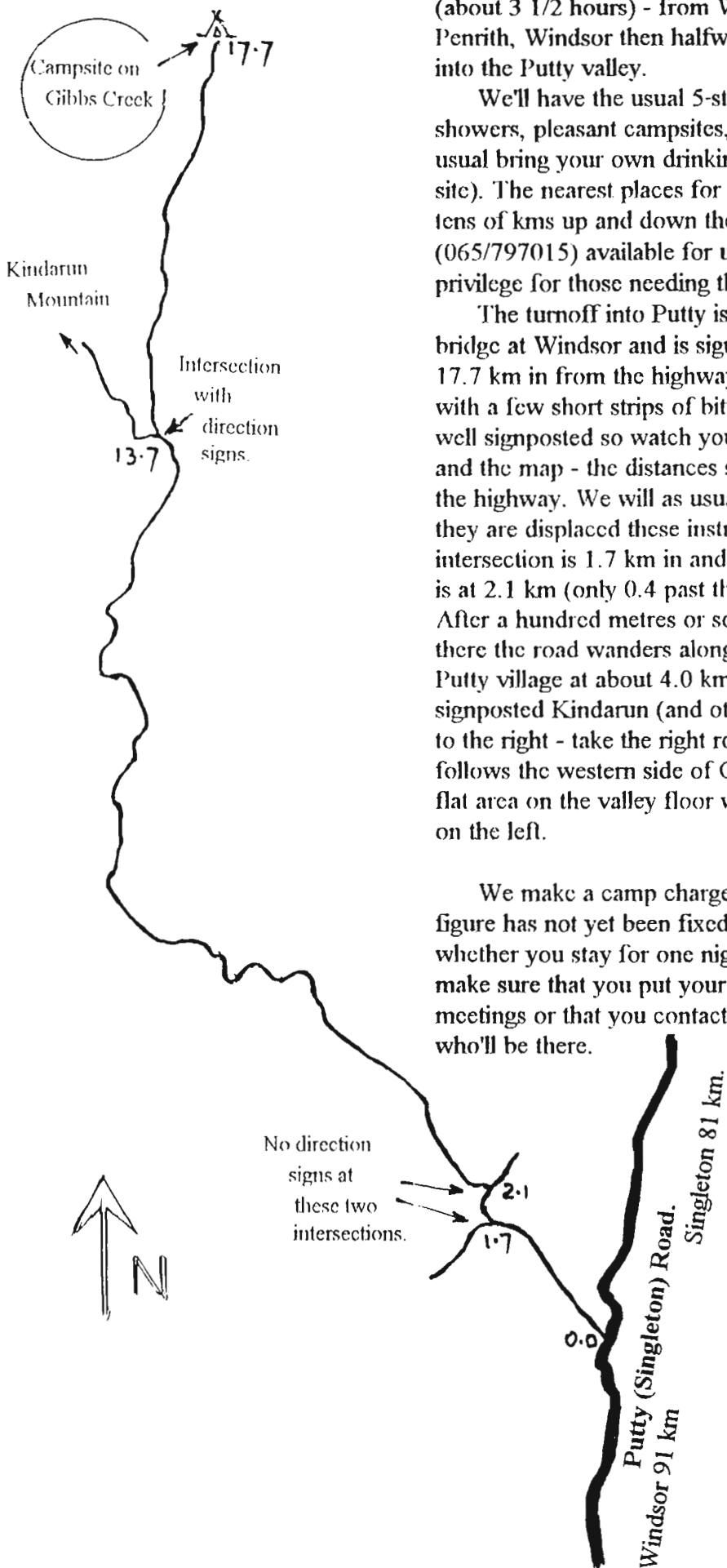
I.B.O.C Camp • Easter 1995.

Our Easter camp this year will run from Friday 14th April to Saturday 22nd April and will be on the property of Mr M. Williams on Gibbs Creek, Putty. It's about 230 km from Wollongong (about 3 1/2 hours) - from Wollongong to Na rellan, Bringelly, Penrith, Windsor then halfway up the Putty (Singleton) Road and into the Putty valley.

We'll have the usual 5-star accommodation with toilet, hot showers, pleasant campsites, good company, plenty of birds. Also as usual bring your own drinking water (although there will be some on site). The nearest places for minor shopping are petrol stations some tens of kms up and down the highway. There is a phone (065/797015) available for urgent incoming calls - this is a special privilege for those needing that sort of contact so we mustn't abuse it.

The turnoff into Putty is 92 km north of the Hawkesbury River bridge at Windsor and is signposted on the highway. The campsite is 17.7 km in from the highway, the road in being reasonable gravel with a few short strips of bitumen. Two of the intersections are not well signposted so watch your odometer and follow these instructions and the map - the distances shown on the map (and here) are from the highway. We will as usual have a trail of IBOC signs but in case they are displaced these instructions will get you there. The first intersection is 1.7 km in and you take the right hand road. The next is at 2.1 km (only 0.4 past the first) and here you take the left road. After a hundred metres or so you cross a wooden bridge and from there the road wanders along the valley floor, passing through old Putty village at about 4.0 km. At 13.7 km there is an intersection signposted Kindarun (and other things) to the left and Gibbs Creek to the right - take the right road. The remaining 4 km to the campsite follows the western side of Gibbs Creek. The campsite is on a clear flat area on the valley floor with the owner's weekender perched up on the left.

We make a camp charge on adults only and while the actual figure has not yet been fixed, it will be of the order of \$5 per adult whether you stay for one night or for the week. If you intend going, make sure that you put your name on the list which will circulate at meetings or that you contact a committee member - we need to know who'll be there.



CMA 1/25,000 maps Putty & Kindarun cover area well.

..... contd.

CAPE YORK IN THE WET

In January Carol and I and Diana Wright had a trip to Pajinka Wilderness Lodge at the tip of Cape York. The Lodge, situated 400 metres from the tip of the Cape, is now managed by the Injinoo people. It has a camping area and provides accommodation in self-contained and fully serviced cabins. All meals, which were varied and sumptuous, were served buffet style in a comfortable open dining area beside the pool. The staff were friendly and efficient and there was a small library, laundry and shop. There were self-guided walks for the local area, and guided nature, birdwatching, historical and fishing tours were provided by arrangement with the permanent staff.

The resident naturalist was very well informed and conscientious in finding the birds we wanted to see. He had prepared a list of 237 species for the immediate area. The highlights for us were the Red-bellied Pitta, Chestnut-breasted Cuckoo, some good views of various waders and fruit pigeons and doves, the White-tailed and Yellow-bellied Kingfishers, nesting Papuan and Marbled Frogmouths, Tawny-breasted Honeyeater, Manucodes and Magnificent Riflebird. In the evenings we were entertained by geckoes which kept the mosquitoes down around the accommodation, and we also spotted a cuscus in the Lockerby Scrub and a saltwater crocodile in the sea off the tip.

Getting to the Lodge involves a two-hour flight from Cairns to Bamaga, followed by a 40 to 60 minute 4WD trip to the tip.

Barry Virtue

TRAVELLING COMPANION WANTED

The following correspondence was recently received from David Winterbottom:

Darwin-Wollongong 19 or 24 June to 19 July 1995

My wife and I are planning a bird trip around Australia from May to July. We have a small four wheel drive vehicle and will be towing a small caravan. Unfortunately Elizabeth has to fly back to Wollongong on 24 June. An opportunity exists for one or two people to finish the trip back on a pay for food/drink plus airfare to Darwin (c.\$450) only basis. 19-24 June will be in Kakadu. The proposed route is Tennant Creek, Bourketown, Atherton, Carnarvon, Currawinya, Grenfell, Wollongong. Only requirements are to be keen on birds, tolerant of classical music, and a reasonably early riser. Anybody interested please contact David Winterbottom on 28 4909.

AUSTRALIAN BIRD STUDY ASSOCIATION

On Saturday 4 February the ABSA held a day of ornithological talks at Macquarie University. Five IBOC members attended, one of whom was one of the speakers.

The first speaker was Graham Fry whose topic was the "analysis of historical and recent data on the Golden Plover from Kooragang Island, Newcastle". Graham explained that there are three species of Golden Plover: *Pluvialis fulva* (Pacific Golden Plover), *Pluvialis dominica* (American Golden Plover), *Pluvialis apricaria* (Eurasian Golden Plover), the first mentioned being the species occurring on the eastern coast of Australia during the austral summer. The bird breeds in the Arctic tundra and migrates to Australia and the Pacific Islands. Research records from Kooragang Island date from the 1960s - there have been 23 retraps from 363 banded birds. The birds increase their body weight from 120/130 gram to 180 gram (approx. 45%) in preparation for migration to the breeding grounds. Very few birds overwinter in NSW or Victoria, but larger numbers do in Queensland; this could be due to many first year birds not returning to their breeding grounds. Bird counts from 1986 to 1994 show a serious decline in numbers. There has been only one recovery of an overseas-banded bird in Australia, and one of an Australian-banded bird recovered overseas.

We don't know the breeding site of this species, its migration route or why its population is declining.

Future plans include leg flagging all banded birds, establishing collaborative research with scientists in Russia, and the protection of habitat.

Richard Major then spoke about the predators in our midst. 2000 artificial Willie Wagtail nests were made by cutting tennis balls in half, and 4000 "eggs" were made from plasticine. These were posted out to volunteers, with instructions to attach the nests to branches for 14 days. 1800 of the 2000 nests were returned, and any marks on the eggs were examined. It was found that 64% of the nests were preyed on, large beak marks outnumbering small beak marks by approx. 2:1. Predation by cats, rats, possums and parrots accounted for about 6% of incidents. Predation rates were greater in those nests which were located on high branches compared with those on lower branches. Where predation was observed, 52% of 134 involved currawongs. Currawongs are omnivores, that is they eat berries, insects, eggs and nestlings; they appear to be the most common predator of nests in urban areas.

After the lunch break an address was given by the keynote speaker Geoff Ross from the National Parks and Wildlife Service on the Little Terns in Botany Bay. The species is considered to be endangered in the US, the UK and Australia, and the threats faced include humans, dogs, foxes, birds of

prey, ravens, seagulls, and climatic conditions. Little Terns arrive in Botany Bay each September and begin their courtship. Colonies have nested at Penrhyn Inlet, Sydney Airport and on a sand spit adjacent to Towra Point Nature Reserve. 1992/3 was a good season with 98 young fledging from 108 eggs, but 1993/4 saw only 2 birds hatch and these were taken by foxes within 12 hours. The current 1994/5 season has seen 107 eggs, with more than 39 (and a possible 77) young fledge. In 1993 the NPWS, in conjunction with the Federal Airports Corporation, began a conservation program for the Little Tern in Botany Bay. The aim is to remove disturbance to the colony by humans, their pets, and foxes.

Kevin Wood then spoke on the movements of the Spangled Drongo in Eastern Australia. Drongoes breed from Cape York down to Coffs Harbour. After late spring/early summer some birds move north to New Guinea, some south to Victoria, and some don't migrate. They are known as "partial migrants" in Queensland, and "partial nomads" in northern NSW. At 26 to 29° south (Gympie to Lismore) they have been found to be abundant at low altitudes in winter, while being absent at high altitudes, suggesting that some altitudinal migration occurs. Their southerly movement along the east coast may be due to the presence of flowering banksias associated with tall heaths.

Durno Murray then spoke to the meeting about albatross movements. It is now standard to track albatross via satellite, and it has been found that they make long forward and return trips to foraging areas to collect food for their chicks. In the non-breeding season the bird flies to a good feeding area and wanders, travelling with the wind. Locally the birds move west about 200 Km off the Australian coast, travelling towards a breeding site in the Indian Ocean, and generally staying below 30° S. A bird's positions can be superimposed on weather maps and its locations looked at with regard to high and low pressure systems. The temperature of a tracking device will rise if the bird is sitting, standing or floating on water; visits to a high-sited nest can be detected by a drop in the pressure measured by a barometer on the bird.

Robyn Wilson

LIBRARY NEWS

Our extensive library continues to grow with the addition of six books in 1994:

The Impact of Cats on Native Wildlife, by Catheryne Potter
Illustrated Dictionary of Australian Birds, by J.D.McDonald
Birds of the World, by Colin Harrison and Alan Greensmith
Rare and Vanishing Australian Birds, by Peter Slater
Bird Wonders of Australia, by A.H. Chisolm
The Reader's Digest Field Guide

We now have nine volumes in the National Photographic Index of Australian Wildlife. They are:

- 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 Birds of Australia
- Cuckoos, Nightbirds and Kingfishers of Australia

These books have been extremely popular with members.

For the serious student or researcher we have many copies of journals and newsletters such as Smoke Signals, Gang Gang, Corella, Emu, The Wet-lander and Australian Birds.

Green Mountains, by Bernard O'Reilly is an interesting book to read for those going on the Binna Burra trip in September. It tells the true story of the crash of a Stinson airliner in the McPherson Range and the memorable rescue which followed.

We also have now 8 cassettes in the Australian Birdsong series, up to Halls Babbler.

Books, cassettes and newsletters are available for borrowing by club members. Borrowing time is one month, and for the convenience of every-one would you please return your books at the following meeting. The library is open 20 minutes before and 20 minutes after each meeting. Hope you all have enjoyable reading.

Olive Rodwell

NEW BOOKS AVAILABLE

Large Forest Owls, published by the NSW FOC has three articles on these owls, mainly by Stephen Debus, with a contribution by Chris Chafer on the Powerful Owl. The cost is \$3.50.

The Taxonomy and Species of Birds of Australia and its Territories gives the latest in the recommended English names, the "lumps" and "splits" currently accepted, and the rationale behind the decisions, by Les Christidis and Walter Boles. It is available from the RAOU for \$18.00 plus postage.

Cuckoos, Nightbirds and Kingfishers is the latest in the National Photographic Index series and is available with the Club discount for \$65.00.

Anyone interested please see Chris Brandis for further details on these plus other books, badges, etc. which are in stock or available for order.

OWLS THRICE OVER

On a late afternoon walk on the eve of Australia Day I decided to explore the south-west sector of the old Excelsior Colliery, Thirroul, and for a change carry on through to view the beginnings of the new subdivision, Sylvan Woods, at the top of Fords Road. On the way I disturbed a good two dozen Topknot Pigeons from out of the top of the only fig tree on the property; the first time I had seen any at that particular spot. Also, there had recently been a reappearance of flying foxes there after a gap of fourteen years, though in the meantime I had heard them from time to time closer to home.

Upon re-entry into the Excelsior I stopped to suss out the cause of a Black-faced Monarch's alarm notes, joined in by a Lewin Honeyeater and an Eastern Yellow Robin. I suspected a roosting Boobook, after previous similar experiences. Yes, there, about seven metres up in a laurel tree, diagonally across from the fig, sat an owl, staring down at me; its size, however, was about double the Mopoke's. Down on the ground below were splotches of bird droppings. I hastened back home for the binoculars. Often the way, isn't it?

Fortunately, the owl was still there. I could now pick out a suspended dead creature, which seemed to be wedged in the fork where it was roosting. I was amazed at the size of Ninox's talons. Taking into further account the brown shallow V-shaped barrings across its front and rather mottled head, I began to form a provisional diagnosis, but needed more plumage confirmation. When I tapped the tree-trunk a few times, the owl obligingly flew a short distance to the other side of the track into the more open canopy of a taller gum and with its back to the descending sun, which highlighted the whitish markings on its dark brown back and wings.

When the owl took off and landed, it carried the dead remains, of which I could see some dangling black claws and greyish feathers. It continued to clutch its prey when it moved to another position in a coral tree, bordering the main track, where I left it in peace, satisfied and elated that, after fifteen years of surveying the Old Excel, I had now observed my first Powerful Owl. A mighty experience! I shall now try and tune in to any nocturnal woo-hooings in the area.

Coincidentally, that same afternoon my daughter, Diana, in one of her periodic clean-ups and rearranging of her bedroom, tossed out a hanging knitted ornamental owl that nanna had made some years ago. Worthy of protection, like the real thing, it now features in my room as a memento of my day's findings.

Two days later I visited Featherdale Wildlife Park, Doonside, having missed the IBOC trip last May. There it was good to spend much time observing the Powerful Owl and the rest of the fine collection of hawk- and barn owls, particularly at their late afternoon feed of young chicks, though the Grass Owl wouldn't venture up on to the wood block till I was safely out of sight. These lines from 'Punch', penned 120 years ago, sprang to my mind:

Here was an old owl lived in an oak.
The more he heard, the less he spoke;
The less he spoke, the more he heard.
O, if men were all like that wise bird!

Mike Morphet
February 1st, 1995

WHAT DO YOU THINK??

With my back to the window, I was suddenly startled by a loud banging on the glass to see, when I turned, nothing but a bird in flight.

With our reflective solar glass, we sometimes have a bird wrongly assume that there's a flight passage through our home from front to back, but in those cases it's always a dull thud with casualties of varying degrees of severity. But this was no THUD. Rather, it was like a rapid firing of bullets from a machine gun as experienced only on the telly. Could it have been the bird?

We were not left wondering for long when a Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, hereafter referred to as the BFCS, came and sat on the railing facing us (but he didn't know WE were among the trees on the other side), then, with direct aim, he flew at us, banging loudly and rapidly on the glass while descending the window until his altimeter registered dangerously low, and he took off around the house. After a couple of turns with the rapid-fire he simply zoomed past all five windows, flying so close to the glass that I thought his wings touched, but other members of the audience thought it was a clacking noise he (ie the BFCS) made with his wings, and over the roof.

Over a period of 3-4 weeks we were to be entertained by this performance with no consistency of pattern in the number of performances, their times of day or days of the week. Sometimes the banging came as early as 6 am when those of us over the age of 10, if not already awake, soon were. Sometimes it was midday, mid-afternoon or early evening. Sometimes it was the window on the left where a silhouette of a bird of prey is permanently in flight, precisely to deter any bird from the assumption previously suggested. Sometimes it was the window on the right where rests no such silhouette. Sometimes we had the flight past several times without any banging on the glass. Sometimes he (ie the BFCS) sat in contemplation before darting at US, or rather at that other bird on the other side.

Now, the question is, "What do YOU think?"

Was he trying to destroy the bird of prey? He (ie the BFCS) was never satisfied with one direct hit. Was he trying to intimidate the bird on the other side - the opposition, so to speak? Was he simply providing entertainment for those of us in holiday mood with nothing specific to do all day? Was he, as children might, simply enjoying his own mirrored performance? Or, yet again, did he believe there was a page of IBOC News needing to be filled, and it was high time Norma A. made some insignificant but long-winded contribution? AND where is he (ie the BFCS) NOW???

Norma Almond

..... contd.

WEDNESDAY WALKS FOR 1995

- March 1: Botanic Gardens, Keiraville
Meet at Murphys Avenue car park, 8.30 a.m.
- April 5: Blackbutt Reserve, off Shellharbour Road
Meet at the top parking area, 8.30 a.m.
- May 3: Bellambi Lagoon area
Meet at the boat ramp car park, 8.30 a.m.
- June 7: Wilson Creek
Meet at Helensburgh station, 8.30 a.m.
- July 5: St Mary's Towers, Douglas Park
Meet at the gates, 8.30 a.m.
- August 2: Scout Camp and Robertson Lookout
Meet in the scout camp car park, 8.30 a.m.
- September 6: The Royal National Park
Meet at Bald Hill, 8.30 a.m.
- October: No walk
- November 1: Bass Point
Meet in the car park, 8.30 a.m.
- December 6: Puckeys Estate
Meet in the car park, 8.30 a.m.

SHOALHAVEN BIRDWATCHING OUTINGS

- MARCH: Sunday 19, Sussex Inlet; meet at Navy Jet at 8.30 a.m.
- APRIL: 14 to 17, Easter Camp at Copper Cup Point.
- MAY: Sunday 21, Fitzroy Falls/Highlands; meet at Information Centre at 9 a.m.
- JUNE: Sunday 18, Attahua Farm, Sassafras; meet at Navy Jet at 9am.
- JULY: Sunday 16, Foxground/Hoddles Track; meet at Free Selectors Road at 9 a.m.
- AUGUST: Sunday 20, Honeymoon Bay/Green Point; meet at Navy Jet at 8.30 a.m.
- SEPTEMBER: Sunday 17, Budderoo NP/Gerringong Falls; meet Berry Apex Park at 8.30 a.m.
- OCTOBER: Saturday & Sunday 21 & 22, Wingello Camp.
- NOVEMBER: Sunday 19, Barren Grounds NR; meet at Berry Apex Park at 8.30 a.m.
- DECEMBER: Sunday 17, Seven Mile Beach NP, barbecue at Virtues'; meet at 5 p.m.

CONTACTS: Diana (044) 218426; Barry & Carol (044) 641389

..... contd.

Unusual Records for January/February 1995

Chris J. Chafer

Status	Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
R	Least Frigatebird	1	22/2	Hyams Beach	overhead	PG
S	Glossy Ibis	1	Dec94	Yallah	road kill	MR
R	Pacific Baza	1	Feb	Mt. Kembla	forest	J&TW
R	Square-tailed Kite	1	5/2	Bomaderry	overhead	B&CV
U	Peregrine Falcon	1	21/2	Lake Heights	overhead	CJC
R	Spotted Harrier	1	10/1	Dunmore	grassland	RJ&CW
U	Buff-banded Rail	2+5c	12/2	Corrimal Heights	urban	PM
U	Stubble Quail	4	10/1	Dunmore	grassland	RJ&CW
MC	Painted Button-quail	1	11/2	Beach Rd., Berry	-	B&CV
MC*	Double-banded Plover	1	10/2	L.Wollumboola	mudflat	CJC
R	Pectoral Sandpiper	1	10/2	L.Wollumboola	lacustral	CJC
S	White-winged Tern	5	10/2	L.Wollumboola	lacustral	CJC
S	White-winged Tern	1	25/1	L.Wollumboola	lacustral	CB
MC	Little Tern	132	10/2	L.Wollumboola	lacustral	CJC
R	Little Corella	2	6/2	Wollongong Uni.	parkland	CJC
R	Sooty Owl	1	10/1	Jamberoo Mtn.	forest	RJ&CW
R	Fork-tailed Swift	1	12/2	Mt. Warrigal	overhead	CB
U	European Blackbird	1	Jan	Towradgi	urban	B&BH
R	Regent Honeyeater	8	Dec94	Lake Conjola	forest	B&CV
S	Brown Songlark	5	10/1	Dunmore	grassland	RJ&CW
U	Red-browed Treecreeper	1	22/2	Jervis Bay NP	forest	DW
R	Figbird	1	10/1	Windang	fig tree	RJ&CW
U*	Spangle Drongo	1	22/2	East Nowra	urban	DW

* indicated first return of season

CB-Chris Brandis; CJC-Chris Chafer; PG-Pat Green; B&BH-Brian & Barbara Hales;
 RJ-Richard Jordon; PM-Peg McKinlay; MR-Mark Robinson; B&CV-Barry & Carol Virtue;
 CW-Chris Wilder; DW-Diana Wright; J&TW-J&T Wylie.

Comment:

The Least Frigatebird is only the second known observation from this region, the previous being 5 March 1983. The Pacific Baza's have now been observed on several occasions from Mt. Kembla and together with a juvenile recorded at Yallah TAFE in December by Mark Robinson, constitute the most southern records for this species in eastern Australia. There is an unconfirmed report of Square-tailed Kites breeding in the Nowra area, and the observation reported here is consistent with recent observations of single birds from that area. In recent years there have been a number of observation of Spotted Harrier from the Minnamurra Valley. The Glossy Ibis record is the first for the region since two were observed at Killalea Lagoon in Feb 1986. The Blackbird is the first record of this species on the coastal plain away from the Balgownie area. Return dates for Spangled Drongo and Double-banded Plover are within their normal range.

As I have said elsewhere the first annual bird report for the Illawarra\Shoalhaven region is currently being compiled. Last year members contributed over 800 records to the unusual records scheme including four species not previously recorded from the region. I hope to have the report ready for May at this stage. If anyone has outstanding records for 1994 that they would like to submit for inclusion, please send them to me no later than the end of March, all records are welcome.

69 Lake Heights Rd. Lake Heights 2502 ph: (042) 763 871.

I. B. O. C. News

NO. 180

APRIL 1995



THE CIRCULAR OF THE ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.
POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 56, FAIRY MEADOW, N.S.W. 2519.

CLUB MOTTO: "ONE GOOD TERN DESERVES ANOTHER"

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THE CLUB'S AIM IS TO JOIN TOGETHER PEOPLE WITH A COMMON INTEREST WHO WISH TO FURTHER THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND ENJOYMENT OF THE BIRDLIFE AROUND THEM

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS due 1st January each year: FAMILY \$20 SINGLE \$15 JUNIOR \$5

***** COMING EVENTS *****

NEXT MEETING: will be held on Monday 10 April at the Fairy Meadow Community Centre, corner of Cambridge Street and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow (opposite Franklins Supermarket), commencing at 7.30 p.m. Our guest speaker for the evening will be Dr Kris French who is a lecturer in biological sciences at the University of Wollongong. Kris is on the council of the RAOU and she also chairs the Regent Honeyeater recovery team in the Capertee mallee. Tonight Kris' talk will be "Conservation of the Regent Honeyeater".

PLEASE NOTE: Due to the Easter camp there will not be a full day walk in April. The camp is to be held at Putty from 14 to 22 April. All details were published in the March newsletter.

WEDNESDAY WALKS: 5 April at Blackbutt Reserve, off Shellharbour Road. Meet at the top carpark at 8.30 a.m., morning tea in hand.

3 May to Bellambi Lagoon area. Meet at the boat ramp at 8.30 a.m.

FILM NIGHTS: As usual there will be four film nights, commencing in May. Please note that film nights occur on the Saturday night **before** the monthly Monday meeting.

The first one will be held on 6 May at the home of Norma Almond, 2 Shoobert Cres, Keiraville, commencing at 7.30 p.m. sharp. We have some superb new films to show, so come along and bring a camp chair (if you have one) and a plate of supper to share afterwards.

You are assured of some excellent viewing including brand new releases courtesy of Lindsay Smith, plus other donations from our WA travellers and Jack Hyslop.

We are sorry to have to inform you of the sudden death last month of Carol Virtue. Carol had been a club member for 17 years, and her warm and friendly manner will be sadly missed by her many birdo friends. Our deepest sympathy goes to Barry and Sally in their tragic loss.

MARCH MONTHLY MEETING

This was our first evening in the brand new Senior Citizens Club premises right in Fairy Meadow, and an open airy place it is too. Brian Hales presented Barbara Hales with the dearest thing to his heart, other than herself, for her tireless efforts in running Club business - yes, a Puffin from the Exeter Scottish Shop. For the effort he has also put in he purchased a mate of Barbara's one for himself.

For the evening the The Nine Intrepid Travellers pooled some of their best slides from the over 1500 taken to give us the highlights of the four and a half month, 25,000 km trip around Australia. Wal Emery outlined the trip's route with the aid of a slide of a map of Australia and pointed out some of the country that the group visited before splitting up at Whyalla and heading home in separate parties.

Dave Thomson talked us through the slides and with maps projected on to another screen we always knew where these out of the way places were. The interspersed bird slides were by Ron Imisides and included such gems as Gouldian Finches and Hooded Parrots. The Trip started in June 1994 after 12 months of planning by Dave, and headed up through central Queensland where they dipped out on the Carpentarian Grasswren but found Letter-winged Kites, on to the Kimberleys in search of the Black Grasswren, which was seen by only a few lucky ones. The scenery at the Bungles was spectacular, especially from the helicopter, and then on to Derby to visit Sister Patricia via the Wolf Creek Meteor Crater, then over to the blue waters of Broome and the waders. One of the disappointing birds for Ron was the rare nomadic Grey Honeyeater, as it was very plain, very quiet and most unhoneyeater-like. Down the coast of WA to see the stromatolites and the Snotty Gobble plant as well as having Thick-billed Grasswrens hopping around the camp. The tickbites at Dryandra State Forest itched for weeks longer than normal, so those proposing to find the Numbat there should be careful. Then down to the south west of WA where the group left Ron and Rita seeking the secret three at Two Peoples Bay Nature Reserve, an eight day but successful search, and then on to the Nullarbor where they found a Long-toed Stint at the Nullarbor Road House desalination plant. After a few days at Port Lincoln NP the 9 people who had set off together and travelled without as much as a harsh word made plans to go back to Wollongong separately. Although the slides were only a fraction of the ones taken they had us all green with envy and further slide evenings will be arranged for later to give those interested a more indepth view of the places we just touched on or missed altogether in the short time allowed. Thanks all for a very interesting evening.

Chris Brandis

MARCH MONTHLY OUTING

On Saturday 18 March only six members turned up for the walk in the Georges River Nature Reserve. Perhaps the predicted 32° heat turned some people off. (Others went to Steelers Stadium - Ed.) We followed Jack's car along Georges River Road and turned right into Freres Road. Here there was a very heavy-duty steel gate closing off the remainder of the road down to Freres Crossing. It was a wide gravel road with a gentle slope even though we were high above the river. As we descended we had an excellent view into the treetops on the lower side, as we were more or less level with them. Here we saw Willie Wagtail, Eastern Yellow Robin, Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, Rufous Whistler, Brown Thornbill, Grey Fantail and Eastern Spinebill. We also saw flowering Geebung and many Flannel Flower still in bloom.

When we reached the river we each found a comfortable rock in the shade for our morning tea. Overhead we saw a raptor - agreed it was a falcon, but that's as close as we got with identification. The walk back up the hill wasn't too bad as it was a gradual rise and we had the excitement of seeing Rockwarbler on the road in front of us, then hopping swiftly over the rocks which rose on one side of the road. We were soon back at the cars where we heard Spotted Pardalote, but of course didn't see them.

We continued on the Georges River Road to the dead end. Here we walked down the track known locally as the Unemployment Track. We saw Grey Butcherbird and Laughing Kookaburra on the first part of the track. Pretty cream wattle and white rice flower were in bloom. Once we began to descend to the river crowea grew in the cracks and crevices - most unfriendly places.

The story goes that the track was built in the 1920s and 30s by men on the dole. It is an amazing piece of construction. You can still see the drill holes made for blasting out the rock, and, on the low side, the build-up of rocks to make the track. It actually goes nowhere - only down to the river - so the story of this track is something of a mystery. We followed it down to where Peter Meadows Creek joins the Georges River. There is a State Survey Mark, No. 5976, on one of the rocks.

We had lunch here and waited patiently for the birds. Nearby the sound of a small rapid interrupted the silence. The mirror-like surface of the water upstream formed a skating rink for dozens of insects darting from place to place. Small fry swimming in the shallows must have had an unusual view of these activities. Occasionally a light breeze would travel along the surface, disturbing the reflections and cooling us down. We neither saw nor heard any birds in this beautiful place.

The climb back up to the cars was a slow, hot journey but we took our time. Again we didn't see any birds despite stopping quite often for a look. Our bird tally was a modest 14 species but we had an enjoyable day out in the bush. These beautiful spots amaze one at times, being so close to a large city. Thank you, Jack, for a lovely day.

Olive Rodwell

BIGNET MEETING ON 11 AND 12 MARCH

COG hosted the meeting held in the pleasant surroundings of the National Botanic Gardens in Canberra. COG have contracted a computer data base architect to design their bird data base to enable the collection and analysis of their records in and around Canberra. The MS Access system has some 11,000 records entered that, via menus, can extract sightings of birds by area by date by observer etc to assist in the compilation of their annual bird report. A problem that the group continually raises is one of defining the data: even the bird names keep changing, the place observed, codes for numbers of birds, habitat, etc are often different at each Club as well as for an individual's records. This makes transfer of data from one group to another very difficult, especially for, say, the NSW Bird Report produced manually by the FOC in conjunction with most Clubs, including our unusual sightings. The Hunter Bird Observers Club tabled their Annual Bird Report, now in our library, and their Garden Bird Survey. They were well done publications but take a lot of work by a few members which makes me think we should stick with an update to the Birds of the County of Camden in the next few years.

Conservation activities of some of the Clubs were discussed, with COG working closely with the Conservation Council to endeavour to save areas such as Mulligan's Flat and trying to get Lakes Bathurst and George declared RAMSAR sites for waterfowl protection. Now that Bruce Lindenmeier has retired he has put a lot of effort into the conservation of ecological communities in the area rather than specific endangered species; the joint submission by 10 or so groups and the constant lobbying has paid off with Mulligan's Flat. The work of the Regent Honeyeater recovery program was outlined and any records of these birds should be reported via record sheets available from myself. The progress of the project will be reported via a regular news letter, "Where the Regents Roam". A request was also made that any incidence of the mimicry by Regent Honeyeaters of other often more aggressive honeyeaters, such as Red Wattlebirds, to minimise conflict, should also be included.

Thanks to COG for the organising of this venue and to all the participants for the lively and stimulating discussion on a wide variety of ornithological subjects. The weekends are a success in just getting together the bird clubs to exchange ideas and describe their activities. Many projects are started by clubs, groups or individuals without being clear on the design of the project which should include :-

- what are the questions to be answered ?
- does the project address these questions with the methodology ?
- does the project answer the original questions ?

If all the answers are 'yes' then the project was a success.

Chris Brandis

The Itinerary.

20th of the 6th, our adventure had begun
There had been a year of planning, for Mark's, final + 1.
The letters + the phone calls had all been sorted out.
The itinerary it was faultless, no one had a doubt?
Our first bush camp was Eulo Bore, the Quail-thrush took first prize,
But the Carpentarian Grasswren soon cut us down to size.
At Lady Loretta + Borrooloola, the itinerary said to try.
Alas we didn't find it. That bird is really shy!
The Gouldian Finch + Hooded Parrot, were added to our list.
At the waterhole at 15ks. That's a place that can't be missed.
Timber Creek + Max's tour, were next on the itinerary,
I must admit the cross were great, but oh! what awful tea!
On the Mitchell + the Bungles we went our separate ways.
But here + there our paths would cross, they really were great days.
Geikie Gorge, then on to Derby, to meet with Sister Pat.
No need to wonder where to next, the itinerary told us that.
Broome, Pt Hedland, Marble Bar, then on to the Hammersley Ranges.
Laurie's axle packed it in, we faced all kinds of dangers.
Asbestos dust, corrugated roads, but never did we falter,
That itinerary took a year to make, it was much too hard to alter.
Cape Range down to Monkey Mia, where dolphins come to play.
The itinerary bent a little bit, we stayed an extra day.
Kalbarri, gee the flowers were great, the scenery was stupendous
Pinnacles, religious art, they really were tremendous.
There were numbats, whales + woylies + quite a lot of birds,
Too much for just one little card, it needs a lot more words.
And now we've crossed the Nullabor, the end is drawing near,
At times we seemed to go so fast, we were there before we were here.
It's really been a marvellous trip, so many lovely places,
Nothing ever stayed the same, so many changing faces.
Thankyou Dave, for a job well done, it's been a great itinerary,
But next time when you work one out, please,
Multiply the time by three.

Wal Emery. 10/94.

In 1978, yep, that far back, the RAOU produced a new set of names for the birds of Oz. It was called the "Recommended English Names for Australian Birds" (REN1978). Some of the names were not well received (THEY even gave a foreign name to OUR Rock Warbler). Despite the reservations of some other clubs, our Club decided to adopt the REN1978 set of names for use in our publications and made this known in an item titled "A Bird By Any Other Name" in our February '85 Newsletter.

Because of the poor acceptance of some names among the birding fraternity (and sorority), to take account of changes in understanding of relationships between birds, to allow for recent arrivals and to now cover our Territories, the RAOU has published (1994) a new set of English Names. It's in a booklet titled "The Taxonomy and Species of Birds of Australia and its Territories" (TSBAT1994), prepared by L.Christidis and W Boles. Our Club was given, and took, an opportunity to influence the new names. Most of the names that we've become accustomed to remain but there are some changes and quite a few additions. Members may be pleased to find that we have some old friends back.

Some of the more commonly used changed names are: Australian Wood Duck (for Maned D.), White-necked Heron (Pacific H.), Nankeen Night Heron (Rufous N.H.), Australian White Ibis (Sacred I.), Swamp Harrier (Marsh H.), Nankeen Kestrel (Australian K.), Stone-curlews (Thicknees), Black-fronted Dotterel (B.f. Plover), Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon), Major Mitchell's Cockatoo (Pink C.), Australian Ringneck (Mallee and Port Lincoln R.), Rockwarbler (Origma), Heathwrens (Hylacolas), Striated and Rufous Fieldwrens (one Calamanthus), Magpie-lark (Australian M.-l.), Red-browed and Painted Finches (R.b. and P. Firetails), Russet-tailed and the local Bassian Thrushes (White's Thrush).

Some of the scientific names also were changed, but in most cases only the first of the two words.

Perhaps the most dramatic feature of the TSBAT1994 publication is the very substantial change in sequence (taxonomic order) of bird families, particularly in the passerines. We've become used to finding quail and button-quail together and we know that the pardalotes are just after the honeyeaters. But not any more. There are also changes of sequence within families but they will probably be more easily dealt with.

The RAOU, as we might expect, will use the new names and sequence in its publications (including IIANZAB) and the "word around the traps" is that the new system will be adopted generally. Those clubs and other groups which have clung to their own (all different) lists will now find it easier to accept the RAOU lead as the objections that they had to REN1978 seem to have been largely addressed. We would expect that new editions of field guides and other bird publications will use the new names and taxonomic order.

Our Committee has considered the issue and has resolved to adopt "The Taxonomy and Species of Birds of Australia and its Territories" (1994) by L.Christidis and W Boles. We will use its names and taxonomic order in the Newsletter, in our Club records and so on.

To best grasp the changes, you really need to have in front of you both the old (REN 1978) and the new (TSBAT1994). The Club has a few copies of both REN and TSBAT for the use of those preparing lists, articles etc.. Personal copies of TSBAT can be bought from Chris Brandis for about \$18. Like REN before it, TSBAT does not show the RAOU number for each bird. Later this year, the RAOU will publish "--a small checklist ---that incorporates the RAOU numbers--" - presumably it will cost a good deal less than \$18.

Simplified Comparison of Taxonomic Orders of Families(?) in REN1978 and TSBAT1994.

Non-passerines.		Passerines.	
REN1978	TSBAT1994	REN1978	TSBAT1994
Emu	Emu	Pitta/Scrub-birds	Pitta/Scrub-birds
Grebe/Penguins	Megapodes	Larks	Treecreepers
Albatross	Quails	Swallows	Fairy/Grass Wrens
Petrel/Shearwaters	Ducks	Pipits	Pardalotes
Storm Petrels	Grebe/Penguins	Cuckoo-shrikes	Bristlebird/Whitefaces
Diving Petrels	Diving Petrels	Bulbul	Honeyeater/Chats
Pelican/Cormorants	Petrel/Shearwaters	Thrushes	Robins
Heron/Spoonbills	Albatross	Robins	Logrunners
Ducks	Storm Petrels	Whistler/Sh.thrushes	Bulbul
Hawks	Pelican/Cormorants	Flycatchers	Whipbird/Q'thrushes
Megapodes	Heron/Spoonbills	Logrunners	Sittella
Quails	Hawks	Whipbird/Q.thrushes	Whistler/Sh.thrushes
Button-quails	Rails	Babblers	Flycatchers
Rails	Button-quails	R'dw'bler/Songlarks	Magpie-lark
Waders	Waders	Fairy/Grass Wrens	Drongo
Skua/Gull/Terns	Skua/Gull/Terns	Bristlebird/Whitefaces	Cuckoo-shrikes
Pigeons	Pigeons	Sittella	Orioles
Parrots	Parrots	Treecreepers	W'swallow/Cur'wongs
Cuckoos	Cuckoos	Honeyeater/Chats	Riflebirds
Owl/Nightjars	Owl/Nightjars	Mistletoebird	Crows
Swifts	Swifts	Pardalotes	Chough/Apostlebird
Kingfishers	Kingfishers	White-eyes	Bowerbirds
Bee-eater/Dollarbird	Bee-eater/Dollarbird	Finches	Larks
		Starlings	Pipits
		Orioles	Finches
		Drongo	Mistletoebird
		Bowerbirds	Swallows
		Riflebirds	Bulbul
		Chough/Apostlebird	R'dw'bler/Songlarks
		Magpie-lark	White-eyes
		W'swallow/Cur'wongs	Thrushes
		Crows	Starlings

Note that in the Non-passerines, the taxonomic orders of families (?) match from the Waders on.

WHAT DO BIRDS BUILD THEIR NESTS WITH?

IBOC member Mark Robinson, whose employment duties include botany and plant identification, plans to analyse the building materials used by our feathered friends. He, with the help of botanist Bob Coveny, will identify to the closest taxon the plant building materials that birds use.

Mark needs some nests to practise on. If you know of any **disused** nests (NOT those likely to be reused next breeding season) from any forest birds in the region, please collect them and contact Mark on (042) 360488 for pick-up.

Mark will need the following collection details:

- * bird species;
- * location (Mark will bring a 1:25000 topo map);
- * bush type - e.g. open forest, woodland, rainforest, beach scrub, dry sclerophyll, lantana thicket, grassland, etc;
- * environmental conditions - e.g. sunny, shady, dappled light, rocky, sandy or clay soil, sheltered, windy, etc;
- * nest age - e.g. built last year, year before.

As this is purely recreational, 10-30 nests over the next year would be sufficient to explore a methodology for the analysis.

Our help would be appreciated and on completion any results would be forwarded for the newsletter.

Unusual Records for February/March 1995

Chris J. Chafer

Status	Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
S	Buller's Shearwater	1	26/2	off Wollongong	pelagic	GB
U	Hardhead	6	05/2	Albion Park	wetland	MR
R	Long-tailed Jaeger	1	26/2	off Wollongong	pelagic	GB
S	White-winged Tern	1	12/3	Windang	sandflats	GB
-	Common Pheasant	1	05/3	Croome	rural	MR
MC	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	48	11/3	Lake South	urban	CB
U	Rainbow Lorikeet	20	12/3	Wollongong Uni	overhead	CJC
U	Crested Pigeon	16	07/3	Minnamurra	golf course	CJC
U	Varied Sittella	3	27/2	Yallah TAFE	woodland	MR
U	Weebill	8	27/2	Yallah TAFE	woodland	MR
U	Spangled Drongo	1	23/2	Primbee	urban	RI
S	Figbird	5	28/2	Port Kembla	urban	OR

GB-Graham Barwell; CB-Chris Brandis; CJC-Chris Chafer; RI-Ron Imisides; OR-Olive Rodwell; MR-Mark Robinson.

Comment:

Very few unusual observations were received for the later half of February and early March. Presumably the Common Pheasant was an escapee, however the species has not been reported in the wild previously in the Illawarra.

I would be particularly interested to receive the last dates that observers recorded either Channel-billed Cuckoo or Common Koel. Although these two species were well recorded in the last couple of months of 1994, I have heard of only a few observations so far this year, did they all leave the area early?

I. B. O. C. News

NO. 181 may 1995



THE CIRCULAR OF THE ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.
 POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 56, FAIRY MEADOW, N.S.W. 2519.

CLUB MOTTO: "ONE GOOD TERN DESERVES ANOTHER"

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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS due 1st January each year: FAMILY \$20 SINGLE \$15 JUNIOR \$5

*******COMING EVENTS*******

NEXT MEETING: will be held on Monday, 8th May, at the Fairy Meadow Community Centre, corner of Cambridge Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow (opposite Flemings supermarket) commencing at 7.30 p.m. Our Guest Speaker for the evening will be Trevor Quested, a member of the Cumberland Bird Observers Club. We feel sure members will recall Trevor from our August '93 meeting when he gave us a very informative and extremely entertaining presentation of his birdwatching trip to Venezuela. Tonight Trevor will take us "Birding in Arizona".

FILM NIGHT: Norma Almond will very kindly open her home at 2 Shoobert Crescent, Keiraville, to host our first film night of the year which will commence at 7.30 p.m. sharp, Saturday, 6th May. We plan to show the Birds of Western Australia which has been donated by our W.A. travellers. Please come along and join us, we appreciate your support. Bring along your camping chair if you have one and a plate to share in supper afterwards. You will find it a good way to share an evening with friends.

NEXT OUTING: This will take place Saturday, 13th May, and Annette Prehm will be guiding us around a variety of locations in the newly gazetted N.S.W. Jervis Bay National Park, one area being along a board walk through the mangrove. We will meet at 9 a.m. sharp at the Lady Denman Museum, Dent Street, Huskisson. Follow the Huskisson road off the Princes Highway and as you approach the township look for a left turn into Dent Street. Bring along your usual eats and drinks for what promises to be a very interesting day with easy walking.

MID-WEEK WALKS: 3rd May, Bellambi Lagoon Area. Meet at the Bellambi boat ramp car park at 8.30 a.m. June 7th, Wilson Creek, meet at Helensburgh Station at 8.30 a.m. bring along your morning tea.

A venue is required for the July film night. If you feel you would like to host this night 8th July please contact Barbara or Brian Hales. A VCR can be supplied, all you need is a reasonably sized TV screen.

APRIL MONTHLY MEETING

The speaker for the evening was Kris French who is currently working in the Dept. of Biological Science at the University of Wollongong and who is President of the Southern NSW RAOU Group. One of the project ideas this group has started is the conservation of the Regent Honeyeater. It is estimated that there are less than a 1000 birds left in NSW where once there were flocks of a 1000, and that those remaining birds are now isolated to 12 main patches of habitat. The Regent generally lives in Ironbark and Box eucalypt country which is prime agricultural land, as well as growing good fence posts; this resulted in massive clearing of the western slopes of NSW, virtually wiping out the habitat.

In 1992, the Save the Bush fund, along with the CBOC, FOC and now with the HBOC and COG, started with a modest grant and willing volunteers to restore some of the habitat and monitor bird populations in the Capertee Valley. It is expected to be a long project as the birds favour 30- to 40-year old mature ironbark trees; one of the aims is to encourage local property owners to be aware of the plight of the Regent and maintain and protect the natural remnants left on their properties. In one massive effort 100 volunteers planted 4,700 trees and shrubs on a number of properties, with a surprising 95% survival rate (of the trees and shrubs, that is) despite the drought. It is hoped that the surrounding property owners will see the benefits of regenerating degraded land and stop their old habits of clearing the lot. Some properties in the area are even suffering salination problems and regeneration could help, perhaps even reverse this trend, thus providing an ongoing habitat for all the species present, including the Regent.

The project has now combined with others under the guidance of the RAOU as a total Regent Honeyeater Recovery Effort covering Eastern Australia, with a full time coordinator, a news letter, data base and David Geering monitoring breeding progress. Anyone wishing to become a volunteer should ring Kris at Wollongong University and join the enthusiastic groups performing the monitoring, especially as most of the hard planting work is over; HBOC could even have a small group outing to assist.

Chris Brandis

A NOTE OF THANKS

I want to convey my sincere appreciation for the concern, friendship and support of so many club members for Sally and me following Carol's death.

The club, and so many individual members, have been a significant part of our lives for many years; a special group where Carol and I always felt warmly welcomed as valuable members in the shared love of, and enjoyable building of knowledge of birds and their natural habitats.

Thank you for the times, places and happy memories, and especially for your care.

Barry Virtue

WEDNESDAY WALK, BLACKBUTT RESERVE 4th APRIL, 1995

Six members met at the top car park at 8.30 am for our April mid-week walk on a calm, mild, cloudy morning. Blackbutt Forest was in very good condition again after a fire had gone through a large part of it some time ago. The only reminder of the fire was the blackened tree trunks. We began our walk along the central Red Gum Trail which serves as a fire trail for the area. It runs from east to west along the entire length of the ridge. At the meeting place, and for the first few hundred metres, birds were few but then we came to a small area where they were in the trees all around us and we heard the unmistakable call of the Spotted Pardalote. We observed a flock of at least 25 Silvereyes, Grey Fantail, Rufous Whistler, Leaden Flycatcher, Eastern Spinebill, Crimson Rosella and Pied Currawong. A little further along the trail we followed a track which branched off to Bangalay Corner and Benson's Creek which goes down the northern slope of Blackbutt and has a large area of reedy grass covering the floor between the Red Gums. Just off the main trail we flushed a flock of Red-browed Finches from the long grass as we passed by and the Variegated Fairy-wren was also sighted in this area. The track leads down into a gully where two types of Melaleucas are found, Deccra and Stypheloides, which favour the lower areas of Benson's Creek.

As we traversed back up to Red Gum Trail from the creek area we observed the Golden Whistler, Lewin's Honeyeater, Eastern Yellow Robin, Grey Shrike-thrush and Satin Bowerbird. We also had good, close views of a Fan-tailed Cuckoo as it moved about the trees near to us. Another large cuckoo was sighted, brown speckled all over, perhaps a little larger than the Fan-tailed but, alas, it got away, leaving us guessing and so frustrated. In this area we came upon a Satin Bowerbird's bower with all the trimmings, including some blue plastic rings which were not broken but these were cut before we left so that they would do no harm.

We then walked over the hill and around the southern side of the forest through the wet sclerophyll area to the dam, which looked quite healthy after the recent rains. The only birds on the dam were about 18 Pacific Black Duck and a number of Silvereyes flew out of the reeds on the edge of the dam as we passed by. From there we made our way up the clearing under the powerlines back to the car park having seen a total of 31 species.

Pacific Black Duck, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Crimson Rosella, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Laughing Kookaburra, Eastern Yellow Robin, Golden Whistler, Rufous Whistler, Grey Shrike-thrush, Leaden Flycatcher, Grey Fantail, Willie Wagtail, Superb Fairy-wren, Variegated Fairy-wren, Brown Gerygone, Brown Thornbill, Red Wattlebird, Lewin's Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill, Spotted Pardalote, Silvereye, House Sparrow, Red-browed Firetail, Common Starling, Common Myna, Satin Bowerbird, Australian Magpie-lark, Pied Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Pied Currawong and Australian Raven.

Horrie Ward

*****SALES SALES SALES*****

The boxes of bird cards sold out immediately, great value at \$12, we hope to have some more soon. However there are still a few beautiful stationery sets left at \$6 each plus wrapping paper at \$1.50 per sheet, see Barbara Hales. Chris Brandis still has club badges and car stickers plus some books for sale.

*****RECYCLE*****

You are welcome to bring in your own coffee mug or tea cup to use at supper time.

..... contd.

Unusual Records for March/April 1995

Chris J. Chafer

Status	Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
S	Darter	1	April	Jamberoo	riverine	BH
S	Darter	2	19/3	Korrongulla Swamp	wetland	RI
MC	Cattle Egret (return)	20+	06/4	Jamberoo	rural	RS
MC	Cattle Egret	1	06/4	Lake Heights	paddock	CJC
U	Grey Goshawk	2	08/4	Sublime Point	overhead	CJC
U	Grey Goshawk	1	25/3	F6 Helensburgh	overhead	CB
U	Brown Goshawk	1	30/3	Waterfall	urban	CJC
U	Peregrine Falcon	1	25/3	F6 Helensburgh	overhead	CB
U	Black-winged Stilt	55	09/4	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	CB
U	Yell-tail Blk Cockatoo	24	29/3	Primbee	overhead	RI
U	Yell-tail Blk Cockatoo	20	07/4	Lake Heights	overhead	KC
U	Rainbow Lorikeet	14	29/3	Primbee	overhead	RI
U	Rainbow Bee-eater	4	31/3	Primbee	garden	RI
U	Barn Owl	1	06/4	Primbee	overhead	KC
U	Rockwarbler	2	30/3	Waterfall	woodland	CJC
U	Scarlet Honeyeater	1	04/4	Balgownie	garden	WE

Several persons responded to my request for information on departure dates for Common Koel and Channel-billed Cuckoo:

Common Koel - last dates observed

1	late Feb	Jamberoo	RS
1	14/1	Mt. Pleasant	DT
1	09/2	Austinmer	GB
1	late Feb	W. Thirroul	MM

Channel-billed Cuckoo - last dates observed

2	12/2	Geringong	JP
1	31/1	Mt. Pleasant	DT
1	06/3	Austinmer	GB
1	09/2	W. Thirroul	MM

GB - Graham Barwell; CB - Chris Brandis; CJC - Chris Chafer; KC - Kerry Chafer; WE - Wal Emery; BH - Betty Hudson; RI - Ron Imisides; MM - Mike Morphet; JP - Joy Parker; RS - Ron Simcock; DT - Dave Thomson

Comment: Obviously the most unusual sighting of this period was the Bee-eaters at Primbee. This is the first known record of this species on the Illawarra plain. The nearest regular populations to Wollongong are at Bamerang near Nowra and Goodmans Ford west of Mittagong. The birds were obviously moving north and only stayed in Ron's yard for 15 minutes. The large gathering of Black-winged Stilts recorded from Killalea Lagoon is the largest number ever recorded in the Illawarra. The presence of juveniles in the group strongly suggests local breeding. Thanks to those who submitted departure dates for the two large cuckoo species. Its obvious they departed earlier than usual, a phenomenon also observed in the Sydney region. There have been very few observations reported west of the escarpment this year, doesn't anyone go birding that way any more? Dry conditions prevail throughout the region and this appears to be affecting all populations. Lake Illawarra has had a sand bar across its entrance since January, the first time since 1982/83, and many wetlands are drying up, including Killalea. I would be interested in knowing if anyone has recorded Chestnut-breasted Manakins over the last couple of years. I have only received one record since 1992!

Due to technical difficulties the Annual Bird Report for 1994 will not be available until June.

I. B. O. C. News

NO. 182

JUNE 1995



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******* COMING EVENTS *******

NEXT MEETING: will be held on Monday 12 June at the Fairy Meadow Community Centre, corner of Cambridge Ave and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, commencing at 7.30 p.m. Our guest speaker for the evening will be Lindsay Smith and tonight's talk will be a brief introduction to a little-known group of local fauna. It is hoped that you will enjoy an interlude with these fascinating creatures, the frogs of the Illawarra. As little work has been done locally on this group, we do not as yet have complete photographic records of all the species that are known to occur in this region. Indeed, we have little data on the status and distribution of many local species. Frogs inhabit a great variety of habitats, including man-made buildings, dwellings, gardens and pools. With the assistance of several fellow researchers/fieldworkers Lindsay will endeavour to present **The Frogs in Your Backyard.**

A croak and dagger affair!!

NEXT FIELD OUTING: will be held on Sunday 18 June at Barren Grounds Nature Reserve, and will be led by Richard Jordan and Christine Wilder. The banksias are in full flower at present, and there are many honeyeaters about as a result. Eastern Bristlebirds are also in abundance, and other exciting sightings include Ground Parrot, Southern Emu-wren and Beautiful Firetail. There will be two walks on the day, and lunch will be at the picnic area (no need to carry provisions while walking). Meet at the picnic area car park at 8.30 a.m. Barren Grounds Nature Reserve is reached via the now fully-sealed Jamberoo Mountain Road.

WEDNESDAY WALKS: 7 June, to Wilson Creek. Meet at Helensburgh railway station at 8.30 a.m.

5 July, to St Mary's Towers, Douglas Park. Meet at the gates at 8.30 a.m.
Bring some eats and drinks for morning tea.

NEXT FILM NIGHT: will be on Saturday 10 June at the home of Gwen and Jim Robinson, 16 Burling Avenue, Mt Ousley, commencing at 7.30 p.m. sharp. We will be enjoying a symphony of birds this evening, so come along and join us. Please bring a folding chair if you have one and a plate of supper to share afterwards. It's a great way to unwind with friends.

MAY MONTHLY MEETING

The speaker for the evening was Trevor Quested of the Cumberland Bird Observers Club who gave another of his interesting and entertaining descriptions of his bird watching trips, this one to south east Arizona. The area is around the famous town of Tucson where there are high mountains and deep canyons in an arid landscape, with varying habitat and a wide range of bird and animal species. Trevor, in his usual enthusiastic manner, described how a book left on a table at home sparked off the interest of him and his wife in the area and the planning started. There is a wealth of accurate information on the area and where to find its birds, often down to the actual tree, and it is very popular with the US birdwatchers who are both knowledgeable and very helpful in ensuring you tick off all the species of the area. The basically desert area also has a wide range of interesting plant life including many of the spectacular cacti seen in the western movies. Trevor and his travelling companions managed to take a number of very good slides of the birds seen, no mean task considering they had only two weeks to find the birds and virtually no time to set up equipment. Many people's places in the area had bird feeders which helped concentrate the birds, one place specialised in hummingbirds and one could sit back and relax while these little jewels buzzed around defying identification and making photography challenging. Trevor described the place as "heaven on a stick" for birdwatchers.

As well as birds there are many mammals and snakes, with squirrels in the trees providing that distractive movement that we rely on to spot birds and causing many false alarms. In the US it is so difficult to separate bird families such as the sparrows, warblers, flycatchers and hummingbirds that it makes identifying our thornbills look easy, but the quail were the opposite, being very obliging and walking boldly out into the open, ensuring a good look. Trevor should patent his squeak as it was this that brought many a bird into camera range, including a hawk down out of the sky. The party crammed many national parks, reserves, museums and places of interest into the two weeks and thoroughly enjoyed the places and the people as well as the wild life. This was as interesting as (if not more so) his previous talk on the birds of his South American trip; Trevor told us he has another holiday planned and promised to visit again and tell us about it. Brian Hales gave a sincere vote of thanks from us all and stated he would hold Trevor to his promise of another visit which would be looked forward to by us all.

Chris Brandis

MIDWEEK WALK TO BELLAMBI BEACH & LAGOON

The May midweek walk was attended by five members, who met at the boat ramp car park on a mild, cloudy morning. A few drops of rain came down at meeting time, but it was fine for the rest of the morning. We began our walk out onto the beach; the rocky point attracted a number of birds, some of which were the Little Pied and Little Black Cormorants, Sooty Oystercatcher, and Kelp Gull, while Crested Tern and Australasian Gannet were seen flying over the water. We continued along the beach to the next point where we observed, among some seaweed, a small group of Red-capped Plover and five Ruddy Turnstones which were very difficult to see until they moved, their plumage blending into the seaweed so perfectly. Also a great sight to see were five more Sooty Oystercatchers and two Kelp Gulls

contd.

together in a close group, moving ahead of us as we walked slowly along the beach. In the area there was the usual large number of Silver Gulls.

We crossed over the sand hills to the bush area where we found a large number of Silvereye. They were right through the whole bushland area, in the coastal wattle, along the beach, and all through the banksias and gums. They were too numerous to count; there must have been hundreds in total. We walked through the bush from the northern end to the lookout, following the track. There was a marked deterioration in the condition of the vegetation, particularly at the northern end. Most of the tall banksias have gone, leaving only a ground cover of lantana and bitou bush under some small trees, a result of fire and strong winds in recent times. But this does not seem to have affected the birdlife greatly.

Some of the group made their way down to the lagoon, where Chestnut and Grey Teal and Little Egret were sighted; in the trees Eastern Yellow Robin, Rainbow and Musk Lorikeet were seen, and four Cattle Egrets flew overhead.

Our walk to the lookout and return along the same track was interesting and productive, observing Lewin's and New Holland Honeyeaters. Little Wattlebird, Grey Fantail, Pied Currawong and Australian Raven.

Heading back to the car park we came to the open grass area where we sighted the European Goldfinch and a small flock of Red-browed Finches. Near the road to the car park was a flock of two hundred or more Common Starlings and six Galahs. We arrived back at the cars at about 11:30 after a great morning's walk, recording a total of 39 species.

Horrie Ward

OUTING TO JERVIS BAY NATIONAL PARK

The May outing was attended by 20 members who met in the car park of Lady Denman Reserve, off Dent Street, Huskisson, on a mild but cloudy morning with a north-westerly wind blowing. Here, before the walk began, a flock of Rainbow Lorikeet was active, flying through the large eucalypts for some time. The walk was led by Annette Prehm. From the car park we followed a path past a harbour with some large flathead and stingrays swimming about in the clear water. The path led on to the start of the Wirreecoo walking track, where the boardwalk crosses the estuarine wetlands which consist of seagrass beds, sand flats, and mangroves, with saltmarsh and fringing swamps. It is a very interesting walk over the sea couch and other grasses at the edge, leading to the sand flats and mangroves, to the end of the boardwalk and a viewing platform which overlooks Currumbene Creek. A few of the birds observed so far included Little Pied Cormorant, Australian White Ibis, White-faced Heron, Australian Pelican, White-bellied Sea-Eagle, and a Sacred Kingfisher of which we had a great view as it perched on a dead tree in the mangroves. Crustaceans and many little red-clawed crabs were clearly visible in the shallow water.

We returned along the boardwalk and rejoined the Wirreecoo track, entering the Blackbutt forest which thrives in moist areas. On the edge of the forest we came upon a number of birds which didn't seem too anxious to be identified, as they were up high in the tall trees, in poor light. Some of them were identified: Red-browed Finch, Silvereye, Golden Whistler, Grey Fantail, and a group of Varied Sittella in the tree tops. The birds were few

for the rest of the walk, but the forest was beautiful, varying from large healthy Blackbutts at low elevation to Spotted Gum and Grey Ironbark in the heavier soils as the track wound upwards. Heading towards the car park at this stage we observed Superb Fairy-wren, Yellow and Brown Thornbills and Crimson Rosella. The walk was about 2 Km long in total and, as it was about 11 a.m., we had a cup of tea before setting out on the second walk.

The next stop was for a quick look over the bay from Huskisson beach where we observed Little Pied Cormorant, Australasian Gannet, Sooty Oystercatcher and Crested Tern. We then drove through Vincentia to Greenfield's Beach car park, from where we intended to walk to Hyam's Beach, but only made it to the southern end of Chinamans Beach, a bit short of our destination. Before we set off from Greenfield's we had a walk down to the beach, passing a small lagoon where we observed Pacific Black Duck and Chestnut Teal.

We set off on the walk to Chinamans Beach on a track which led over a headland, close to the shoreline. The rocky terrain meant that the vegetation was generally only of medium height; some was stunted and some was more of a heath type. Back away from the shoreline the growth was more vigorous. Near the end of the headland the track descended sharply to a gully and creek at the beginning of Chinamans Beach. A sand bar at the mouth of the creek formed a lagoon which attracted a number of birds, particularly Little Pied Cormorants. The Fan-tailed Cuckoo was heard calling there, and Crimson Rosella, Red-browed Finch, Spotted Pardalote, Eastern Yellow Robin and White-throated Treecreeper were recorded in the area. We followed a track which led south through another lovely section of bushland consisting of banksias of various sizes and eucalypts, including the beautiful Scribbly Gum. Near the end of the track was a group of trees, straight and quite tall with a beautiful grey, smooth bark, which was lovely to look at and admire. The track came out at the southern end of Chinamans Beach where we had lunch. The rocks formed part of Hyam's Point. After lunch we returned along the beach and over the headland to the car park. The weather had been fine all day, although rain threatened on the way back. We ran into a storm at Bomaderry on our way home, so we were lucky to have it fine for the walk. We finished the day with a total of 60 species: 27 on the Wirrecoo Track, 22 for Greenfield's Beach and 11 for Huskisson Beach.

Horrie Ward

EASTER CAMP 1995

On Thursday 13 April, under heavy skies, the early arrivals to our Easter camp were met by our host Morton Williams on his property "Ironbark". Here on a grassy area surrounded by high wooded hills we set up our camp, the men putting in place our first class IBOC amenities. Edging the campsite was a large grove of Sydney Bluegums. These were planted by Mort eight years ago and are now growing straight and tall to 80 feet or more. This enthusiastic and energetic man had provided a tanker of rainwater for drinking, a pump for water from the creek for all washing purposes including removing dust from cars. He cut and split wood for our camp fire which he brought in by the trailer load, and generally thoroughly spoilt us. We loved it!!

Yellow-tailed and Gang-gang Cockatoos, Kookaburras and Fan-tailed Cuckoos were among the birds calling to welcome us, and Jacky Winters, Superb Fairy-wrens, Grey Fantails and Willy Wagtails were there to greet

us. Eleven horses roamed freely in the valley and visited us at least once a day. One cheeky white pony took a fancy to Olive's pantry, much to her dismay.

Over the next two days most of our people arrived, some setting up their tents among the grove of trees: everything from two-man and larger tents, campervans, to Laurie and Nola's new and much admired "doll's house", then onto Nob Hill and bigger vans with all the creature comforts, to Ron and Rita's luxurious "manor house". It made such an interesting camp with 26 adults and 14 children, and two Almond ladies who spent two days with us and who drove 100 Km to a motel in Singleton for an overnight stay. Of course, not everyone could be there for the full nine days.

Most birdwatching outings started from camp and nearly all involved walking or climbing up the surrounding hills and ridges. For the first three days the weather was overcast and showery but we were rewarded with sightings of Rose Robins, Rockwarblers, Golden and Rufous Whistlers, and King Parrots. On other walks were sightings of Scarlet and Eastern Yellow Robins, Variegated Fairy-wrens, Spotted Quail-thrush, Yellow-tufted and White-eared Honeyeaters, and Olive-backed Orioles. Birds which were very common to the area were Red-browed Finches, Spotted Pardalotes, and Striated Thornbills. Three beautiful Wedge-tailed Eagles gave a daily soaring and aerobatic display, while a short distance away a very large Brown Falcon flew low over the tall grasses, keeping himself well fed from the wildlife therein.

Large Flannel Flowers were found. *Pimelea linifolia*, in drifts of heads of white flowers, were a common sight as were orchids (although not in flower) clinging to the rock faces with maidenhair fern adding to their beauty. *Scaevola*, a pretty five-petalled flower, added its touch and an occasional wattle tree in flower was found.

The honeyeaters were migrating north and the best places to observe them from were the tops of the ridges. The majority were Yellow-faced, interspersed with White-naped along with the odd sighting of New Holland Honeyeaters and Noisy Friar-birds. A large colony of Bell Miners called, almost deafening at times, some coming low to scold us as we visited a nearby pristine rainforest. Apart from leeches, we sighted Yellow-throated and Large-billed Scrubwrens.

On Sunday afternoon, on the way back from a walk, the heavens really opened. Four walkers arrived at camp very wet. The others were invited into a house further up the valley to dry out in front of a fire until the downpour stopped. The good-spirited man therein offered drinks all round, but when some asked for water, well, that wasn't quite what he had in mind!

Monday morning and the clouds cleared, the sun shone and the skies were bright blue. This was the pattern then for the rest of our stay. Likewise, clear starry nights lowered the night temperatures to somewhere between 3° and 4°C, with a minimum of 2.8°C. The campfires were so welcome to toast ourselves by before retiring. On Monday night the first sighting of a full moon inspired three ladies to break into moon songs: "Moon comes over the mountain", "By the light of the silvery moon", etc. Not sure they were appreciated by everyone. I do know that a letter read by Nola from a South African friend with an hilarious account of what can happen to a new car was enjoyed by all. Of course the main reason for our get togethers at the campfire was to discuss the day's outings and bird sightings. Dave kept tally of the birds and methodically identified each bird for the appropriate

square in the atlas. He also compared the sightings and numbers with those of the camps held in the valley in 1980. It was also here by the fire that our leader Laurie gave us our suggested agenda for the next day.

Bird numbers slowly built up to 80 species until Thursday when we piled into cars and set off for the day to the site of the 1980 IBOC camps, some 30 Km south. Here birds were particularly plentiful both in numbers and species. Just to name a few: Speckled Warbler, Crested Shrike-tit, Rose Robin, Double-barred Finch, and White-throated Treecreeper. It was here that we identified a pair of White-throated Honeyeaters. Mindful of the fact that ornithologists generally do not recognise that this bird occurs so far south, great care was taken in its identification. The birds were cooperative by remaining in sight until being observed by at least six of our most experienced birdos.

A visit to the lagoon area on the way home added further birds to our list, such as the White-backed Swallow, Richard's Pipit, Black-fronted Dotterel and Yellow-rumped Thornbill. Four Hooded Robins gave an enjoyable aerobatic display as they chased each other. Diamond Firetail, European Goldfinch, Dusky Woodswallow and, finally, that pesky Common Myna on the way back to camp brought the total to 95 species.

On Friday the list was not added to until Ron Imisides and Wal Emery went spotlighting with taped bird calls. They called up a Tawny Frogmouth and a Barn Owl. When they played the call of the Powerful Owl a party of Yellow-bellied Gliders took fright and literally flew through the air - a lucky sighting for Wal and Ron.

Some of the highlights of the camp, apart from the important bird sightings, included: the Easter bunny delivering chocolate eggs to our doors early and unseen (methinks the bunny had a grey beard and looked more like Santa); three folk sharing their birthdays with us - Heather, Dave's granddaughter, turned eight, Olive turned ? and doesn't look a day over 36, and Jim had his all-important 70th birthday; on Wednesday we cooked or barbecued and had our dinner cosily around the camp fire; small things like 38 procession grubs crossing the road, with 28 crossing back the next day - where had they been and what happened to the other ten?; a tiny jet black bat falling from a branch being cut from a tree - it recovered in the warmth of Heather's hand and flew away; three people taking unscheduled swims in the creek; and the hilarious resiting of the toilet by 20 experts and overseers and two toilers.

The children, some budding birdos, found plenty to do. They fed the horses, some fished for guppies and yabbies in the creek without catching anything. They had great fun whizzing down the hill on a sled. Some had their bikes and rode everywhere. All kept the fires well-attended to (too well, some adults thought). At night they toasted marshmallows, and we all shared Easter eggs, caramels, nibblies and licorice around the camp fire.

Too soon, and it really was, that Saturday came and we broke camp and left with many happy memories. Our thanks to Ron Hanks for speaking to Mort on our behalf, and to those who surveyed the camp site. And Brian, we missed you and Barbara.

Many, many thanks to Mort and his family for making us so welcome, and to all the participating birdos for being such good company.

Jim and Gwen Robinson

Gwen included this postscript with her report which was posted from Yamba: At 6.30 a.m. at Dorriggo, in the next caravan, a little boy awoke and was crying miserably. Suddenly two kookaburras broke into loud laughter as they do early in the morning. The little boy's cries turned into chuckles and delighted laughter. Smiles all round from everyone.

BARREN GROUNDS NEWS

There have been some changes at the Barren Grounds Bird Observatory in the last few months. New wardens, Christine McNamara and Raoul Boughton have been appointed; Patrick Tap has returned to his studies and Paul Stubbs has returned to Great Britain.

Christine and Raoul are young, recent environmental science graduates, keen to build on the good works of past wardens. Already the weekend courses over the past few months have been well attended. There has also been a change in the accommodation arrangements. From 1 July only fully catered accommodation will be offered. This should help the Observatory financially and provide a sound base for the future.

The next course, *Gourmet Lyrebirds*, will be held over the long weekend from 9 to 12 June. Dr Peter Fullagar will be the course leader and the wardens will provide the gourmet food. If Jack Baker is any judge (see below), the food will be great!! One of the weekend's highlights will be Peter's recordings of lyrebird calls from throughout their range. Of course the local lyrebirds will be in full voice too.

Other courses coming up include: *Plants and Vegetables*, a plant identification course led by local eucalypt expert Gary Leonard with all vegetarian cuisine; *Birds for Beginners*; *Wildflowers and Wattle-seed Pavlova* and *Photography* led by Ford Kristo. After the high standards set in the kitchen by Patrick, the new wardens are looking forward to tantalising guests with their own special *Gourmet* weekends.

Susan Proust, IBOC Representative,
Barren Grounds Bird Observatory
Management Committee

POST SCRIPT

Congratulations to the Barren Grounds Bird Observatory Committee. The recently appointed wardens, Christine and Raoul, are a fabulous injection of youthful enthusiasm into the waning Observatory. Recently Jean and I were lucky enough to sample their hospitality, scones with cream, whipped up at short notice. They made us feel welcome as they discussed their plans for the Observatory which include running a raffle to replace the aging computer printer. They also impressed us with their keenness to get into some worthwhile bird research as soon as possible. After teams such as the Wonderful Wardens (Pat and Richard) and the Whinging Wardens (Jean and Jack) we can but bide our time to see what nickname the new wardens will earn. Meanwhile, remember to bring a few dollars of loose change along to the next IBOC meeting to buy some raffle tickets.

Jack Baker, whilom Whinging Warden.

Status	Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
S	Darter	1	8/4	Korrongulla	wetland	CJC
U	Australasian Shoveller	2	17/4	Killalea SRA	wetland	GB
S	Collared Sparrowhawk	1	11/4	Primbee	urban	RI
U	Brown Goshawk	1	24/4	Woronora Dam	overhead	KM
U	Grey Goshawk	1	30/4	Killalea SRA	overhead	CB
U	Grey Goshawk	2	8/4	Sublime Point	overhead	CJC
U	White-necked Heron	1	26/4	Foxground	paddock	KM
C	Red-capped Plover	6	14/4	Bellambi Point	beach	RS
MC	Double-banded Plover	5	14/4	Bellambi Point	beach	RS
R	Wood Sandpiper	1	17/4	Killalea SRA	wetland	GB
R	Marsh Sandpiper	2	17/4	Killalea SRA	wetland	GB
U	Whimbrel	1	14/4	Bellambi Point	rocky shore	RS
U	Black-winged Stilt	30+	17/4	Killalea SRA	wetland	GB
U	Black-winged Stilt	2	30/4	Shellharbour Swamp	wetland	GB
U	Ruddy Turnstone	9	14/4	Bellambi Point	rocky shore	RS
U	Crested Pigeon	3	12/4	East Woonona	urban	RS
MC	Southern Boobook	1	9/5	Port Kembla	urban	OR
MC	Barn Owl	1	7/4	Primbee	overhead	KC
MC	Barn Owl	1	16/4	Falls Creek	road kill	KM
MC	Barn Owl	1	18/4	Koona Bay	forest	GB
U	Musk Lorikeet	30+	15/5	Primbee	urban	RI
U	Rose Robin	2	19/4	Albion Park Rail	woodland	GB
U	Rose Robin	1	25/5	Port Kembla	urban	OR
U	Scarlet Robin	1	27/4	west Nowra	woodland	KM
U	Large-billed Scrubwren	1	29/4	Bulli Pass Res.	rainforest	GB
U	Logrunner	1	7/5	Hoddles track	tall forest	TQ
U	Chestnut-rumped Hylacola	1	24/4	Woronora Dam	woodland	KM
U	Chestnut-rumped Hylacola	1	29/4	Cudmirrah	heathland	KM
C	Red Wattlebird	50+	7/5	Fitzroy Falls	forest	CJC
S	Figbird	1	10/5	Port Kembla	urban	RI
S	Figbird	5	16/5	Primbee	urban	RI
S	Spangled Drongo	1	22/4	Port Kembla	urban	OR
MC	Dusky Woodswallow	1	29/4	Korrongulla	wetland	CB
MC	Dusky Woodswallow	2	14/5	Primbee	urban	RI
U	Grey Currawong	1	30/4	Seven Mile beach	woodland	BV
U	Grey Currawong	1	29/4	Mt. Keira	(no data)	BH

GB - Graham Barwell; CB - Chris Brandis; CJC - Chris Chafer; KC - Kerry Chafer;
 BH - Brian Hales; RI - Ron Imisides; KM - Kevin Mills; TQ - Trevor Qusted; OR - Olive
 Rodwell; RS - Ronald Smart; BV - Barry Virtue

Comment: A really good spread of interesting observations for this reporting period. Noteworthy is the record of Wood Sandpiper which appear to have over-summered at Killalea. The drought has caused this wetland to almost dry up, the first time I've seen it so low in 14 years of birding there. Dusky Woodswallows were late in leaving the region this year. There have been numerous observations of Yellow-faced Honeyeaters moving through the coastal region through April. The Red Wattlebirds were also obviously on the move. Coastal records of Rose Robin and Grey Currawong are also relatively unusual. The three Barn Owl records suggest a coastal movement of this species into the region, while the Shoveller record is the first for a nearly a year. Keep your eyes open for Swift Parrots, and thanks to all those observers whose contributions make this column so interesting to write. Two contributors commented they were unsure on the status of species. There are still a few copies of The Birds of the County of Camden left, which can be bought from the secretary for only \$5. this booklet provides a comprehensive summary of our regions avifauna.

I. B. O. C. News

NO. 183

JULY 1995



THE CIRCULAR OF THE ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.
POSTAL ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 56, FAIRY MEADOW, N.S.W. 2519.

CLUB MOTTO: "ONE GOOD TERN DESERVES ANOTHER"

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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS due 1st January each year: FAMILY \$20 SINGLE \$15 JUNIOR \$5

PLEASE NOTE that both the Hales and Brandis households have new addresses.

~~*~* COMING EVENTS *~*~*~*

NEXT MEETING: will be held on **Monday 10 July** at the **Fairy Meadow Community Centre**, corner of **Cambridge Avenue** and **Princes Highway**, Fairy Meadow, commencing at **7.30 p.m.** This meeting will take the form of a **Members' Night**, when **all** IBOC members are invited to participate in the activities. This participation may involve anything ornithological - a recital or a narrative, some slides or a video, something creative or a memento or two.

Members can be contacted at the Centre in an **emergency** on (042) 853146.

NEXT OUTING: will be held on **Saturday 15 July** at the **Bicentennial Park**, Homebush. Meet at the car park nearest the tea house at **9 a.m.** The main entrance is from **Underwood Road**, Homebush which runs off **Parramatta Road**. Please note that there is no access to the park from the **F4 Freeway**.

WEDNESDAY WALKS: **5 July** at **St Mary's Towers**, Douglas Park. Meet **outside** the gates at **8.30 a.m.**, morning tea in hand. Remember this is a religious retreat, so please keep the noise level to a minimum.

2 August to the Scout Camp and Robertson Lookout. Meet at the scout camp car park at **8.30 a.m.**

NEXT FILM NIGHT: will be held on **Saturday 8 July** at the home of **Norma Almond**, 2 Shoobert Cres, Keiraville, commencing at **7.30 p.m.** sharp. We have some superb films to show, so come along and bring a camp chair (if you have one) and a plate of supper to share afterwards. There will be some excellent viewing including brand new releases courtesy of **Lindsay Smith**.

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING: will be held at the home of **Peg McKinlay** on **Tuesday 18 July**, commencing at **7 p.m.**

JUNE MONTHLY MEETING

The speaker for the evening was fellow member Lindsay Smith who gave those members who braved the cold westerly winds an insight into the frogs in our backyard. As not a lot is known about the life in the freshwater creeks and ponds of our area (many of which are gradually being lost to development of the coastal plain and escarpment), Lindsay decided to gather as much information as possible while the wildlife was still there. Unlike bird-watching, frogwatching is generally carried out in uncomfortable conditions, at night, and, for frogs, the wetter the better.

I can remember when I first came to the coast in the early 60s there were plenty of frogs, especially the Large Green Tree Frog, but now they are rare. Many of the world's frogs, even in pristine areas, are disappearing at an alarming rate and as to date scientists have not found the reason, there could be little time to gather information on the 18 or so local species. Lindsay recently discovered that the Giant Burrowing Frog still exists on the escarpment heathlands after not being sighted south of Darkes Forest for many years. With these large squat frogs the male has thorny knobs on his fingers but their function is unknown. The Eastern Pobblebonk Frog has poisonous glands on the hind legs and, as with many frogs, the mucus on its skin is highly irritating to human eyes, making careless handling of these creatures a hazardous experience. One of the most spectacular frogs is the endangered Green and Gold Bell Frog, now only found in our area near or in Port Kembla, and the slide of this frog gave the bold colours and patterns justice. Like many frogs they can change colour to blend into the background within minutes, making the patterns on the skin rather than the colour an identifying criterion. Many a light sleeper has been kept awake by the small but very loud Bleating Tree Frog, as they love to call at night, all night.

Anyone wishing to know more about these fascinating creatures should get "Field Guide to the Frogs of Australia" and this will assist in identification if you are lucky enough to find a frog in your backyard. Anyone willing to help the members of SOSSA continue with their studies should contact Lindsay with information or an offer of assistance. Brian Hales gave the vote of thanks and praised the quality of the slides and said he would now look at frogs in a different light, but kissing one would still be out of the question.

Chris Brandis

ATTENTION!!! PRODUCT RECALL NOTICE

The recently published Reader's Digest Photographic Field Guide has been withdrawn from sale because of the many mistakes and transpositions it contains. A new edition is currently being produced, and will be available in July or August. If you have a copy of the first edition Reader's Digest will replace it with the new one. You can write to them, enclosing your address and telephone number, at the address below:

Reader's Digest Australia Pty Ltd
The Prudential Building
39-49 Martin Place
Sydney NSW 2000

Please mark your envelope "For the attention of Ms Gerri Toxall".
Many thanks to Dave for bringing this to our attention.

JUNE MIDWEEK OUTING

Six members attended the outing, meeting at Helensburgh railway station on a calm sunny morning, with the Sulphur-crested Cockatoos being noticeable in both voice and number. We started off from the station at 0840 and soon warmed up as the sun rose higher in the sky, and we could remove our woolly jumpers. Down the hill, in the gully where we crossed the creek, a large number of those "little brown birds" were high up in the canopy, defying identification except for the Brown Gerygone, Grey Fantail and Eastern Spinebill. The rest seemed too far away up in the tree tops; I think all the rain we have had this year must have added metres to the height of the trees. Pressing on up the hill towards Garrawarra, we observed the Spotted Turtle-Dove, Golden Whistler and Australian Magpie, all on the lower side of the road, towards the gully. Lewin's Honeyeater was heard in the area a number of times. We crossed the railway line via the bridge and entered the Garrawarra State Recreation Area. As the road ascended to the top of the ridge the bush changed slowly to dry sclerophyll forest, with thin topsoil on Hawkesbury sandstone, the vegetation here being less vigorous than in the lower areas. Along the ridge conditions suited the angophora, which thrived in that habitat, and some beautiful specimens were seen. The road to the top of the hill was quite rough for walking until we came to a section of sealed road. The forest was very beautiful on the hillside below us as we looked down into tall, straight, stately eucalypts with lovely smooth grey trunks. All through the trees the gorgeous Gynea Lily was in flower, throwing its tall flower heads skywards, with up to nine in a group. The wattle species in flower varied from the gully to the ridge - one we noted growing on top of the ridge was almost white.

By about 10 a.m. we had come to a beautiful secluded rest area, close to the road, which overlooked a green valley. As we neared the rest area we observed a male Golden Whistler which flew through the trees above us and which continued to move about in the tall eucalypts while we had our morning tea. Our walk continued on then through a gate at the beginning of a service trail until it came to a sudden end at a steep drop, so we turned around and headed back. Here we really missed our fearless leader Jack, because we failed to find the track down to Wilson's Creek Dam. We returned the way we had come. The service trail was a great walk because it produced a large number of birds, the two most noted being the Yellow-faced and New Holland Honeyeaters which were both seen and heard all along the ridge. The Eastern Spinebill was also observed a number of times. There is no doubt that the attracting feature was the great number of species of grevillea which were displaying their beautiful large flowers of orange and yellow. At the end of the service trail we sighted a Little Eagle flying overhead. On the way back to the cars we added Silvereye, White-throated Tree-creeper and Fan-tailed Cuckoo to the list, making a total of 21 species for the morning. While the number of species was not great, the total number of birds in the area was quite large.

Horrie Ward

SOME HOUSEKEEPING NOTICES

If you would like a copy of the IBOC membership list, please telephone Chris Brandis as lists are not being posted out automatically to each member. The club is STILL looking for an excursions/activities officer. If you could fill or help out with this position please contact any committee member. Don't be a mug! Bring yours to the meetings and reduce waste.

BARREN GROUNDS IN WINTER

Snow fell at Katoomba on Saturday, it was a very cold night and our grandson was camping (minus a tent) at Hilltop, so as the alarm rang at 6.30 on Sunday morning we felt we'd better get up and get ready for the IBOC walk at Barren Grounds. Otherwise we wouldn't be able to face Gregory even though it would have been very easy to chicken out and snuggle down in bed again as the weather was still rather cold.

Fifteen people braved the elements and met at the Barren Grounds picnic area at 8.30 on Sunday morning 18 June. The sun was shining, the wind was blowing and it was **COLD**, but we were welcomed by a small party of Superb Fairy-wrens and a friendly Eastern Yellow Robin. Some people were fortunate to see a Pilotbird on the edge of the road near the wardens' cottage as they drove in.

With Richard Jordan and Christine Wilder leading we headed off towards The Glen, passing puddles of water covered in a layer of ice, while admiring the beautiful blooms of *Banksia ericifolia*, *Epacris microphylla* and *longiflora*, also white tea-tree flowers and a few blooms on the boronia bushes. A very good view was had of a Grey Shrike-thrush sheltering in *Banksia serrata*. The wind was blowing so strongly at the Illawarra Lookout that it was decided to turn back and walk along a more sheltered track to the wardens' cottage and then return to the picnic area for morning tea. During this time a Fuscous Honeyeater was observed - this is a rare sighting in this area. *Banksia paludosa* was displaying some yellow blooms, accompanied by yellow and cream wattle blossoms, and the moss-covered rocks were bright green from the damp conditions.

We enjoyed a warm drink for morning tea and it was then decided to drive to Richard and Christine's property "The Wolery" on the shelf below Barren Grounds in an attempt to escape the wind. Here Christine led us around their property through patches of open rainforest where it was much calmer although we could hear the wind roaring on top of the escarpment. Lunch was enjoyed on the warm verandah of the house while we enjoyed the calls of the lyrebirds, some Pied Currawongs, and an unusual call which proved to be an Olive-backed Oriole.

After lunch we went for another short walk through the rainforest behind the house and then back along the road where we saw a kookaburra and some Crimson Rosellas in an open paddock. The brilliant red and blue plumage of the rosellas was a striking contrast against the green grass.

Black clouds were gathering overhead so the outing was concluded earlier than usual, but a total of 33 species was observed for the day - a good tally allowing for the weather conditions.

Thank you to Richard and Christine, and we look forward to another visit to this lovely area on a calmer, warmer day.

Oh, by the way, Gregory had a wonderful weekend on his scout camp at Hilltop and wasn't at all cold; he had his Hutchie and a good sleeping bag and he really couldn't understand why there was so much concern for his welfare!

Nola Williams

.... contd.

An Annual Report For 1994

For some months now I have written of delays in producing an annual report of ornithological observations for 1994. The draft is written, has been reviewed and is now in the final stages of being prepared for publication. It is envisaged that the report will be ready for distribution in August 1995, and further details will be revealed at the July meeting. At this stage we only intend printing on a user-requested basis, so we will be asking for people interested in receiving a copy of the report to let either myself or the secretary know.

Briefly the report details over 600 observations of 182 species from some 37 observers who contributed to the unusual records scheme through 1994. It details the occurrence of four new species for the region bringing the known regional total number of birds to 406. Highlights for the year included Little Curlew at Comerong Island, Wood Sandpiper at Killalea Lagoon, large numbers of migrating fantails, continued establishment of a storm-petrel colony on the Five Islands NR, another Little Button-quail record, good breeding season for Little Terns and another Barking Owl record. If the report is favourably received then it is envisaged to regularly produce a similar summary each year in line with other local clubs through NSW.

Chris J. Chafer

Status	Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
S	Darter	1	May	Towradgi Creek	watercourse	BO'B
U	Little Egret	1	May	Hooka Point	wetland	SP
S	Intermediate Egret	1	10/6	Koona Bay	wetland	CB
U	White-necked Heron	1	29/5	Cecil Hoskins NR	wetland	BO'B,SH
U	Musk Duck	2	29/5	Cecil Hoskins NR	wetland	BO'B,SH
U	Hardhead	6	11/6	Mt. Annan Botanical Garden		BO'B,JM
R	Pied Oystercatcher	2	10/6	Hooka Point	wetland	CJC
MC	Double-banded Plover	45	May	Windang	sand flat	CB
C	Red-capped Plover	55	May	Windang	sand flat	CB
R	Pacific Gull (imms)	2	4/6	Windang	sand flat	CB
U	Barn Owl	1	5/4	Keiraville	urban	EG
U	Barn Owl	2	23/5	Dunmore	road kill	CJC
R	Powerful Owl	1	May	Mt. Keira	forest	AM
R	Emerald Dove	1	12/6	Byrong Park	rainforest	TW
U	Peaceful Dove	2	6/6	Bamerang	woodland	DW
U	Brown Cuckoo-Dove	1	8/6	Fairy Meadow	urban/forest	HW
U	Crested Pigeon	45	May	Primbee	urban	RI
U	Gang-gang Cockatoo	2	8/6	Fairy Meadow	urban	HW
U	Rose Robin	2	24/5	Tomerong	forest	DW
R	Pink Robin	2	May	Bangalee Res.	forest	GD
U	Rockwarbler	2	5/5	Crooks Nose	woodland	MH
U	Rockwarbler	1	5/5	Minamurra Rainforest	forest	MH
U	Spotted Quail Thrush	2	24/5	Tomerong	forest	DW
U	Crescent Honeyeater	2	24/5	Tomerong	forest	DW
U	Fuscous Honeyeater	8	6/6	Bamerang	forest	DW
U	Fuscous Honeyeater	4	7/6	Jervis Bay NP	woodland	DW
S	Eastern Bristlebird	2	30/5	Vincentia	heath	DW
U	Bassian Thrush	1	April	Mt. Keira	forest	J&AM
U	Double-barred Finch	12	11/6	Mt. Annan Botanical Garden		BO'B,JM
S	Beautiful Firetail	1	7/6	Jervis Bay NP	heath	DW
U	White-fronted Chat	1	May	Hooka Point	lake shore	SP
S	Figbird	1	May	Market St. W'gong	urban	SP
U	Dusky Woodswallow	6	30/5	Vincentia	woodland	DW
S	Spangled Drongo	1	11/5	Woonona	urban	MH
S	Spangled Drongo	1	May	Primbee	urban	RI

CB - Chris Brandis; CJC - Chris J. Chafer; GD - Gary Daily; EG - Esme Gay; MH - Merv Hawkin; SH - S.Hill; RI - Ron Imisides; JM - Julie Mitchell; AM - Adam Mitchell; BO'B - B.O'Brien; SP - Sue Proust; HW - Helena Williams; TW - Tom Woudsma; DW - Diana Wright.

Comment: This reporting period contains another good spread of records with a number of new contributors. The most exciting report is of an Emerald Dove at Byrong Park. This species has declined noticeably over the 16 years I've been birding in the Illawarra, indeed there were no reports at all of this species in 1994. Large aggregation of Double-banded and Red-capped Plover are currently feasting at the entrance to Lake Illawarra, while the now regular immature Pacific Gulls have arrived for the winter. A pair of Pink Robins have been reported from Bangalee Reserve west of Nowra. This species is normally restricted to the southern part of the state, though there have been several observations previously in the Bamerang area, which is on the opposite side of the river to Bangalee. A good sighting of a Rockwarbler at Minnamurra rainforest is an unusual habitat, though the species also inhabits rainforest margins at Bomaderry Creek and The Grotto near Nowra. There have now been four dead Barn Owls reported from Dunmore this year, while Ron Imisides has now had a regular winter-visiting Spangled Drongo (which he feeds cheese) for over 10 years.

I. B. O. C. News

NO. 184

AUGUST 1995



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***** COMING EVENTS *****

NEXT MEETING: will be held on Monday 14 August at the Fairy Meadow Community Centre, corner of Cambridge Ave and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, commencing at 7.30 p.m. Our guest speaker for the evening will be Raoul Boughton, one of the recently-appointed wardens at Barren Grounds Bird Observatory. Tonight's talk will cover the history of Barren Grounds before it became a Nature Reserve, and will focus on the research projects being carried out there now, mainly on Southern Emu-wrens and Ground Parrots. Raoul and Christine have brought a fresh, enthusiastic approach to the observatory and are eager to impart this enthusiasm to others.

NEXT FIELD OUTING: will be held on Sunday 20 August to Lady Carrington Drive, Royal National Park, and will be led by Brian Hales. Meet at the southern entrance to the drive at 8 a.m. and we'll take some vehicles to the northern entrance of Lady Carrington Drive. Please do not be late as we require to get the vehicles to the other end of the walk and then return before beginning the outing. Bring a carry lunch.

WEDNESDAY WALKS: 2 August, to Mount Keira Scout Camp and Robertson Lookout. Meet at the scout camp car park at 8.30 a.m.

6 September, to Royal National Park. Meet at Bald Hill at 8.30 a.m.
Bring some eats and drinks for morning tea.

NEXT FILM NIGHT: will be on Saturday 12 August at the new home of Brian and Barbara Hales, 32 Shearwater Boulevard, Albion Park Rail, commencing at 7.30 p.m. sharp. Travel south down the Princes Hwy to Albion Pk Rail, turn left at the lights into Creamery Road (Pavlova Pantry on the corner), down to the Stop sign and turn left into Koonaa Road which becomes Shearwater Bvde at Macquarie Shores. Please bring a folding chair if you have one and a plate of supper to share afterwards. It's a great way to unwind with friends and a chance to check out a new house.

GROUND PARROT CENSUS: will be held on Sunday 6 August at Barren Grounds. If you would like to participate, ring the wardens (360195) or meet in the picnic area at 9 a.m. The census is part of the "Elusive Birds" course.

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING: will be at Olive Rodwell's on Tuesday 22 August.

PLEASE NOTE: Articles for the September newsletter should be sent to Barbara Hales, who has very kindly volunteered to be Editor while the incumbent is travelling north to Alaska. Barbara's address: 32 Shearwater Boulevarde, Albion Park Rail. Many thanks, Barbara.

JULY MONTHLY MEETING

Members' Night is the evening when members entertain fellow members, and to start off Barbara Hales showed two plaques, beautifully hand-painted by Hazel Emery, which are to be displayed prominently in the Hales' new home - puffins of course. Dave Thomson introduced the new Preliminary Atlas of Western NSW and invited anyone interested in atlassing to contact himself for further information. Jim Robinson told of his experience during a fishing trip at Bass Point when he discarded a large fish deemed inedible by humans which, before he could release it, was fought over by some pelicans with the largest one finally tipping the fish down its throat. But it only went half way down and, with 300 mm of fish sticking out of its throat, the pelican took off effortlessly, presumably to digest at leisure, as its bill can certainly hold more than its belly can.

Dave Thomson then showed some slides of earlier Club outings to Lord Howe Island with Red-tailed Tropicbirds; to Iron Range where it appeared a scruffy beard competition was being closely won by Wal Emery; to the Daintree River, then out to the Flinders Ranges, off to a Mallee Fowl mound hide where the wait was too much for one member who fell asleep. Ron Imisides then presented slides of the bird-attracting native plants in his garden and the birds that were attracted. A Spangled Drongo has called in each year for about 10 years and catches cheese thrown from the balcony, and the Red-browed Finches that after nearly 20 years of coming to the feeder suddenly stopped when Pied Currawongs appeared in large numbers, and have not been back since. Dora Lockrey showed two very good paintings of Australian birds by her niece. Brian Hales followed with some of his own slides taken at western Sydney and some of Lennie Klumpes "rejects", if only we could do as well.

Joan Zealey shared her holiday to Hawaii with us, illustrating the habitats and some of the birds found there. It was interesting to find out that many native species were decimated by a form of avian malaria introduced in ships' ballast. Some of these have been replaced by such birds as Common Myna and Spotted Dove but she did see such as the Hawaiian Stilt, Goose and Hawk and injured juvenile Laysan Albatross that are rehabilitated before being released. Olive Rodwell had an Eastern Spinebill that had been killed when it flew into the window of a tug on Port Kembla Harbour and the brush tip to the tongue was clearly visible. Finally Joan Wylie recommended a visit to the Serendip Sanctuary near Geelong to see the waterbirds via a system of hides, if you are passing through the area. Thank you all who participated in sharing your experiences with the rest of us.

Chris Brandis

REMEMBER to bring your mug or cup to the meetings. It reduces the amount of rubbish generated AND saves the Club some money.

MIDWEEK OUTING TO ST MARY'S TOWERS

The July outing was attended by 9 members, meeting at the entrance to St Mary's Towers on a calm, cold, clear morning. As we drove along the road approaching the venue a heavy frost lay on every area of open grassland. As the sun rose higher the temperature rose and it turned out to be a beautiful morning. Some of the birds at the entrance were Noisy Miner, Australian Magpie, Galah, and a small group of 8 Rainbow Lorikeets which were flying about (perhaps to keep warm).

We drove into the grounds and parked the cars in the usual place near the monastery building. From there we walked over to the dam which had only Eurasian Coot on it, with Purple Swamphen on the grass nearby. Near the dam two Little Corellas were feeding. We followed the track past the farm sheds to the open grassland where a pair of Masked Lapwing flew along the low area to our right; some Welcome Swallows were also there on the wing. We left the track and turned right towards the subway which gives a safe passage under the F5 Freeway. The early part of the walk produced Eastern Rosella, Australian Raven and Common Myna. The open grassland gave way to a few scattered trees, gradually merging into a lovely forest of tall eucalypts, spaced just far enough apart to let some warm sunshine through. The ground cover under the eucalypts consisted of wattles, banksias, tea trees and a mixture of grasses. After a short walk we came to a great spot where we could sit down on a low bank to have morning tea and watch the bird life around us. We were on the verge of a gully with a creek running along it. The forest had a large population of birds, some of which were the Brown, Yellow, Striated, Yellow-rumped and Buff-rumped Thornbills, Superb and Variegated Fairy-wrens, Spotted and Striated Pardalotes, Eastern Yellow Robin, Lewin's, Yellow-faced and Fuscous Honeyeaters.

After morning tea we followed the rough track which led down into the wet gully, over the creek and up to some higher ground close to the freeway which was rather barren-looking, with very little ground cover and only a few small trees. It didn't appear to be a very wonderful spot for birds, until we observed a Grey Fantail - and it was not alone. Nearby was a female Scarlet Robin, then a Grey Shrike-thrush, Grey Butcherbird, a number of Yellow-faced Honeyeaters and also some thornbills. There must have been something in that spot that the birds liked! At this point we turned around and headed back to the cars. We passed through the wet gully and arrived at the crest of the hill on the other side where we sighted Eastern Spinebill, Golden Whistler and White-naped Honeyeater in the tall eucalypts. Near the buildings around the monastery was a small dam which had a group of Wood Ducks in the grass around it. Then we sighted Crested Pigeon perched in a tree nearby. We arrived back at the cars at about 12:15 pm. For the morning we recorded a total of 39 species.

Horrie Ward

HELP!! HELP!! HELP!!

The Club is DESPERATELY seeking an Excursions Officer. To find out more about this vital and interesting position please contact Brian or Barbara.

JULY MONTHLY OUTING

After a week of strong winds Saturday 15 July dawned promising to be a calm winter's day. Indeed the weather was delightful until after lunch when a cool breeze sprang up. The outing was to Bicentennial Park, Homebush - one and a half hour's drive from Wollongong and a venue worth keeping in mind for barbecues and family outings. The park is well laid out with car access right around and clearly signposted walking tracks. The Information Centre and Wisteria Tea House open at 10 a.m. and are both worth a visit.

We had an early morning cuppa while we waited for everyone to arrive. The whole scene was beautiful - sitting in the early morning sunshine with birds flying all around us. There were Magpie, Australian Raven, Masked Lapwing, Rainbow Lorikeet, European Goldfinch, New Holland Honeyeater, House Sparrow, Common Myna, Red Wattlebird, Australian Magpie-lark and White-plumed Honeyeater flying amongst the small trees around the open barbecue area. Down on the Ornamental Lake we could see Royal Spoonbill, Large Egret, Dusky Moorhen, Eurasian Coot, Silver Gull, Welcome Swallow, Little Black and Little Pied Cormorant, Sacred Ibis, Little Grebe, Purple Swamphen and Pelican.

Our first walk was around the Ornamental Lake. The track circled the lake, going through dense melaleuca habitat, across grassland and over paved areas. In the reeds we saw Golden-headed Cisticola, and amongst the melaleuca we tracked down a Brown Honeyeater. Sitting on a bridge was an Intermediate Egret. On the lake we added Pacific Black Duck, Darter and Chestnut Teal. After circling the lake we had morning tea back near the Tea House where we saw Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike and a Pommy President Hot Chip-eater.

The Wetlands Walk took us along the edge of Homebush Bay through the mangroves and saltmarsh, to the Waterbird Refuge. On an open grassy patch we saw little brown birds that looked at first glance like a flock of sparrows. But Joan and Lydia's persistence paid off. After viewing and chasing them for some time we discovered we had Nutmeg Mannikin - a first for some of us. We heard Spotted Pardalote and saw Grey Fantail, Double-barred Finch, Silvereye and Yellow Thornbill all darting about in the undergrowth. On the saltmarsh were Black-fronted Dotterel and White-faced Heron.

We didn't see any waterbirds from the hide at the northern end of the Waterbird Refuge as the wind was just starting to come up. We had lunch here in the shelter of the hide and then started on the return walk. On the north-east corner of the park was a viewing tower which we all climbed to lookout over the mangroves to Homebush Bay. From the tower we could see the chemical and industrial areas across the bay. We walked along the Mangrove Boardwalk over the tidal mangrove flats. It was very still and quiet in there.

We headed for the Information Centre, sighting a Yellow-faced Honeyeater en route, where we had a good look around and viewed an interesting 15 minute video about the park. Someone had the bright idea to visit the Tea House before our return journey. All eight of us treated ourselves to Devonshire Tea. What a great end to a great day! Thank you, Brian and Barbara. We counted 46 species in all. This is an easy walk we should keep in mind for another time and another season.

Olive Rodwell

YATHONG NATURE RESERVE

In autumn 1995 I visited Yathong, about 100 Km north of Hillston, where an old sheep property has been taken over by the NPWS to form a continuous reserve from Round Hill through Nombinnie to Yathong. The habitat is variable from grassland, dry forest, belah and mallee. There is a converted shearers' quarters there where you can rough it with hot showers, a flush toilet with a view, gas cooking and a fridge, all for \$5 a night. I went to search for the Striated Grasswren and I still am, being unlucky in seeing only half the Grasswrens I've spent days searching for. There is a program of captive breeding and releasing Mallee Fowl in conjunction with an intense fox and cat baiting exercise, but, as I spotted a fox just outside the quarters 20 km inside the baited area, it will be difficult to eradicate them. It is hoped that by keeping their main food, the rabbit, down with ripping and poisoning that these predators will find the area less attractive. The mallee was still interesting with both Yellow-plumed and Grey-fronted Honeyeaters together, to enabling a good comparison of the yellow plume, as well as White-fronted and Brown-headed Honeyeaters, Shy Heathwren and Gilbert's Whistlers. I did not see any Southern Scrub-robins or Chestnut Quail-thrush which are readily seen in similar habitat at Round Hill so a return visit is a must.

The dams around the property attracted a number of Major Mitchell's Cockatoos which make a spectacular sight, as well as many of the smaller parrots such as Red-rumped Parrots and Blue Bonnets. One dam had both White-fronted and Orange Chats as well as Splendid Fairy-wrens but due to the drought birds were a little scarce. Many of the Western Grey Kangaroos were affected by a virus that makes them blind and they made a pitiful sight running into trees at speed while slowly starving to death. A search for White-browed Treecreepers in the belah was fruitless but I did find them about 35 Km south of Hillston, and with over 60 species seen all told, despite the drought, it was an interesting trip.

Permission to use the quarters is easily obtained from the Cobar NPWS office and a caretaker lives at the nearby homestead to make sure you are comfortable. It is worth the travel but watch the mallee roots as I got 2 spiked tyres during the stay.

For those who find raptor identification difficult, Gordon Beruldsen of "Nest and Eggs of Australian Birds" has published a simple procedure for identifying hawks in flight for \$9:00 including packaging and postage. Just write to 47 Broadmoor St, Kenmore Hills, Qld 4069 if you need a copy. It includes possible New Guinea vagrants if you are wandering around the top end.

Birdwatchers' Code of Ethics

- The welfare of birds must come first.
- Habitat must be protected.
- Nest and eggs and the immediate vicinity must not be disturbed.
- Keep disturbance to birds and their habitat generally to a minimum.
- Abide by the bird protection laws at all times.
- Keep your pets at home.
- When you find a rare bird, think carefully about whom you should tell.
- Make your records available to the Club's Records Officer.
- Respect the rights of land owners.
- Respect the rights of other people in the countryside.

- Be an ambassador for the birdwatchers generally. We want to be welcome in the future.

Copied from the Hunter Bird Observers Inc. Newsletter.

Finding Birds Fast with Binoculars

Trevor Quested has published these hints to birdwatchers in the CBOC Newsletter as extracted from an Internet article by E R Matthews.

1. Memorise how you turn the focus wheel.
2. Remember the last distance you were focused on then apply 1.
3. Be prepared and adjust the focus for the distance you expect the next bird to be at.
4. Start focusing before the binoculars reach the eyes.
5. Make a mental note of where the bird is eg by the main trunk near the yellow leaves.
6. Keep looking at the bird as you raise your binoculars into the line of sight.
7. Practise, practice, practise and you will miss identifying fewer birds.

Chris Brandis

NEWS FROM BARREN GROUNDS

Barren Grounds Bird Observatory has just received an ecotourism grant of \$34000 to convert the garage next to the demountables into a visitor centre which would inform visitors to Barren Grounds about the unique environment there and which would include static and graphic exhibitions of the plants and animals of Barren Grounds. It would be used in conjunction with weekend courses for slide displays, etc. There will also be a nature trailending (or beginning) at the centre. The many day visitors who now come to Barren Grounds could learn a lot about the reserve and the observatory. They may even be encouraged to attend some weekend courses.

The grant, unfortunately, will not cover the full cost of labour. The Management Committee, therefore, asked the bird club representatives to see if any members with carpentry, electrical or plumbing skills would be willing to volunteer some time. As the wardens are usually tied up with courses at weekends there will also be a need for trained volunteers to man (person?) the centre once it is up and running. This would probably be on Sundays only. Obviously the more people involved the less onerous this would be. If anyone feels able to help in any way, could they please contact me.

I think the centre will be a great thing for Barren Grounds. It will not be too big and will not change the character of the place. However, there are many people who walk and picnic in Barren Grounds who know little about the reserve, the endangered fauna there and its fragility. The centre would provide an opportunity for these people to learn about the observatory and the courses offered there. These courses keep the observatory afloat financially. So please let me know if you can help in any way.

Sue Proust

IBOC Rep, Barren Grounds Management Committee

Barren Grounds Course Program

Elusive Birds 4-6 august

A great chance to see Ground Parrots up close with mist nets and to look for Eastern Bristle Birds, Emu Wrens, Pilotbirds and Beautiful firetails.

Leader : Jack Baker

Rainforest Ecology 25-27 August

A look at four different rainforest types and the plants and animals found there. A great chance to learn about the beautiful rainforests of the Illawarra.

Leader : Dick Turner

Family Fun Weekend 1-3 September

This course is designed for families to discover the plants and animals of Barren Grounds. We'll look for Sugar Gliders, Wombats and Pygmy possums.

Leaders : the Wardens

Pygmy Possums and Sugar Gliders 15-17 Sept

Trap Antechinus, Bush Rats and, if you're lucky, Pygmy Possums, Sugar Gliders, perhaps even a Quoll. Spotlight for possums and gliders.

Leader : Ian van Tetts

Wildflowers and Wattleseed Pavlova 29 Sept-2 Oct

A course for nature lovers and foodies— a gourmet weekend, great food and the Spring flowers of Barren Grounds

Leaders : Denise Black and Leo Cady

Give that Bird a Name 6-8 October

This course focuses on bird banding--- giving a bird a "name" -- a metal band which tells us much about a bird---migration, growth, age and population.

Leader Alan Leishman

Eucalypts : A guide to identification 20-22 October

Learn how to identify these great Australian trees. Find out why different species like different soils, altitude and climate.

Leader : Gary Leonard

Cost : Generally \$140 (RAOU \$130)

Wildflowers and Wattleseed Pavlova \$210 (\$195)

Children \$80

NAME-GIVING AUSTRALIAN BIRDS: 2

A PIECE OF DIVINITY

*There is surely a piece of divinity in us,
Something that was before the elements,
and owes no homage unto the sun.*

Sir Thomas Browne: *Religio Medici* Part ii, 12

The Greek historian and military leader, Xenophon (c430 - c354 BC) first used the Greek word *paradeisos* in reference to the parks of the Persian kings and nobles during the campaigns; it was borrowed from the Old Iranian dialect, Avestan (or Avestic) *pairidaeza* meaning a circumvallation, a surrounding defensive barrier, or simply an enclosure. It spread into Middle English as *paradis* via Latin and Old French and in the 12th century came to mean the Garden of Eden or heaven in Judaism and Christianity. By extension we use the word **paradise** to describe a place of great beauty and perfection. The Muslim counterpart is a garden of sensual delights and pleasures.

Together with their elaborate displays and exaggerated plumes, **Birds of Paradise** (or **Paradise birds**) are arguably the most colourful and beautiful birds throughout the world. In 1519 with financial backing from Charles I, King of Spain, the Portuguese navigator, Ferdinand Magellan found a westward route to the Moluccas, where the skins of two birds of paradise were given to the expedition as a present for the King. In his report of the voyage, Pigafetti, an Italian, stated that the birds came from paradise and hence were called "bolon dinata", meaning divine birds. Four of the forty-three species recorded in the world are to be found in Australia and are generally less colourful and ornately plumaged than the New Guinea varieties. Three of these are **Riflebirds**: the polygamous **Paradise** of the east coast straddling the Queensland - New South Wales border; and **Victoria's** and **Magnificent** of the northernmost tropical rainforests. This latter area is also occupied by the fourth and monogamous bird of paradise, the **Trumpet Manucode**.

Migrating from its breeding grounds of north-east Queensland to New Guinea in the dry is the **Buff-breasted Paradise-Kingfisher**, Australia's only landbird with two long stiff white tail-plumes, measuring up to 18 cm in length, giving it the other name of **White-tailed Kingfisher**. Its other colours of blue, orange-red and rufous make it distinctive as well as beautiful. Doubts have been raised as to the record of the **Common Paradise-Kingfisher** in the Torres Strait.

There is also much doubt as to the survival of the **Paradise Parrot**; the last reliable sighting was in 1922. Once inhabiting the eucalypt woodlands of south-east Queensland and northern New South Wales, it nested in termite mounds, as does the Kingfisher above. It had first been discovered in 1844 by John Gilbert, John Gould's assistant, who was killed a year later by Aborigines. The

ornithologist rejected Gilbert's request that the bird be named after himself and instead called Gilbert's "new green parrot of the Darling Downs" *pulcherrimus* meaning most beautiful. It earned the name of paradise by English bird-keepers when live specimens were first taken there. For the species itself its habitat has been no paradise, as droughts, competition from graziers, and its having been easy prey to trappers contributed to its demise; it rarely survived in captivity either.

We could almost say the Paradise Parrot paid the price for its beauty by ending up in hell, believed to be the abode of the dead and the region below earth. The Germanic roots produced the Old English *hel* and Middle English *helle*. Whilst the source and derivation of the name of **Hell-Diver** for the **Little or Australasian Grebe** are unknown, it is not difficult to imagine this small bird descending into Hades as if disappearing like magic whenever it submerges for lengthy periods below still fresh water, either to avoid danger or to hunt for fish; it also travels far over land under the cover of night.

Ruler of hell and supreme spirit of evil is the **devil**. The Old English *deofol* stems from the Latin *diabolus* and the earlier Greek *diabolos* meaning slanderer. No bigger than 15 cm in length, the **Yellow-throated Scrub-Wren** has acquired the name of **Devil-Bird** in southern Queensland, the northern end of its lower eastern range, where it occupies gloomy, dense and wet forest gullies. Its unexpected appearance in these dark surroundings has apparently given rise to this name. This bird's nest, which sometimes has new chambers constructed, hangs from vines in dark places over or beside watercourses and can accommodate the egg and chick of the Fan-tailed Cuckoo. Very vocal whenever an intruder comes to the nest, it is also a mimic of several other bird species. Lacking horns, cloven hoofs or forked tail, it is the most colourful of this country's five types of scrub-wren.

In much of the remaining areas of Australia, particularly the drier inland, can be heard the **Crested Bellbird** or **Dick** (or **Dick-Dick**)-**the-Devil**, which is often difficult to see. This other name seems to reflect one of its ventriloquial calls, transcribed as 'pan-pan-panella/pallela'; rather than its somewhat macabre habit of decorating the rim of its nest with torpid or immobilised hairy caterpillars, which evidently are not a food source for the nestlings when they hatch out.

A person who does not acknowledge the God of Judaism, Christianity or Islam, but instead worships old gods of primitive religions, or is considered irreligious and hence uncivilised, we refer to as a **heathen**. In ancient times the heathen were dwellers on the heath (Old English *haeth* from the Germanic, meaning wasteland), the more remote parts of the land where the deities personified nature, whereas Christianity was the religion of the towns. Occurring in open heath and woodland thickets of south-eastern Australia is the **Chestnut-rumped Heathwren** or **Hylacola**, possessing a song like a canary and mimicry of many other birds. Further to the west of the continent is the sometimes smaller **Shy** or **Mallee Heathwren**, with a more pronounced white eyebrow and 'chee-chee-chick-a-dee' pre-dawn spring song.

In Judaism and Christianity, Satan has been regarded as the arch-enemy of **God** and humankind. How the **Godwit**, among the largest of the swift-flying and long-

billed sandpipers, got its 16th century name is uncertain, even if we investigate the occasional ending variations of -wipe and -wike. This bird doesn't appear to be endowed with God's intelligence (from the Old English *witar*, to know). It seems more likely that the name comes from the Anglo-Saxon words *god* (good) and *witza* (animal), because either it was once a favourite table bird or else it was considered a bird of good omen, where the Old English *wit* meant fellow, or perhaps for both reasons. Most common among the three types of northern hemisphere breeders that visit Australian waters and tidal mudflats is the **Bar-tailed**. With a straighter bill and smaller in size is the **Black-tailed Godwit**. The third member is the rare vagrant to eastern Australian, the **Hudsonian**.

In the 17th century, **providence** was a term applied to God, conceived of as a benevolent provider who foresees (from the Latin *pro* and *videre*) and orders the course of all things in the universe, combining care and control. Breeding only on Lord Howe Island, particularly the upper slopes of Mounts Gower and Lidgbird, comes the **Providence Petrel** and then it migrates to Japan for the summer. This gadfly-petrel might not want to look upon God as guardian and protector, for, after only the first few years of settlement by European colonists on Norfolk Island, it became extinct there. The burrowing "Mount Pitt birds" became a major food supply for the starving colonists; in 1790 Captain John Hunter named them Birds of Providence, and, according to the journal of Lieutenant Ralph Clark, Quartermaster General, over 170,000 were slaughtered over a three month period.

A term often given to birds of paradise in general is **bird of the gods**, which is a translation of the Malay *manuk dewata*. This was given the Latinised form *manucordata* which then became Anglicised in the 19th century to manucode. The **Trumpet Manucode**, mentioned earlier, is the least spectacular of the Australian birds of paradise and has an iridescent sheen similar to that of the starling.

A wading bird venerated by the ancient Egyptians was the **Sacred Ibis**, because the crescent shape of its bill reminded them of their moon goddess, Isis, the bringer of fertility and consolation to all; frequently represented with a cow's head or horns, she was also a goddess of magic with legendary powers of casting spells to counteract evil. Either in full or head form, the bird represented Thoth, their god of wisdom and magic and a patron of the arts and sciences. He was identified by the Greeks with Hermes, messenger of the gods and conductor of souls to Hades. In his second book the 5th century Greek historian, Herodotus recorded that killing a sacred ibis constituted a capital crime. In 1859 the bird became the totem of the British Ornithologists' Union. The Egyptian word *ib* lost its asprate sound and acquired a Greek ending to become *ibis* remaining unchanged through its transition into 14th century English via Latin.

Occupying the eastern half and south-west corner of Australia, the **Sacred Ibis**, bearing close resemblance to that of Egypt, is also known as the **Australian White Ibis**, though it might also be described as off-white since its plumage is often stained, not uncommonly after its rummaging through rubbish tips; not an activity one would immediately associate with any gods. In large flocks these nomadic birds fly, with long necks extended, in V-formation or long wavering lines.

sometimes reaching great heights on thermal currents and also travelling long distances from their colonies to feed. The first part of its species name *Threskiornis molucca* is composed of two Greek words, meaning sacred bill.

The word **sacred** came into Middle English from French, which in turn is derived from the Latin *sacra* (to set apart, consecrate) and *sacer* (dedicated to a divinity, holy - a meaning that was picked up in English in the 16th century). Another Australian wader to have earned the name sacred is the **Eastern Reef Heron** or **Egret**, *Ardea sacra*, though its source and derivation are unknown. In plumage this bird only partly resembles the Sacred or White Ibis as there are two forms: pure white and dark grey, which can interbreed.

Why one of our kingfishers should be named sacred, as it appeared in an illustration in Governor Phillip's 'Voyage to Botany Bay' in 1789, is also a puzzle; the notion is also reflected in its genus nomenclature - *Halcyon sancta*. Frequenting forests and woodlands, the **Sacred Kingfisher** is probably the most familiar and widespread of the small land kingfishers; its noisy 'ek-ek-ek' and 'kee-kee-kee' calls advertise the breeding season and its defensiveness of its nest, built in a tree hollow, termite mound or bank.

A religious devotee who travels to a sacred place or shrine is a **pilgrim**, such as those that featured in Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales', whose intent it was to tell the best story that gave "the fullest measure Of good morality and general pleasure"; the winner was to earn a supper back at the Tabard Inn at the end of the return journey from Saint Thomas Becket's shrine. The word pilgrim entered Middle English from Old French *pèlerin* which contained a consonant change from the Latin *peregrinus*, meaning far land and hence foreign. It is this root word that has been used to identify a particularly swift bird of prey, the **Peregrine Falcon** or simply **Peregrine**, with its genus name of *Falco peregrinus*. This species was originally named for its migratory habits. The French call it *faucon pelerin* the Germans *Wandertalk* the Danes *Pilgrimstak* and the Swedes *Vandrelak* in this country it is widespread, though tending to decline in numbers in settled areas, and can be sedentary, nomadic or part-migratory. Master of the air, this hunting bird can fly and dive at speeds of around 300 kilometres per hour to strike its victim, not uncommonly a racing pigeon, at the base of the neck. Its hoarse chattering and cliff-face droppings can be tell-tale signs of a nest-site. In falconry, which originated in China over 4000 years ago, young birds were taken as 'pilgrims' on the wing and not from the nests.

In a religious ceremony, the placing of oil on a body is a sign of sanctification or consecration. The Hebrew *Messiah*, meaning Anointed One, was translated into Greek as *Christos* from *khria* to rub or anoint, which entered Old English as *Crist*. In the beliefs of Christianity, **Jesus Christ** is the Son of God and second person of the Trinity. Amusingly and, some might argue, irreverently, the **Lotusbird** or **Comb-crested Jacana** has been called the **Christbird** from its apparent ability to walk on water. This is a reference to the story in St Mark's Gospel following Christ's miracle of the five loaves and two fishes. However, it is not upon the inland Sea of Galilee that the Lotusbird moves, but upon the floating lily weeds in the still waters of lagoons, swamps and dams, aided by its very long toes and hind claw;

also, far from appearing like a ghost upon the surface, as in the minds of Christ's disciples, this swamphird walks along with exaggerated jerky movements of the head. To avoid danger, it can dive underwater and remain submerged, but for its bill and nostrils, for up to half an hour.

It is upon the ocean, though, that we come across birds with an allusion to the **Virgin Mary** (Miriam in Hebrew), mother of Jesus and patroness of seamen: the **Storm-Petrels**, of which there are principally five that visit Australian waters - **Wilson's**, thought to be the most abundant bird on earth; **White-faced**, the only breeder in this country; the **Grey-backed** and the **Black-** and **White-bellied**. There have been some recordings of **Leach's** and **Matsudaira's Storm-Petrels**. This group of oceanic birds is known to sailors as **Mother Carey's Chicken**, believed to be their corruption of the Latin *mater cara*, the Holy Mother, to whom they prayed for protection from storms; seamen regarded these birds as harbingers of bad weather. It has also been said that Mother Carey was an ocean witch with attendant petrels. The **Southern Giant Petrel** is recorded to have been given the name of **Mother Carey's Goose** during James Cook's voyages.

Those men chosen by Christ to become missionaries or "fishers of men" were the **Apostles**, from the Greek *apostolos*, meaning one sent forth, a messenger. A sedentary mud-nester of the dry forests, woodlands and scrubs of the eastern interior is the **Apostlebird**, which is also called **Twelve Apostles** from its social habit of moving about in parties; however, the groups of these birds are more likely to be nine or ten, rather than a dozen, and in the region of 100 in the non-breeding seasons of autumn and winter. Some suggest their somewhat sombre grey plumage has also earned them that title.

With a similar habitat, but a larger range is the larger **White-winged Chough**, which is also gregarious, feeds in small parties, and is also called **Apostlebird**. This same name and **Twelve Apostles** have been applied to two genus of the *Timaliidae* family: the **Grey-crowned** and **White-browed Babbler**, which, like the mud-nesters, are gregarious, noisy and bathe in dust. The former mainly occupies the northern half of this continent and, according to Pizzey, flies in a follow-my-leader style from cover to cover; the latter frequents mostly the southern half. Typical of all four kinds of babblers, they have a dark mask-like eye stripe bordered by white eyebrows that Simpson and Day liken to the appearance of a band of thieves; which is far removed from the image of the original Twelve Apostles.

One of Christ's disciples, in fact the chief one, lurks in the name of a large family group of oceanic birds: the **Petrels**. According to Saint Matthew, Christ said to **Simon Peter**, "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it." The Greek *petros* means stone or rock and is a translation of the Aramaic *Kepha* the surname Christ gave his apostle. In French *pétre* or *pétere* means Saint Peter's bird and is a diminutive of the Late Latin *petrus* In Norway they refer to *Soren Peders* and *Petersvogel* and in Germany *Petersvogel*. The name of petrel arose from the bird's apparent ability to walk upon the surface of water, alluding to the same chapter of

was converted to the Catholic faith and became a monk. Legend represents him as a Roman soldier who cut his cloak in two (a symbol of heroic chastity) and gave one half to a beggar. To commemorate this bishop, a Christian festival has been celebrated annually on 11th November. The European martins and swallows would migrate round about the time of Martinmas, which was also formerly the period when cattle was slaughtered to be salted for winter.

Differing from the swallows, the **Tree** and **Fairy Martins** in Australia have white rumps and only slightly forked tails; their range extends well beyond that of the swallows.

Blue Martin is a name given to three of the six forms of **Woodswallow**: the **Masked** (also **Bush Martin**), the **White-browed**, and the **Dusky** (also **Jacky Martin**), the last one occupying a much smaller range of the continent. Related to Butcherbirds and not to the ordinary Swallows, these birds have brush tongues, like Honeyeaters and Lorikeets, so that nectar and pollen augment their diet of flying and terrestrial insects.

In his 'Canterbury Tales' Chaucer included the 'Persones Tale'. A *personne* was a parish priest within the Church of England, whose name came via Old French from Mediaeval Latin *persona ecclesiae*, meaning 'person of the church'. In the sixteenth century the word came to be used more loosely for a clergyman or minister; namely, **parson**.

Besides the pseudonyms of Apostlebird and Twelve Apostles, the **Grey-crowned Babbler** is also known as the **Parsonbird** on account of its white throat resembling a clerical collar; for the same reason the New Zealand Honeyeater, the Tui, is so called. A further connection might be the territory of about twelve hectares, just like a parish, that a group of Grey-crowned Babbler as a whole defends throughout the year.

With a habitat of open forest and woodland, the **Black-throated Finch** is also referred to as the **Parsonbird**, or **Parson-Finch**. Its black throat or bib is suggestive of the stock worn by ministers of certain religious denominations. Its manner of bobbing its head up and down upon landing and as a display of greeting might also convey the picture of a local vicar making supportive responses to his parishioners!

The Latin *frater*, meaning 'brother', gave rise to the Old French and Middle English *frere*, from which is derived **friar**, who from the thirteenth century belonged to a Catholic order, such as Franciscan, Dominican, Carmelite, and Augustinian, and lived by begging, being bound by vows of chastity and poverty. On account of the bare black skin on its head, the **Friarbird**, sometimes shortened to **Friar**, was first

Saint Matthew's Gospel, mentioned in regard to the Lotusbird, but in this instance Peter's doubt about Christ's claim to be the Son of God and his beginning to sink after stepping out of the boat. The bird's dangling feet dip into the waves surface during flight, but unlike panicking Peter, it is well adapted for life at sea; on land, however, its ungainliness makes it an easy prey for predators.

We now turn our attention to leaders and significant members of the church and scan the links between some of these people and certain Australian birds. Firstly, let us consider the **Cardinal**, a Catholic dignitary second only to the Pope and one of the princes of the Church, usually wearing a red hat and scarlet robes, the traditional colours of royalty. The word came into Middle English via Old French from the Latin *cardinalis*, from *cardo* meaning hinge. By extension it conveyed the notion of pivotal importance, including the four "natural virtues" of justice, fortitude, temperance and prudence; the chief winds; and numbers. One of the smallest of the large family group of *Meliphagidae* is the **Scarlet Honeyeater**, called the **Cardinal Honeyeater** by Latham in 1801 because of the association of colours of plumage and clothing; the male has a scarlet breast, head and rump. This species occupies mangroves, forests and woodlands of the eastern coastline. Bright cardinal redness has also influenced the naming of the New World buntings (the grosbeaks), an American wildflower and a European beetle.

In the early days of Christianity leaders were required to direct worship and affairs. In Greece there had been overseers or guardians, called *episkopoi*, and this word was adopted by the Anglo-Saxons, with a pronunciation change to *biscop*, which then became **bishop**, for the position of a clergyman consecrated for the rule of a diocese. An introduced grass-finch or true weaver, first recorded in 1926, is the **Red Bishop(bird)** or **Grenadier Weaver**, which settled in the riverside reedbeds of the Murray in South Australia and other areas as aviary escapees, but it is now believed to be extinct. Some field guides liken it to a giant bumblebee in flight. The colour association with the church leader is really evident only in the male during the breeding season.

Across a white body the prominent chestnut breast-band, which has some remote resemblance to a red bishop's stock, has led to the **Banded Stilt** also being called the **Bishop-Snipe**. This wader is largely found in dense flocks over salt lakes and marshes along the southern and western coasts.

One particular bishop back in the fourth century is believed to have contributed to the naming of two Australian swallow-like birds and also of countless male sons throughout the world after it entered the English language during the Norman Conquest: **St Martin** of Tours. In French the proper name is also contained in the names of such birds as *martin-chasseur* (hen-harrier), *martin-pêcheur* (kingfisher), and the diminutive *martinet* (swift or martin). Born a heathen in Hungary, St Martin

given by the early settlers to the **Noisy Friarbird**. There are three other varieties of Friarbird: the **Helmeted**, with the common call of "poor devil, poor devil"(!) and the **Silver-crowned** in the north; and the **Little** in the north and east. These large pale-brown Honeyeaters are often host to the larger Cuckoos, particularly the Koel.

The **Noisy Friarbird** bears the alternative name of another Christian living under strict vows: **Monk**. Its bare head and pronounced frill or ruff of long white or creamish feathers is reminiscent of the tonsured head of a monk. The Greek *monakhos* (solitary) and *monas* (monk) gave rise to the Latin *monachus* and the Old English *munuc*. During the latter part of the Middle English period the short *ν* in words where *m*, *n* and *ν* were contiguous was commonly written *o*, which led to the development of 'monk', like the words 'come' and 'love'.

Females too have vowed themselves to obedience and abstinence. Curiously, however, it's the male of the **White-throated Chat** that is responsible for this species' extra name of **Nun**. It has a wholly white head and belly with a black band from the back of its crown to cross its breast, giving the appearance of a wimpled nun; in contrast, the female bird has a grey-brown forehead and thinner breast-band. The name has also been given to other related Chats, which don't have a white head, and elsewhere to Domestic Pigeons (because of the tuft of headfeathers) and moths.

In Greek *nenna* or *nanne* meant 'aunt', and in Late Latin *nanna* or *nunna* was used as a title of respect for an old lady. In the early monastic community, similar respect was paid to the male elder, *nannus*, and female elder *nanna*, when addressed or referred to by the young members.

The only religious sect specifically referred to in the naming of Australian birds is that of the **Mormons**, founded by Joseph Smith in 1830 and based on the revelations he claimed he received from God of the fourth century A.D. prophet, warrior and historian, Mormon, who had been one of a race which had colonised America from Palestine. In the year following their resettlement in Salt Lake City in 1847, the early Mormons were invaded by a plague of crickets, which seriously affected their food supplies. Divine intervention was thought to be responsible for the arrival of a flock of seagulls which then devoured the insects. The Mormon cricket, as it is now known, still periodically invades the State of Utah. In 1852 the subsequent Mormon leader, Brigham Young formally announced the doctrine of plural marriage, following on from an earlier vision of Smith's. Despite hostility, polygamy became a prominent feature of the creed until 1890, and figuratively a Mormon came to mean a polygamist.

Because of the predominance of brown plumaged birds among the family parties of

..... contd.

the **Superb (Blue) Fairy-Wren**, the belief evolved that the handsome blue male must be polygamous and have his own collection of wives, which therefore earned him the popular name of **Mormon Wren**. These family groups, however, have been found to comprise birds of a number of generations, including the dominant adult male, a female, and subordinate non-breeders of first-year birds of both sexes. The moulting into non-breeding brown plumage is termed eclipse and generally occurs in autumn and winter. These males, however, can be distinguished from the brown females by their black bills and (dark) blue tails. In the breeding season both the male and female can behave in an amusing way for the observer when they attack their images cast on reflective surfaces, such as occurred in my backgarden when a pair regularly did the rounds of an old aluminium kettle standing on the barbecue. Besides gardens and parks, the Superb Wren frequents a variety of habitats, particularly composed of dense low cover broken up by clearings. Its range is the coastal and inland areas from south-east Queensland to the Eyre Peninsula, including Tasmania. It is a vigorous coloniser, perhaps reminding us of the historical movement of the Mormons.

To conclude this chapter on religious beliefs and followers, we shift our focus to the Hindu faith. From the Sanskrit *Brahma*, meaning 'prayer' or 'divine cause of the world', came *Brahmanas*, one of the caste, which in turn was used to designate a member of the priestly or learned caste. The adjective **Brahminy** was developed on analogy with other words like 'Bengalee'. The name of **Brahminy Kite** was adopted from India, where the bird is considered sacred like the Hindu priest, and sanctioned by the Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union in 1975. This slow soaring raptor with prominent white and chestnut plumage frequents the coastline north of Sydney and Perth, particularly the mudflats and mangroves, feeding on fish, insects, snakes and other reptiles.

And from the beak of this scavenging bird of prey that searches out washed-up carrion, we proceed to the next chapter, with Tennyson's poem 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' in mind, "into the jaws of death".

Mike Morphett
April 29th, 1995

I. B. O. C. News

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THE CIRCULAR OF THE ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.
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***** COMING EVENTS *****

NEXT MEETING: will take place Monday, 11th September, at the Fairy Meadow Community Centre, corner of Cambridge Avenue & Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, commencing at 7.30 p.m. Our Guest Speaker for the evening will be Gary Davidson. Gary is a very keen "birder" who hails from Canada and his contact with us came via the American Birding Association and a Mount Kembla friend (none birdo) who visited Canada a couple of years ago. "North American Birds and Canadiana" should be a very interesting talk and slide show so come along and join us. The election of Office Bearers for 1996 will also take place at this meeting and all positions are declared vacant. Nomination forms which are enclosed with this newsletter should be forwarded to Chris Brandis at least one week before the meeting. Please consider nominating for President, Secretary, Treasurer, Editor or Committee Member, your help will be greatly appreciated.

NEXT OUTING: This will be to Abrahams Bosom Reserve at Currarong, Saturday, 16th September, meeting at 9 a.m. at the junction of the Princes Highway and Greenwell Point Road. All cars will then drive to Currarong to commence the walk. Features of the reserve are its beach, natural rock pool, creek and scenic walking tracks. Bring along your usual eats and drinks.

WEDNESDAY WALK: This will take place Wednesday, 6th September. Meet at Bald Hill, Stanwell Tops at 8.30 a.m. Due to unforeseen circumstances Jack Hyslop will not be able to lead this walk but Jim Robinson has kindly stepped in to help out. Please come along and join in, especially as some of the regular walkers will also be away.

***** PLEASE NOTE *****

As is usual, owing to the October camps, you will not receive a newsletter for October and there will not be a monthly meeting, outing or Wednesday walk.

AUGUST MONTHLY MEETING.

The speaker for the evening was Raoul Boughton who, with Christine McNamara, are the new Barren Grounds' Wardens providing interesting and well catered for nature courses in an unusual and varied habitat. Raoul told us a little of the history of the area and that the "Barren Ground" name is related to the practise of burning regularly in the late 1800s and the earliest part of this century to provide some fresh green feed for the stock carried on the plateau. We thought it was after the bleak winter days when the westerlies howl across the heath as the regeneration that has taken place is remarkable and not so "barren" anymore.

During the World War 1, grass trees in the area were harvested for the resin which was mixed with the gun powder to make the bullets waterproof and now there is a range of habitats from low heath to wet sclerophyl forest with an accompanying range of birds, mammals and plants. Probably the most well known birds are the Ground Parrot and the Eastern Bristlebird, with many overseas visitors, as well as locals, visiting with the hope of seeing at least one of these rare birds.

In 1949 a local conservation society moved to have grazing terminated in the area which became a nature reserve in 1956 with the RAOU setting it up as a Bird Observatory in 1982. During the time as a Bird Observatory considerable research has been carried out into the flora and fauna by both the Wardens and the local Universities. For those who wish to be guaranteed a sighting of a Ground Parrot the annual census is recommended and the data from this over the years has produced some very interesting and valuable facts that will be used to try and ensure the birds survival in the Illawarra. Anyone is welcome to visit and support the Observatory. Raoul showed slides of some of the local inhabitants including Beautiful Firetail, Rockwarbler, Pilotbird, Southern Emu-wren, honeyeaters and some plants of the area.

Brian Hales then showed some slides of a past club trip to O'Reillys to whet the appetites of those visiting Binna Burra this year including one of the most spectacular of all the Australian birds, the Regent Bowerbird.

The vote of thanks on behalf of the Club was given by ex Barren Grounds warden, Jack Baker, who still has an active involvement in the centre as well as conducting research into the Eastern Bristlebirds of the area.

Chris Brandis.

AUGUST FIELD OUTING.

It was surprisingly cool at the beginning of our walk along Lady Carrington Drive in the Royal National Park on Sunday, 20th August. Out came the old jumpers and parkas we all seem to hide in corners in the boot. We had a good roll up of 25 people. It was lovely to have the kids come along, their eyesight is so keen and they spot many birds. We start them young in IBOC - we had Betty's granddaughter in the stroller. The walk was easy, along the old road with a gentle slope down, following the course of the Hacking River. We took some cars to the northern entrance and by the time we got back the people left behind had a substantial bird list including Superb Lyrebird, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Crimson Rosella, Grey Butcherbird, Australian Magpie, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, Pied Currawong, Noisy Miner, Magpie-lark, Eastern Yellow Robin and Topknot Pigeon.

August Field outing contd..

We began walking from the southern end of the track about 9 a.m. By morning tea time we had added Green Catbird, Eastern Spinebill, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Lewin's Honeyeater, Superb Blue Wren, Red-browed Finch, Golden Whistler, Wonga Pigeon and Brown Thornbill.

It was 11 a.m. before it started to warm up and we began peeling off the outside layers of clothing. The birds were active all around especially the Green Catbird, Golden Whistler, Eastern Yellow Robin, Eastern Spinebill, Superb Lyrebird, Satin Bowerbird, Eastern Whipbird and Lewin's Honeyeater. We had numerous sightings of each of these birds. The bush was alive with activity. Twice we saw pairs of Sulphur-crested Cockatoo preparing nests in hollows high in the trees. One bird watched while the other diligently cleaned all the leaves and debris out of the hole and dropped it all to the ground. The men reckoned the male bird was doing all the work while the female supervised but we women disagreed with that hypothesis. There were several close sightings of the Superb Lyrebird. One very dirty bird was bathing in a small creek below the roadway. It had a wonderful time splashing and washing its long tail feathers and took no notice of us all peering at it from above.

We had several sightings of White-throated Treecreeper, Grey Fantail, Yellow-throated Scrubwren, Large-billed Scrubwren and even the elusive Eastern Whipbird who openly displayed himself to us. Further along the river were Black Duck and Australian Wood Duck. Near the northern end of the track hundreds of stately Gynea Lily were in full bloom. The graceful climber and ground cover False Sarsaparilla (*Hardenbergia violacea*) formed a purple carpet on the ground and spilled out over the huge rocks. Some climbed to the tops of the lilies and grass trees. No garden could have been more lovely. We stood in wonder at nature's beauty. Even heard a few Ah's.

By lunchtime it was quite warm so we found some good shade in an open grassy patch. By now we had also added Striated Thornbill, Little Wattlebird and Grey Goshawk to our list. As we drew nearer to the picnic area we had Dusky Moorhen, Laughing Kookaburra, Red-whiskered Bulbul, Silver Gull and a family of Black Duck. Mum and dad were busily guiding their brood through the reeds and away from the canoe on the river. By the track we saw one solitary Spotted Sun Orchid.

It was a delightful walk and I'm sure all enjoyed it. In all we saw 49 species of birds. Thank you Brian for yet another good outing. Funny how we always seem to finish at the kiosk!

Olive Rodwell.

1995 RAOU TWITCHATHON - WEEKEND 28-29 OCTOBER

This years Twitchathon will be bigger and better than ever. As in the past the competition will be split, firstly into the serious 24 hour marathon and also the opportunity for a more relaxed fun approach to the Twitchathon. So, no matter what your approach to birding there will be something for you. We already have excellent sponsorship and great prizes. Several pairs of binoculars from Proust Optical, ~~Figtree~~ Shopping Centre, 3 complimentary wills prepared by Muggletons Solicitors, 99 Percival Road Stanmore; birding computer software from Intelligent Birding (Simon Bennett) of Melbourne; and 2 perpetual trophies from Emu Tours. Money raised will be for accommodation at Barren Grounds and conservation of the Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo in S.E. and S.W. Australia. Entry forms from Peter West, 12/45 Edward Bennett Drive, Cherrybrook NSW 2126 Phone (02) 875 4482.

WEDNESDAY WALK, SCOUT CAMP & ROBERTSON'S LOOKOUT.

On the 2nd August on a calm, crisp, clear, (some would say cold) sunny day, nine members of IBOC met at the Scout Camp for our monthly half day walk. The camp was opened in 1940 and the exotic trees, planted in the early days before native vegetation became popular, have now reached massive proportions and look very much at home.

When we started our walk the thermometer was very low and there wasn't a breath of wind to ruffle the leaves of the trees, native or otherwise. We saw lyre birds and their scratchings, a whipbird, and Kookaburras high up on a tree and of course currawongs were singing their usual ringing chorus.

We wandered along, past and under Jacarandas, Flame Trees, Red Cedar and Ravanelas and over large, healthy, beautiful expanses of wandering jew. Here we inspected a nesting box but no nestlings and here a Lewin's Honeyeater inspected us - at length. When we came to a break in the trees, the view was spectacular, first over Lake Illawarra and then over the Steelworks, which on this lovely day were quite smoke free.

Above the swimming pool was a giant strangler Fig, bedecked with orchids, not flowering, ferns and vines and looking as if it had been there for hundreds of years and will be there for hundreds of years to come. Past the pool was an area of swamp with Cabbage tree palms of all sizes luxuriating in the additional water, ferns on the ground, on the trees, on the rocks, such a profusion of ferns, huge 'floaters' covered with moss now looking very parched, dry creek beds and towering trees and another Strangler Fig that started life on top of a 'floater' and was having a hard time strangling it.

We saw a Whipbird and a Spotted Thrush, now known as a Bassian Thrush, and a male bowerbird and then sat for a while in the chapel, in dappled sunlight and enveloped in stillness and then we were off again 'til we came to a sunny clearing where we had morning tea.

Other birds sighted included Topknot Pigeon, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, Green Catbird, Satin Bowerbird and Silvereye. Having seen and/or heard a total of 22 species here at the Scout Camp we then set off for Robertsons Lookout - by car I must admit.

Here the scenery and vegetation were completely different - no foreign invaders here, mainly tall rough barked eucalypts, some very old, old man Banksias and Prickly Moses with sparse pale flowers dotted here and there and a ground cover of bracken, all flourishing despite the dust dry soil. The wind was blowing here and rattled the tops of the trees and caused the high cloud to scurry across the sky.

The paved paths led us to the lookouts where the main points of interest were the large number of leafless Red Cedars waiting to burst forth into their new red Spring raiment and the astonishingly beautiful and varied shades of green that go into the making of the sub-tropical rain forest of our area. Here we saw White-throated Treecreeper, Grey Fantail and Yellow-faced Honeyeater bringing the day's total of species to 25.

Peg Merrett.

CAPE YORK AUGUST 1996

The Club is in the throes of organising a trip from Cairns to Cape York and return to Cairns for approximately 18 days in August 1996.

We hope to visit Cooktown, Weipa, Iron Range, the tip of the Cape and Thursday Island.

To help us with our planning we need to know how many people are interested.

If you would like to help us find the Golden Shouldered Parrot would you please make contact with Brian, Barbara, Laurie or Nola within the month

Seats will be limited due to the size of the four wheel drive vehicle.

Laurie Williams

BIRDING IN THE NORTH WEST OF N.S.W.

Unexpectedly, my husband and I found we could get a fortnight off and decided to go to the north west of NSW and then into Queensland. I wanted to see Eulo 9 Mile Bore again and Geoff reluctantly agreed as Eulo for him meant flies and more flies.

Our first night was at Lithgow Caravan Park and it was bitterly cold overnight and in the morning the ice was 1/8" thick on the inside of the caravan windows. Outside was a carpet of ice in a landscape of fog. Lake Wallace was like a primeval landscape. Bathurst did provide a male blackbird, barely visible through the fog, which lifted about midday, and by the Bell River at Molong on a fence were two Flame Robins and on the ground Yellow-rumped Thornbills. Before Wellington we saw a pair of Wedge-tailed Eagles, Whistling Kite and Little Falcon. Before Wellington we drove in deep fog which again only lifted in brief patches until after lunch.

Before Nyngan we encountered our first Apostle Birds. These were Biblical apostles so there were about 12 of them. Between Cunnamulla and Charleville we saw Apostle Birds so frequently that they began to resemble a total church population. There were 300 of them, in 2 flocks, before Roma down by the Warrego River. By the river at Nyngan birding was good and we found a Blue-winged Parrot, Blue-bonnet and a number of Red-rumped Parrots as well as Spiny-cheeked, White-plumed and Singing Honeyeaters, White-plumed being the most numerous.

There are now only two caravan parks at Bourke and we decided on the Paddlewheel Park, to which a number of R.A.O.U. members are coming in September. Birding was interesting at the park and we saw our first Red-capped Robin there. We asked about the Currawinya N.P. and the road through Hungerford and were told not to take it with or without the van being strongly advised to go first to Cunnamulla and take the road to the park from Eulo as it was gravel and recommended.

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Birding contd.

Between Bourke and Cunnamulla birding picked up and at a Rest Area 63 km from Bourke we saw Major Mitchells, Restless Flycatchers, Hooded Robins, Jacky Winter and White-winged Fairy Wren. On the plains we saw our first Emus and a lovely flight of Budgerigars which flew up from the bore drain next to the road and landed on a small tree about 50 metres away. They allowed us within a few metres and we found in the same tree a family of White-winged Fairy Wrens.

At Cunnamulla Caravan Park we were visited by a lady employed by the Shire Council to advertise the Adventure Way to Thargominyah. She knew the usual tourist ploys but when we told her we were birdwatchers she concentrated solely on birding, Eulo Bore, Lake Bindegolly and Currawinya N.P. and provided us with maps and various bird lists. One was compiled by I.B.O.C. a year ago. We found this especially interesting as compared with our own in previous years. The lady gave detailed knowledge of Currawinya, birding on the two lakes in the park, facilities and road conditions.

We pulled in at Eulo Bore and in the time spent there found Apostle Bird, Wood Duck, Hoary-headed Grebe, Blue Bonnet, Pied Honeyeater and Yellow-throated Miners (the latter in aggressive abundance). That was all. We went to the Eulo Caravan Park and contacted the Date Farm proprietor opposite and he also gave us valuable birding information saying that birding in the area was wonderful at the moment but not at the bore which had water but not enough vegetation cover and feed. A Black-breasted Buzzard circled the park. We looked in at the Mud Springs and had wonderful views of Red-winged Parrots and Mallee Ringnecks.

We drove on to Lake Bindegolly where previously I had never found anything and found it teeming with life. Brolga were dancing and Silver Gulls, Whiskered and Gull-billed terns were circling the lake. There were egrets, coots, swans, stilts and cormorants and various species of ducks. Freckled Ducks had been reported there for the previous few days. Around the lake were lapwings, White-winged Fairywren, White-browed Babblers, Restless Flycatchers, 2 types of woodswallows and one little grassbird.

The next day we had planned to go to Currawinya but as I was not feeling well we headed for Charleville. We called in at Eulo Bore and found 2 Black-fronted Dotterel and some Galahs. At a lunch stop at Quilberry, 110 km from Cunnamulla we found a Collared Sparrowhawk, Southern Whiteface, Hooded and Red-capped Robin, White-winged Triller, Western Gerygone, Jacky Winter, Masked Woodswallow and Zebra Finch. At Charleville we made a late afternoon visit to the sewerage treatment works where we had good birding mainly with various species of ducks.

The next day we headed for Roma. At a desolate morning tea stop I found Buff-rumped Thornbills and by the Balonne river near Roma we had a feast of birds - Cockatiel, Spotted Harrier, Diamond and Peaceful Doves, Zebra and Plum-Headed Finches. The doctor put a stop to birdwatching, a good trip cut short. In the late afternoon as we left Roma we saw another Red-winged Parrot and to our great joy a solitary Bourke's Parrot.

Joy Parker

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contd.....

ARTHUR (ARFIE) MOTHERSDILL - A TRIBUTE

We generally consider that 1956 was the year in which saga of the (human association) with the Bellambi Wandering Albatrosses started. But in fact it really started long beforehand. Arthur (Arfie) Mothersdill was born in 1915 and early in life was acquainted by his father with the ways of ocean fishing. In the 1920's and 1930's power boats were expensive and hard to come by so Arfie used to go several miles to sea by canoe to fish, without food, water and safety gear. One day in 1938 he happened to encounter a 30 knot westerly while some miles out and was on his way to New Zealand, (which was OK in those days as you didn't need a passport). By combination of strength, stamina, seamanship and luck he managed to get back home and was probably the last man to do so.

Nowadays the loss of "boaties" in westerly gales is a common occurrence in local waters. As a result of this experience Arfie and his old man decided that it was time to buy a power boat, which they did, a 14 foot (4.27m) Kauri Pine clinker hull with a 4Hp single cylinder 4-stroke, water cooled, engine. "state of the art" pre WW2. Subsequently christened "Mabel", this little craft and Arfie were there, fit, able and ready to go when the time came to catch Wanderers. Arfie kept Mabel in a boat shed on the beach at Bellambi Point. Thus Bellambi, a relatively minor village, achieved the distinction of the Wanderer association, above Wollongong and more significant locations. In those times there were no boat ramps, sea walls and jetties and a fair amount of skill was necessary to get a boat through the surf and rocks. But there were plenty of Wanderers. Arfie's father recalled their presence in 1912 and this is the only evidence that we have that Wanderers were in numbers at Bellambi before the birth of the sewer outfall at Malabar (in 1916).

When the birdo's came onto the scene; Doug Gibson, Alan Sefton and Dave Walsh (all of whom have passed on), all of whom had watched the Wanderers, often just a few metres off the shore and distributed along 30 km of coastline, and wondered whence they came, it was only a matter of time that they and Arfie decided to try their hand at trapping and banding. The results of this experiment are now well documented history.

Today Arfie lives still at Bulli, almost 80, and not quite as fit as he was 50 years ago. Mabel should have gone to the maritime museum, but unfortunately was burnt to death by one of Arfie's philistine relations, something Arfie still fumes over.

Birdo's tend to acknowledge the efforts of other birdo's and the contributions (often significant) of colleagues, such as Arfie, often fade from sight (in the history of the world according to birdo's) as time progresses. Without Arfie, Mabel, his sense of humour, seamanship, knowledge and participation, it is probable that the NSW Albatross Study would never have eventuated. To go to sea with Arfie was a great way to spend a field trip, and few of us are left to recall it. We and the Wanderers are now benefitting from the opportunity that Arfie gave us, and we will do our utmost to ensure that the New South Wales Albatross Study survives into the future.

THANKS ARFIE

Tribute reproduced courtesy of Lindsay & Janice Smith and loudly echoed by the Illawarra Bird Observers Club.

I.B.O.C. Camps and Trips since the Club started in February, 1977.

Ever wondered where we went in such and such a year or how long since we were at Bullamakanka? - Well, take a run through this list. It includes only those outings where we stayed at least one night.

	Easter Camps.	Oct. Long-w/e Camps.	Late Oct. Camps.	Other Camps/Trips.
1977		1/10-3/10 - Nowra - "Coolendel".	21/10-23/10 RanknSpngs-Pulletop NR.	
1978		30/9-2/10 - Bungonia - "Spring Ponds".	28/10-29/10 -Mudgee - MunghornGapNR.	19/8-20/8 - Tahmoor - "Wirrimbirra".
1979		29/9-1/10 - Canyonleigh - "Coowong".	2/11-4/11 - Thredbo - Kiama Ski Lodge..	19/5-20/5 - Jervis Bay-Greenpatch. 13/10-14/10-SndyHollow-"Amesbury Pk."
1980		4/10-6/10 - Nowra - "Condies".	25/10-26/10 - Temora- Inglebar SF.	24/2-5/3 - Lord Howe Island. 17/5-18/5 - Lake Conjola-camp area. 27/6-30/6 - Putty - "Rosswell". 7/11-9/11 - Putty - "Rosswell".
1981		3/10-5/10 - Canyonleigh-"Wendela".	23/10-26/10 - Dungog - Allyn River SF.	25/7-14/8 - Cape York/ Cairns.
1982	9/4-18/4 - Narrandera - Square Knob.	2/10-4/10 - Wingello - "Spring Valley".	23/10-24/10 - Grenfell - Weddin Mtns SF.	
1983	31/3-9/4 - Tuncurry - "Lavender Hill".	1/10-3/10 - Mittagong - "Wanganderry".	22/10-23/10 - Deua NP - Berlang RA.	14/8-27/8 - Hattah Lakes / Mootwingee.
1984	19/4-28/4 - Pilliga SF - Rocky Ck Bore.	29/9-1/10 - KangarooVlly- Barrengarry.	19/10-22/10-SandyHollow -"Amesbury Pk".	12/10-19/10 - Pilliga SF-Rocky Ck Bore.
1985	5/4-14/4 - Macquarie Marshes.	4/10-7/10 - Conjola - Sperring's.	18/10-21/10 - Numeralla - "Tarcoola".	13/7-11/8 - Kakadu NP/ Kununurra.
1986	28/3-31/3 - Jingellic - "The Oaks".	3/10-6/10 - Canyonleigh - "Coowong".	24/10-26/10 - Murga - "Cleveland".	
1987	17/4-20/4 - Grenfell - Weddin Mtns SF.	2/10-5/10 - Culburra - Cactus Pt.	16/10-25/10 - Lake Brewster.	1/9-6/9 - Lamington NP - "O'Reilly's".
1988	1/4-4/4 - Upper Horton - school.	30/9-4/10 - Wingello - "Spring Valley".	14/10-23/10 - Dubbo - Goonoo SF.	23/4-25/4 -BackyammaSF Combined Clubs.
1989	24/3-28/3 - Gloucester - "Woodlands"..	29/9-2/10 -KangarooVlly-"Gordon Vale".	13/10-22/10 -Lake Cowal-"Lakeside".	
1990	13/4-16/4 - Murga - "Cleveland".	28/9-1/10 - Mittagong-"Wanganderry".	27/10-4/11 - Pillaga SF - Rocky Ck Bore.	25/3-31/3 - Lord Howe Island.
1991	29/3-6/4 - Carcoar - showground.	28/9-30/9 - Conjola - Sperring's.	26/10-2/11 -UpperHorton-"Dalkeith".	18/5-19/5 - Canberra - motel.
1992	17/4-25/4-McMahonsReef "Markt Pongou".	3/10-5/10 - Canyonleigh - "Wendela".	23/10-1/11 - Jugiong - "Stonehenge."	24/8-12/9 Kinchega/ Mungo NPs. 28/11-29/11 - Yerranderie village.
1993	9/4-14/4 - Rylestone - "Badgerground".	2/10-4/10 -KangarooVlly-"Oakview".	23/10-30/10 - Ebor - Styx River SF.	21/8-12/9 -Wyperfeld NP/ Flinders Ranges. 17/9-19/9 - Canberra - motel/van park.
1994	1/4-9/4 - Myall Lakes - "Myall View".		22/10-29/10 - Crookwell - van park.	

Please let me know if you find any errors or omissions in this listing.

Dave Thomson. 84 2876.

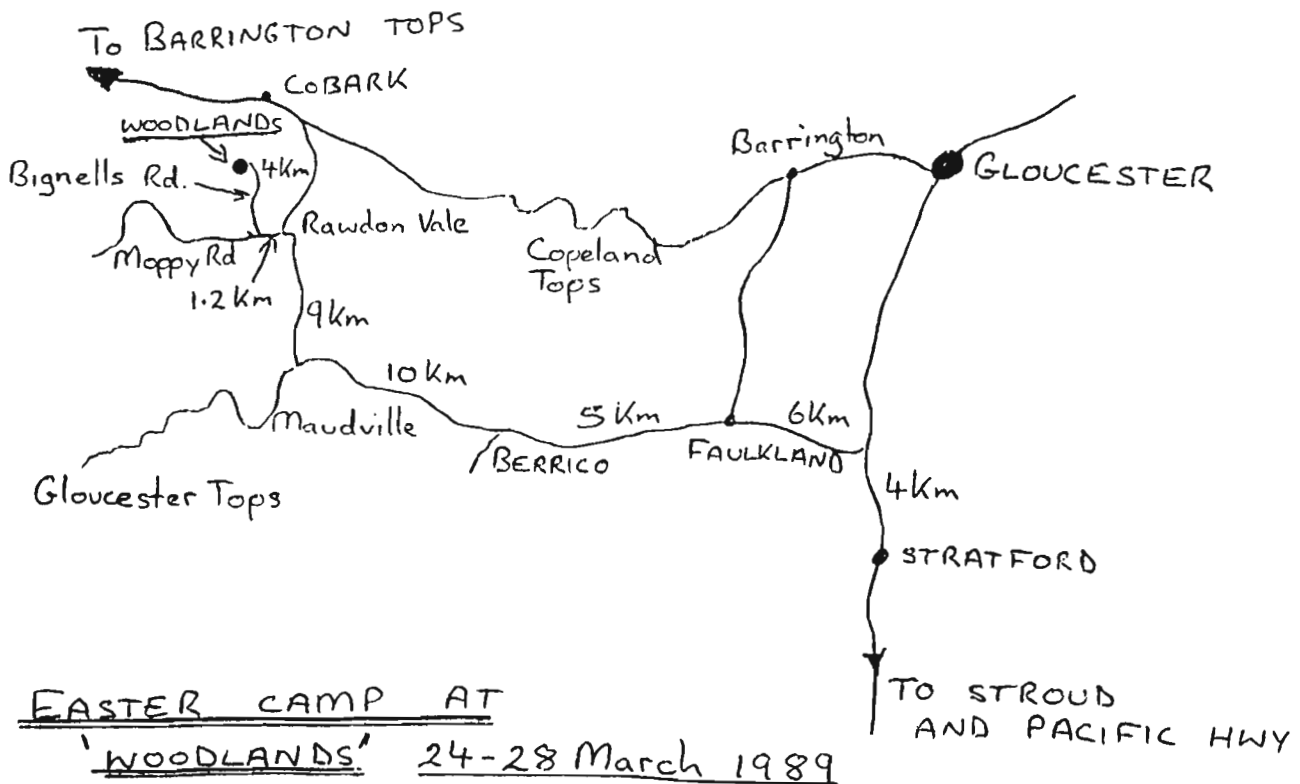
26/7/95.

LATE OCTOBER CAMP

This years camp will be held 21 - 28th October at "Woodlands", approximately 35 km west of Gloucester. The campsite is situated along the banks of the Barrington River and is set among scattered timber with casuarinas lining the river bank. Only a short walk away are some heavily timbered hills containing a magnificent stand of rainforest. The camp site is also very close to the vast Barrington Tops State Forest, Copeland Tops State Forest and Gloucester Tops, part of Barrington Tops N>P> This area contains the beautiful Gloucester Falls and a magnificent stand of Antarctic Beech Forest. The area is one of the best birding spots in NSW and contains a huge selection of species including Rufous Scrub-bird, Olive Whistler, Regent Bowerbird, Noisy Pitta, Pheasant Coucal, Paradise Riflebird and many more. There will be the usual toilet and shower facilities.

To get there, proceed north along the Pacific Highway to 18 km north of Raymond Terrace. Turn left along the Bucketts Way towards Stroud and Gloucester. About 14 km before Gloucester you pass through Stratford. 4 km north of Stratford turn left on Cobark Road and proceed along the Gloucester Tops Road through Faulkland and Berrico for 21 km. Turn north along Rawdon Vale Road for 9 km. At Rawdon Vale follow Moppy Road west for 1.2 km and then turn north along Bignells Road. The entrance to "Woodlands" is 4 km along this road, watch for the IBOC signs. *BRING DRINKING WATER*

NOT TO SCALE



1995 October "Long-weekend" Camp - Numeralla.

This year we're breaking a little with tradition by having our October long-weekend camp a long way from home and are arranging it for a whole week - it fits in with the school holidays. It's to run from Friday 29th Sept to Saturday 7th October and will be at Numeralla, about 380km from Wollongong and 20 odd km east of Cooma on a property named "Tarcoola" owned by Gary and Robyn George, phone 064 / 533363 - we camped there in '85. We'll be 100m from the Big Badja River and about 1km from the George's house. The river water is fine for washing and swimming but not for drinking - bring your own drinking water. There will be the usual 5-star toilet and shower arrangements. Our camp fee will again be \$5 per adult whether you stay for one night or for the week. CMA 1/25,000 map Numeralla shows detail of the area well. It also shows "Tarcoola" as abandoned which it was but now is not.

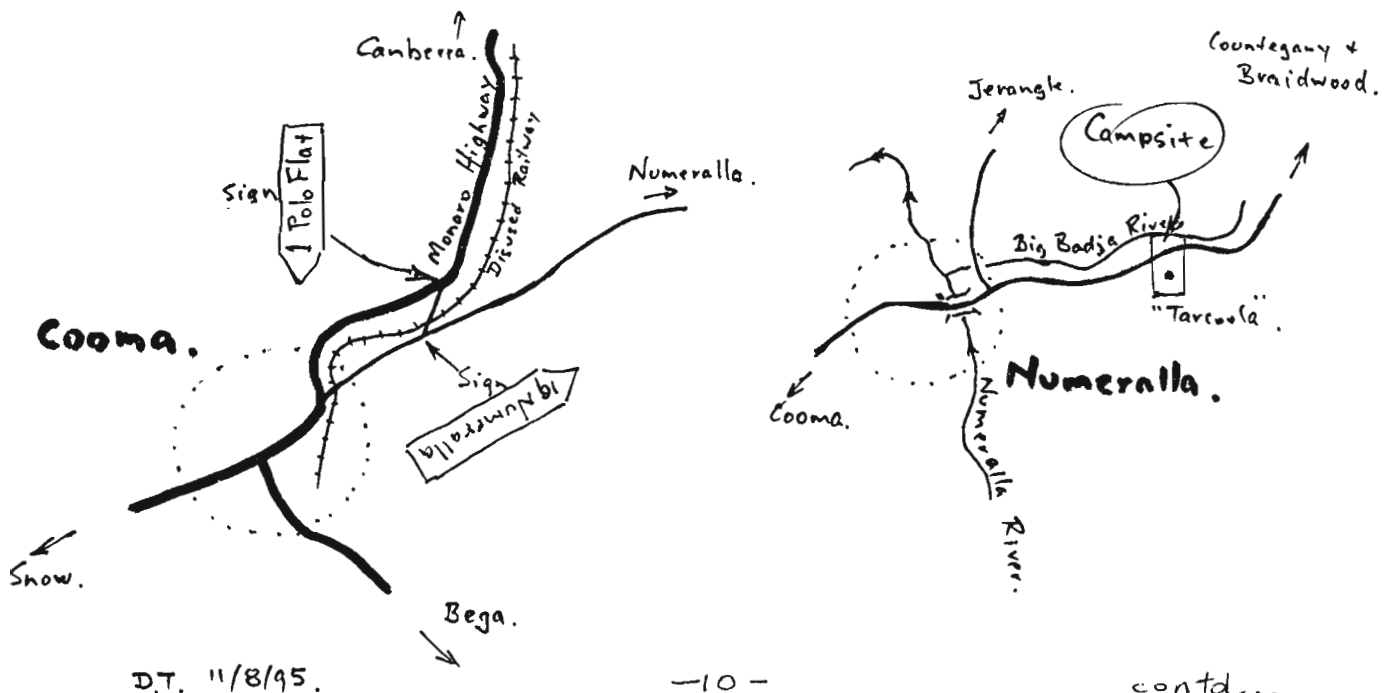
Local properties are partly cleared for stock while surrounding country is medium density eucalypt forest, and hilly. There are platypus in the river beside camp and 114 species of birds have been recorded on the property or nearby. And for the fishermen, trout - bring your rod, the season opens on our 1st weekend - we've had a few feeds from the river here. The snow is about one and a half hours away - some campers might like to take advantage of being so close and spend a day there.

Numeralla village (2km from camp) has no facilities other than a phone, school, church, tennis court and hall. The nearest place for shopping, petrol, doctor, police is Cooma about 24km away by bitumen road - Woolies and GB's, a good hospital and good general shopping.

The road from Wollongong to the campsite is bitumen all the way. NRMA map "South Coast and Snowy Mountains" shows the general route well - roughly southward through Goulburn and Canberra to Cooma then east to Numeralla. Unless you want to shop on the way in, you can avoid Cooma by turning left 4km N of Cooma at a sign that says "1 Polo Flat" and then, after 0.7km and at a sign that says "19 Numeralla", turn left again and head for camp. In Numeralla village the road takes a bridge over the Numeralla River and camp is 2.8km past the bridge and on the left - we'll have some signs out as usual. An easy way past Canberra, especially with a van, is to leave the Federal Hwy about 7km after the Queanbeyan turnoff, taking the Majura Road past the airport and then following the Cooma signs - a fairly clear run.

An alternative route to Numeralla is to take the road from Goulburn to Braidwood down the east side of Lake George and thence via Togganoggra, Snowball and Countegany, camp being about 10km W of the Countegany intersection. It's a nice run, is about 30km shorter but has a lot of gravel road. See the NRMA map. We camped at Deua NP on this road in 1983.

And if you're intending to go, put your name on the list, either in person or by contacting a committee member - we need to know who will be there, when and for how long.



Status	Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
U	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	01/6	Crooked River	estuary	KM
U	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	05/7	Koona Bay	wetland	BH
U	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	14/7	Comerong Island	wetland	CJC
S	Little Eagle	1	02/7	Shellharbour	overhead	CB
U	Marsh Harrier	1	09/7	Shellharbour	grassland	GR
U	Marsh Harrier	1	28/5	Thirlmere Lakes	wetland	SP
U	Marsh Harrier	1	28/6	Albion Park	no data	JZ
S	Pied Oystercatcher	2	26/5	Windang	sandflat	SP
S	Pied Oystercatcher	2	07/7	Griffins Bay	sandflat	KC
MC	Red-capped Plover	2	07/7	Griffins Bay	sandflat	KC
U	Black-fronted Plover	1	24/6	Shellharbour	wetland	SP
R	Emerald Dove	1	02/7	Minnamurra rainforest	rainforest	SP
U	Bar-shouldered Dove	3	09/7	Minnamurra Spit	woodland	CB
U	White-headed Pigeon	8	09/7	Jamberoo	urban	BH
U	Flame Robin	3	27/5	Mittagong(Boxvale)	woodland	DT
U	Rose Robin	2	09/7	Keiraville	garden	ME
U	Rose Robin	2	12/7	Wollongong Uni	garden	CJC
U	Logrunner	2	21/6	Thirroul	forest	MM
U	Logrunner	2	10/7	Mt.Keira ring track	forest	JW
C	Eastern Whipbird	2	09/7	Mangerton Park	forest	ND
U	Crescent Honeyeater	few	25/7	Barren Grounds NR	woodland	KM
MC	European Goldfinch	few	27/5	Ben Har	rural	DT
S	Figbird	6	22/6	Warrawong	garden	MM
U	Spangled Drongo	1	22/5	Thirroul	woodland	MM
U	Spangled Drongo	1	10/7	Mt. Ousley	garden	JW
U	Green Catbird	2	22/6	Thirroul	forest	MM
U	Green Catbird	1	09/7	Mangerton Park	forest	ND
U	Grey Currawong	3	25/6	Barren Grounds NR	woodland	KM

CB - Chris Brandis; CJC - Chris Chafer; KC - Kerry Chafer; ND - Nancy Drydon; ME - Mary Eskdale; BH - Betty Hudson; KM - Kevin Mills; MM - Mike Morphett; SP - Sue Proust; GR - Gwen Robinson; DT - Dave Thompson; JW - Joan Wylie; JZ - Joan Zealey

Comment: The most exciting find for this period is Nancy's Catbird. This is the first known record from this site, which is some 4 km from the nearest likely resident population on the escarpment. It will be interesting to see if the species can establish itself in this new location. The Warrawong record of Figbirds is also of significance.

There are only two small populations of this species in the Illawarra, one based around Primbee and the other around Nowra. For the northern population there have been regular observations from Port Kembla and Primbee and a few from Lake Heights. Another Emerald Dove has been observed at Minnamurra rainforest, while the usual winter migration of Rose Robins has turned this species up in several coastal gardens. Drongo locations are slightly up from normal this winter, with observations from 7 suburbs so far. I have included the Goldfinch record as this species is undoubtedly in decline, any additional records would be welcome.

NOTE: Anyone requiring a copy of the 1994 Annual Report needs to order one through either Chris Brandis or myself. The committee has decided to print the report on request only. Those persons who have ordered one should receive it in mid August.

Status	Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
S	Reef Egret	1	19/8	Crookhaven Heads	rocky shore	CJC
R	Australian Bittern	1	July	Spring Creek (Kiama)	wetland	
U	Musk Duck	2	30/7	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	GB
U	Australasian Shoveller	1	30/7	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	GB
U	Peregrine Falcon	1	11/7	Barren Grounds NR	overhead	AW
U	Grey Goshawk	1	5/7	Mt. Keira	overhead	AW
U	Brown Goshawk	1	10/8	Thirroul	forest	MM
S	Little Eagle	1	2/8	Bulli Pass Res.	overhead	GB
U	Buff-banded Rail	1	14/7	Stanwell Park	urban	JH
S	Pied Oystercatcher	4	13/8	Windang	sandflat	GB
R	Hooded Plover	5	29/7	Berrara	beach	KM
U	Kelp Gull	23	6/8	Whytes Gully tip	wasteland	CJC
U	Yellow-tail Blk-Cockatoo	15	25/7	Lake Heights	garden	KC
S	Little Corella	2	13/8	Thirroul	overhead	MM
U	Musk Lorikeet	20	29/7	Cudmirrah	forest	KM
R	Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove	1	24/7	Rhododendron Park	rainforest	DT
S	White-headed Pigeon	9	24/7	Rhododendron Park	rainforest	DT
U	Crested Pigeon	2	13/7	Stanwell Park	urban	JH
U	Crested Pigeon	6	5/8	Helensburgh	parkland	MM
U	Crested Pigeon	1	7/8	Thirroul	rail station	MM
U	Barn Owl	1	2/7	Kiama Bypass	roadkill	KM
U	Barn Owl	1	21/7	Mullet Ck, F6	roadkill	KM
U	Barn Owl	1	30/7	Kiama Bypass	roadkill	KM
U	Scarlet Robin	1	13/8	Albion Park	parkland	GB
U	Red-browed Treecreeper	2	1/7	Cudmirrah	forest	KM
S	White-plumed Honeyeater	8	7/8	Kemblawarra	school ground	CJC
U	Brown-headed Honeyeater	2	20/7	Braemar (Mittagong)	woodland	KM
U	Crescent Honeyeater	1	12/7	Wollongong Uni	garden	AW
U	Zebra Finch	4	30/7	Killalea SRA	grassland	GB

GB - Graham Barwell; CJC - Chris Chafer; KC - Kerry Chafer; JH - Jack Hyslop; KM - Kevin Mills; MM - Mike Morphet; DT - Dave Thompson; AW - Alex Watson

The highlight for this month is obviously the Rose-crowned Fruit-Dove found at the Rhododendron Park. Unfortunately the bird was expired after hitting a glass window. Nevertheless, its an exciting find and represents the fourth known occurrence from the region, all previous records coming from the Bass Point rainforest in Sept/Oct 1984, Aug/Sept 1985 and May/June 1989. Another exciting find were the White-plumed Honeyeaters at Kemblawarra. As I recently wrote, there are only three other known extant colonies of this species on the Illawarra plain, Corrimal High School, lower Fairy Creek and Springhill Road. My kids have been going to the Kemblawarra school for five years and neither Kerry or myself have observed them here previously. The birds have been present for a couple of weeks and it will be interesting to see if they hang around. Regular readers of this column will note yet another swag of dead Barn Owls. Clearly this species is much more numerous than usual. The Buff-banded Rail at Stanwell Park is the first known record from the Illawarra coast north of Thirroul, where a specimen was collected in August 1963. Crested Pigeons are starting to take up residence in the coastal northern suburbs, while the number of Kelp Gulls using Whytes Gully as a foraging resource is also increasing.

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If you are unable to get to a meeting and forget to mail your records, then why not give me a ring on the phone number at the top of the page. I'm home most nights after 7pm.

I. B. O. C. News

ISSUE NO. 186

November 1995



THE CIRCULAR OF THE ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.
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THE CLUB'S AIM IS TO JOIN TOGETHER PEOPLE WITH A COMMON INTEREST WHO WISH TO FURTHER THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND ENJOYMENT OF THE BIRDLIFE AROUND THEM

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS due 1st January each year: FAMILY \$20 SINGLE \$15 JUNIOR \$5

***** COMING EVENTS *****

NEXT MEETING: will be held on Monday 13 November at the Fairy Meadow Community Centre, corner of Cambridge Ave and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, commencing at 7.30 p.m. Our guest speaker for the evening will be Dr Kevin Mills. Kevin has been a member of our club for many years and has led many walks as well as speaking on numerous occasions at our meetings. Tonight the subject of his talk will be "The Rainforests of the Illawarra", also the subject of his recently published book.

NEXT FIELD OUTING: will be held on Saturday 18 November to Killalea State Recreation Area, and will include the Minnamurra sand spit and Killalea Lagoon. We will meet at the first car park inside the gate at 8.30 a.m. The entrance to the SRA is in Buckleys Road, off Shellharbour Road, Gregory's Reference (13th ed.) map 17, H9.

PLEASE NOTE: At the November meeting we will be electing people to fill the positions of President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. Please bring along your completed nomination forms. If you feel you could fill one of the positions please nominate yourself. We are also asking for members to come forward to fill the position of Activities Officer. Please consider You can be of great assistance to the club by carrying out this important job.

DECEMBER MEETING: Our Christmas gathering will be the usual light-hearted yet intellectually stimulating evening with a host of awards and prizes up for grabs. The theme for the night will be announced at the November meeting, thus giving members plenty of time to gather their thoughts and come up with some truly inspirational and entertaining ideas. It's a fun night, with lots of laughs and good cheer.

SEPTEMBER MONTHLY MEETING

The speaker for the evening was Gary Davidson, a birdwatcher from Canada who, with his wife, has taken a year off teaching to explore the birds of Australia, and who talked about the area he lives in and its natural history. Gary had spent time in Queensland as an exchange teacher thus whetting his appetite for the birds of other areas of Australia.

Gary's home town of Nakusp in British Columbia is about 400 Km east of Vancouver and is in an area of several mountain ranges producing spectacular scenery and habitat that varies from moist forest to desert and from lake to alpine meadow. The slides shown went through the 4 very different seasons including the short but cold winter during which many of the smaller lakes freeze over allowing fishermen to drive over them to their favourite ice-hole. Nearly every photograph showed snow-capped mountains and/or forest-ringed lakes, typical of that mountainous region, which provided the variety of habitat but which made travelling difficult, some roads literally carved out of the sheer sides of mountains.

The variety of large animals includes bears, and people moving through the forest often carry bells that ring as they move to allow the bears to move away. The bears are only a danger if surprised and become defensive or frightened, or if they become "garbage" bears scrounging in local tips and losing their natural fear of humans. There are many birds in the area including some that have family members in Australia, but mostly there are different species, often filling similar habitat roles to some Australian species. There are also those birds that are a problem to identify, such as the 15 or so gulls, the new world flycatchers, warblers and sparrows that, when out of their breeding plumage, make our thornbills look easy. Many of the waders that visit in the summer are in breeding plumage unlike in Australia where we catch only a glimpse of the new plumage as the birds moult just prior to migrating. There is a good selection of owls including the fearless Pygmy-Owl which will hunt during the day and attack birds up to twice its own 150 mm length.

The excellent slides of scenery, birds, animals and plants gave us a good insight into the area, and explained why it is a popular place for exchange teachers from Australia. The vote of thanks from all the Members present was given by Brian Hales and an invitation was extended to Gary to join the activities of the Club at any time during his stay in Australia.

Chris Brandis

SEPTEMBER OUTING TO ABRAHAM'S BOSOM, CURRARONG

Although light rain was falling the four cars that met in Nowra set off for Currarong with the hope that the slightly clearer patch of sky was over Abraham's Bosom. Just after we started the walk with rain gear on (making those with packs under the coats look like hunchbacks of Notre Dame) the rain ceased and it stayed dry for our guests from Canada, Gary and Marie Davidson, for the remainder of the walk. The overcast conditions made seeing birds in the treetops difficult, and with the Swamp Mahogany near the carpark in flower there were Musk and Rainbow Lorikeets screeching in the trees everywhere but it was hard to view their bright colours. Down near the shore 2 Eastern Reef Egrets were seen flying past and, while trying to see if they landed further along, a Humpback Whale was noticed

just off a headland, heading south. The water nearby was boiling at times with baitfish and it was surprising there was only a lone Crested Tern hovering overhead to pick up the scraps and a few Australasian Gannets diving out further.

The track through the heath was like a tunnel with New Holland Honeyeaters and Red Wattlebirds calling everywhere and flashing overhead. At a small clearing some had a glimpse of Variegated Fairy-wrens and Tawny-crowned Honeyeater and most saw Eastern Spinebill, Brown Thornbill and White-browed Scubwren. We had good views of Sooty Oystercatchers and saw a White-bellied Sea-eagle fly out across the sea but no sign of the Reef Egrets. We had lunch on a hill overlooking the heath and a pair of Tawny-crowns obliged us with great views of the delicate colours and the long bill. During the walk we could hear an Olive-backed Oriole calling and after much searching only Joan Wylie had a brief glimpse before it again was lost from sight. As we were walking past a swampy area along Abraham's Bosom Creek, Ian McKinlay spotted a White-cheeked Honeyeater amongst the many New Hollands we had seen and we soon had several in this small pocket south of their normal range.

On arriving back at the car park the pair of Chestnut Teal we had seen in the morning were still asleep in the same spot on a log in the creek, while we had a total of 46 species. Thanks to Diana Wright for showing us the way through the system of walking tracks in the reserve and to the 11 members and guests who braved the initial poor weather to make a good day out.

Chris Brandis

SEPTEMBER MIDWEEK WALK

On 6 September six members of IBOC met at Bald Hill for a half-day walk. The wind from the southwest was blowing directly off the snow at Robertson and was freezing; however, as the sun was shining, all was clear and beautiful but the paragliders and hang gliders were more sensible than the birdos - there weren't any of them. From here we drove to the entrance of Lady Carrington Drive which was originally a carriageway, but as we had no carriage we walked and were happy to do so because on this wide (enough for 2 carriages), well-graded road the sun shone and the luxuriant growth on the tall trees bordering the way protected us from the wind. From the trees flew Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, all screeching raucously. There were surprisingly few flowers, not even wattle, only a couple of quite large bushes attractively covered with mauve flowers and looking like mint bushes (but not smelling like them), tall white everlasting daisies and sweet-smelling Lomandra, spikes at the ready, waiting to scratch the unwary. The trunks of the trees, which were quite large, were all blackened from the fires, but the greenery that covered the ground and branches provided evidence of the remarkable recuperative powers possessed by native vegetation. As the vegetation recovered the birds have returned, and we saw Red-browed Firetail, Golden Whistler and Eastern Yellow Robin, while up high a Wedge-tailed Eagle was being harassed by a couple of smaller birds.

Cedar cutting commenced in this area two years after the arrival of the First Fleet, and in 1891 the park trustees planted Red Cedars along the Hacking River but these failed to thrive and we saw only a few, easily identified by their new red spring foliage.

After we'd gone about 1 Km along Lady Carrington Drive we turned left into the Forest Path, a loop track of 4.5 Km which skirts Forest Island, a steep hill that is almost cut off from the rest of the park by the Hacking River and Bola Creek. The soil here is richer than that in most of the Royal N.P., consisting as it does of weathered Narrabeen sandstone, claystone and shale, and as a result we entered a glorious lush, dark rainforest area. The damp ground was covered by fallen leaves which made for wonderfully soft walking and, although we were on the edge of Bola Creek, there was no sound, the creek didn't chatter (neither did the birds) and the birds didn't sing. There were ferns up the trees and large rocks covered with moss, and it looked like a paradise not only for humans, but also for mosquitoes and leeches. However, no-one was attacked.

Presently we came out of the rainforest and into a patch of sunlight; it was too good an opportunity to miss, it also being 10 o'clock, so we sat on convenient logs or rocks and had morning tea listening to tree creepers, Grey Shrike-thrush, whipbirds, Lewin's Honeyeater and Brown Gerygone. Local coal companies had permission to cut timber in this area and continued to do so until the 1920s when members of the public protested and forced the government to withdraw the permits. We were well into tall closed forest now, and where lilly-pillies and casuarinas had been burned and apparently killed by the fires, lots of little trees or suckers were shooting from their bases and were currently about one metre tall. Wandering Jew flourished here and, while the tops of the trees were thrashing around, no wind penetrated down here. There were quite a few "little brown birds" about, some of whom turned miraculously into White-throated Treecreepers, Spotted Pardalotes, Grey Shrike-thrush and Yellow-faced Honeyeaters.

Soon we were back at the cars, having taken about 2.5 hours for a short, easy walk, but what a delightful walk it was. We saw 24 species in all. Many thanks to Jim Robinson for leading the walk and to Jack Hyslop for directing us to such a lovely place.

Peggy Merrett

ALLAN SEFTON MEMORIAL LECTURE

The third lecture in this series was given by Dr Denis Saunders of the W A CSIRO, and the evening included a presentation by Dorothy Sefton of the Allan Sefton Memorial Prize for excellence to a student in the University of Wollongong's Environmental Science program. The evening provides a get-together for many interested groups including BHP, Wollongong City Council and the University, with all parties learning from each other. Dr Saunders' subject, the role of the Scientist and Volunteer in Environmental Research, reminded us that the knowledge we gain is of little use unless it is published and in a form that can be made use of by the appropriate people. The exploitation of the Australian wheat and sheep belt over the last 100 years goes on at a frightening rate despite numerous warnings, and involving those who have the most to gain/lose in research is one way to change attitudes. He repeated the warning that massive loss of land productivity and species extinction will happen because the inter-relationship of ecosystems is poorly understood and the changes have been so rapid that we do not know what has been lost already.

A LEISURELY TRIP TO LAMINGTON

On Sunday 20 August 1995 nine IBOCers set out on a leisurely trip to Binna Burra on Lamington Plateau in southeast Queensland. Wal Emery was the tour guide on this occasion, taking us to camp in state forests and national parks which he and Hazel had visited previously. Our first camp was at Swans Crossing in the Kerewong State Forest just west of Kew and the Pacific Highway. Here we stayed for 3 nights in peaceful surroundings, going for short walks following the creek through rainforest and doing a trip to the Comboyne, visiting Boorganna Nature Reserve and Ellenborough Falls. White-headed and Topknot Pigeons, Emerald Doves, Brown Cuckoo-Doves and Brush Turkeys were some of the 65 species recorded.

On Wednesday we moved further north to Station Creek camping area in the Red Rock section of Yuraygir National Park, just north of Woolgoolga, another very interesting area to visit. Wattle was in full bloom by the highway, looking spectacular, and we passed several newly constructed roadside rest areas with toilets which are a great asset for motorists. There were lots of wildflowers blooming in Yuraygir N.P. including Hovea, Boronia and purple Patersonia heralding the spring, and a lovely flowering Wonga Vine looked splendid in the camping area. It is possible to walk across the sand dunes to the beach where Australasian Gannets, Osprey, White-bellied Sea-Eagles and Beach Thick-knee were seen. Ron and Rita Imisides had the excitement of a Buff-banded Rail running along the roof of their caravan while they were eating their evening meal in the camping area. We also had sightings of Figbirds and White-breasted Woodswallows among the total of 80 species recorded during our two night stay.

On Friday we headed further north following the Clarence River, travelling through sugar cane country. We had a very pleasant morning tea stop at Ferry Park rest area, Maclean, a new building which has a very nice display of local arts and crafts for sale. We turned off the highway at Woodburn to head for Lismore and on to Dunoon past the macademia nut plantations, finally setting up camp at Rummery Park in Whian Whian S.F., a terrific place to spend time walking and bird watching. At night we saw glow worms in the creek bed and by day we saw and photographed a carpet python and lace monitors who seem to be permanent residents.

We went on a lovely walk to the top of Miryon Falls and some of our party climbed down beside the falls into the rainforest below. Very little water was going over the falls but we saw some native orchids in flower as well as lots of lichen and moss. We also spent a day driving to Rocky Creek Dam, stopping at Peates Lookout where we could see the lighthouse at Byron Bay in the distance. We had our morning tea in the Big Scrub and did a circular walk in the rainforest, seeing the beautiful Wompoo Fruit-Dove. At dusk we enjoyed watching the performance of a Paradise Riflebird in the picnic area at Rummery Park. Scarlet Honeyeater, Pale-yellow Robin and Little Shrike-thrush were some of the highlights of the 60 species observed in this area.

Monday 28 August saw us packing up to move on to Sheep Station Creek camping area in the Border Range N.P., passing through Nimbin (a most interesting place) and Kyogle and setting up camp near a tree with a koala resting in it. We went for a walk to Lophostemon Falls which took us through beautiful rainforest with superb moss-covered logs and evidence of the early cedar cutters. We spent a day travelling along the Tweed Range Scenic Drive, stopping at various lookouts and rest areas and doing some of the short walks. Good views were had of the majestic Mt Warning in the distance. The Cedar loop walk was spectacular as was the Antarctic Beech Forest at

(6)

Bar Mountain rest area. We also did the Brindle Creek walk through fabulous Antarctic Beech and rainforest, past waterfalls and trees loaded with Birds Nest Ferns, Elk- and Stag-horns, orchids, moss, lichen and various fungi, while we enjoyed seeing Wompoo, Topknot and Wonga Pigeons, Emerald Doves, Brown Cuckoo-Doves and Logrunners among the 79 species recorded.

On Thursday we enjoyed a beautiful drive along quiet narrow scenic roads with several views of Mt Warning as we made our way to Wollumbin Caravan Park near Murwillumbah. The sight of this mountain towering over the surrounding countryside enticed most of our party to get out of bed at 2.30 a.m. on Friday, drive up to the car park and climb the remaining 4.4 Km to the top of the mountain where they were among the first people to see the sunrise on the first day of spring: no mean feat! Some others arose at a more respectable hour, drove to the car park and climbed the track to meet the adventurers on their descent, the latter being rewarded for their efforts by having a Noisy Pitta lead the way for the first 10 minutes of the climb.

We drove to Mebbin S.F. and saw the largest ironbark in Australia as well as several beautiful King Orchids flowering high in the rainforest on a walk we did before lunch. At night in the camping ground we the company of fireflies while Ron and Wal went spotlighting and saw the Marbled Frogmouth. Eighty bird species were recorded for Wollumbin, with a grand total of 162 species for the trip.

We were in the area at the time of the Banana Festival in Murwillumbah and I was fortunate to be able to attend the annual quilt show where the fabulous work of many ladies and children was on display, an additional bonus for me. On Sunday we were off to Binna Burra, stopping at the Natural Bridge in the Numinbah Valley for a walk and morning tea prior to driving up the mountain to our camp site on the Lamington Plateau to enjoy more rainforest, walks, birds and good company.

A very sincere "thank you" must go to Wal and Hazel for giving us the opportunity to share some of their secret places and to discover for ourselves some of the treasures that are there to be enjoyed if only we take the time.

Nola Williams

NUMERALLA CAMP

On Sunday 1 October Tom & I and my sister Pat set out for our long-awaited first IBOC camp. At our morning tea stop en route we saw Red-rumped Parrots nesting, Dusky Woodswallow and Australian Hobby. Driving on we arrived at camp at midday. After setting up we were just in time for a presentation to our hosts Gary and Robyn, Melinda and Jessica. Laurie presented the family with two lovely gardening books and expressed his thanks on behalf of all.

Soon we set off for a walk with Dave on the host property. We inspected a Welcome Swallow's nest and saw Hooded Robin, Fantail Cuckoo and Yellow-rumped Thornbill. Meanwhile Tom headed for the nearest creek with his fishing gear; on his return he had trout for dinner. Well done, Tom!!! Shower time approached and - surprise, surprise - all managed a hot shower despite a cool afternoon. The camp fire at night was appreciated.

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Next morning we drove to a nursery, leaving Dave's car midway for ferrying drivers back later. John and Shilo met us and showed us around the nursery, a lovely old home with a loom where Shilo does some weaving. Birds were plentiful, including Scarlet and Yellow Robins, wattlebirds, spinebills and rosellas. After eating lunch we started our walk back along a fire trail. Dave assured us it was easy walking, having surveyed the track from the back of a motorbike. However the long steep hill told another story, and all needed a good rest at the top. The sighting by Bronwyn of a Wonga Pigeon, plus numerous sightings of White-throated and Red-browed Treecreepers, Striated and Spotted Pardalotes kept us going. Jason, Galvin and Melissa, being young, stayed ahead and counted 12 kangaroos. Wal, having found koala droppings, kept us searching unsuccessfully for the koala.

Back at Dave's car Fran, the home owner, invited us to see a bird nesting in her shed, a thrush which has used the same cardboard box for three years. Wal made friends with their old border collie who wanted to get into the car and come with us. At this point we farewelled the Wilsons. The rest of us headed back to camp, just ahead of the rain; more trout was caught and was shared around, but there was no camp fire.

On Tuesday Wal and Hazel shifted to higher ground due to heavy overnight rain and, as more rain looked imminent, they headed for home. However the weather fined up, and as it was a free day our trio drove to Nimmitabel, seeing plenty of raptors on the way. Easily identified was Australian Kestrel, Wedge-tailed Eagle and Brown Falcon. Laurie and Nola found a little craft shop outside Cooma and had a nice fish dinner with damper. A very cold night (no showers except for one brave fisherman!!) but a big camp fire and a nip of port saw us all go to bed warm.

Wednesday dawned fine and warm as we walked along the Big Badja River into Numeralla - saw White-faced Heron, Dusky Moorhen, Reed-Warbler, Little Grebe, Black-fronted Plover and a Hooded Robin on a nest. On the afternoon walk in the opposite direction we spotted Gang-gang Cockatoos and Sacred Kingfisher. Dave found some interesting nests and Tom investigated old gold diggings and the remains of a hut.

On Thursday we awoke to a heavy fog - what a beautiful sight, watching fog lift slowly and mountains appearing. We saw galahs nesting close by our van; around camp were Yellow-tufted, White-eared and White-plumed Honeyeaters, and there was even a platypus in the river. Our day trip to the cascades was cut short by a "Road Closed" sign. We parked and walked which was worthwhile as we saw Crescent Honeyeater, Eastern Whipbird, numerous other honeyeaters and thornbills, and also heard a lyrebird. Back at camp we saw Diamond Firetail, Southern Whiteface, Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo and Restless Flycatcher.

Friday morning saw us all packing up at the finish of an interesting week. All agreed it was a small but worthwhile camp which was enjoyed by ALL. Total species in camp was 75, and all over total including species seen as we travelled to camp was 88. Thanks, Dave, for all your work in setting up and dismantling.

Joan Wylie

CAPE YORK TRIP 1996

Planning for our trip to Cape York is well under way. At present we are negotiating with a tour company to take us on a 21 day trip from Cairns to Cairns for approx. \$2100. Transport from Wollongong to Cairns and return is to be arranged once we have completed these negotiations.

A detailed map will be available at the November meeting, showing where we are suggesting we travel. We are aiming at 16 members to make up the group. As soon as we have definite details of the tour we will arrange a meeting for those who have indicated that they are interested in the trip. If you require any further details in the meantime or you want to put your name on the list please ring 27 2326 and we will endeavour to help you with what information we have available already.

Below is our suggested itinerary which will leave Cairns on a Sunday morning and return on a Saturday afternoon:

- Day 1 Cairns to Lakelands
- Day 2 Lakelands to Musgrave
- Day 3 Musgrave to Archer River
- Day 4 Archer River to Iron Range
- Day 5 Iron Range
- Day 6 Iron Range (Portland Roads)
- Day 7 Iron Range
- Day 8 Iron Range to Bertie Creek
- Day 9 Bertie Creek to Punsard Bay
- Day 10 Punsard Bay
- Day 11 Punsard Bay (Boat trip to Thursday Island)
- Day 12 Punsard Bay
- Day 13 Punsard Bay to Twin Falls
- Day 14 Twin Falls to Weipa
- Day 15 Weipa (trip through the mine)
- Day 16 Weipa to Coen
- Day 17 Coen to Lakefield (Hann River)
- Day 18 Lakefield to Laura River
- Day 19 Laura River to Cooktown
- Day 20 Cooktown
- Day 21 Cooktown to Cairns

Laurie Williams

NAME-GIVING AUSTRALIAN BIRDS: 3

THE DEATH SQUAD

Caesar: *Cowards die many times before their deaths;
The valiant never taste of death but once.
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
It seems to me most strange that men should fear;
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come when it will come.*

Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar* II.ii.30

Beliefs and philosophies will continue to be debated as to the life and death processes of us humans. Whilst generally it is held that each human cell has an age limit, despite their capacity for subdivision, immortality is ascribed to our deities and souls. Such a concept can allay any fears we might hold about death, even though death is often still a taboo subject. Ceremonial rituals we employ as a vehicle for our grief, to ease our pain of loss and to mark our respect for the deceased.

Birds, whilst mostly a source of joy, comfort and inspiration for us, have been associated with death in our lives, legends and language. With its diet of carrion, the vulture is probably among the first that spring to our minds. The 1994 Pulitzer Prize for feature photography was won by South African photographer, Kevin Carter for his poignant picture of an emaciated young girl slumped on the ground and stalked by a vulture in southern Sudan, stricken by civil war and famine. In many cultures mythical birds have been linked with sickness or death. In some parts of southern India the number of screeches an owl gave meant a different omen: one or eight times signified death, the latter of a sudden nature. In our Australian vernacular we talk of a certain winner in a horse race as a dead bird; someone lacking in spirit or vigour and something broken down or boring as dead as a dodo; and a person doomed to fail or become the target of a pay-back gesture as a dead duck.

It is perhaps surprising that so few birds in Australia have been given death-related names, particularly if we take into consideration the many species with black or predominantly black plumage, a colour often associated with clothing in times of mourning in western societies.

With glossy brownish-black plumage, the **Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo** of south-east Australia is also called the **Funereal Cockatoo** with the species name of *Calyptorhynchus funereus*. The Latin root word is *funus*, meaning burial. By way of contrast, according to the myth of the traditional Aboriginals of Arnhem

way of contrast, according to the myth of the traditional Aboriginals of Arnhem Land, it was the piercing cry of the white **Sulphur-Crested Cockatoo** that once warned spirits wandering from a deceased person's bones interred in a painted log coffin and now give warning to the living of the spirits present in the bush. White too is the colour that peoples in the Far East more often wear in mourning. It is the weird, plaintive calls of the **Funereal Cockatoo**, variously rendered in English notation as 'wee-yu', 'wyla', 'kee-ow' and 'plee-erk', that have been compared with the wailing of humans in response to a death or tragedy. The calls soon draw attention to a flock of these birds, either in flight with deep slow wingbeats or in treetops extracting insect larvae or the seeds of pines, banksias or hakeas. There is, however, some element of death in the life-cycle of this species. In the tree-hollow nest only one nestling of the two eggs laid is reared to maturity; the other fails to hatch or the chick is neglected by its parents. Some studies have also shown a decline in population when insufficient food could be found for the young in areas where native vegetation had been substantially cleared.

The Aranda Aboriginals of Central Australia and the Tiwi of Melville and Bathurst Islands have likened the 'karr-er' cry of the **Eastern Curlew** to the wails of mourners, and this bird features in some of their stories about the dead. But how the active and inquisitive **Grey Shrike-Thrush**, widespread in Australia, but more common in the east, should have come by the name of **Mourner** is hard to fathom. Often included in the lyrebird's mimicry, its voice is pleasant and melodious, giving rise to its species name *harmonica* though in winter it is usually limited to a single loud ringing 'chong' with a downward inflection. As the primary name suggests, its plumage is predominantly grey, with only a hint of black or white. A mourner (from Old English *murnan* and Middle English *mourmen*) is also one who attends a funeral. Whilst the Grey Shrike-Thrush is known to feed on the eggs and nestlings of smaller birds and on frogs and small marsupials as well as its main diet of insects, spiders and worms, there appears to be no report of its taking part in some kind of ceremonial ritual for its victims, like the butcherbird that hangs up its prey on a branch.

Much easier to accept is the name of **Mourning Bird** for the burrowing **Wedge-tailed Shearwater**, a common large muttonbird of the east and west coasts of this island-continent. At night the breeding islands are filled with the flocks' wailing cries of 'ka-woo-er', repeated dolefully, then rising and falling rhythmically to peak almost hysterically.

Related to this bird and of similar size is the **Sooty Shearwater**, which visits the southern and south-eastern coastline and has acquired the name of **Ghost Bird**. As in the example of the Grey Shrike-Thrush, the source and derivation of this vernacular name is unknown; however, we can see some reasons for this notion of an apparition or disembodied spirit of the dead. The word **ghost**, incidentally, comes from the Old English *gast* and Middle English *gost*; the 'h' was inserted by the early printers, probably through the influence of the Dutch *gheest*. The Sooty has somewhat sombre dark-brown plumage. Its variable underwing colouration, however, often means that observers haven't a ghost of a chance of distinguishing it from such relatives as the Short-tailed or Wedge-tailed Shearwater unless there is a flock upon which they can base their conclusions. Its mainly silvery

underwing, landing ashore at night, and its high-pitched 'coo-roo-ah' or 'coo-wah-coo' calling that increases in volume and dies away can combine to create the imagery of a ghost.

The confession of the nursery rhyme Sparrow to the killing of Cock Robin with bow and arrow as **murder** weapons lead to the mourning of the rest of the birds a-sighing and a-sobbing. The spelling and pronunciation of murder was influenced by the Old French *murdre*; Old English had *morþor* and Middle English *morther* or *murther*. Among all the Australian bird species only the **Barking Owl** has been charged with such an unlawful death, by being called **Murder-Bird**. This particular hawk-owl of the forests and woodlands, with a range covering mostly the eastern half of the country, produces an occasional terrifyingly high-pitched wavering scream during autumn, which was formerly attributed to another hawk-owl, the Powerful. Listeners might conclude it was screaming blue murder. Such a thought leads us into the next category: law and order.

Mike Morphett

October 1st, 1994

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* indicates returning summer migrant

Status	Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
U	Cape Petrel	12	27/8	off Wollongong	pelagic	AW
U	White-headed Petrel	1	27/8	off Wollongong	pelagic	AW
S	Darter	1	24/9	Kanahooka Bay	lake shore	CJC
C	Great Cormorant	200	20/8	Koona Bay	lacustrine	CJC
S	Striated Heron	1	28/8	F6, Mullet Creek	overhead	KM
U	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	02/9	Hoskins NR	wetland	BO'B
S	Collared Sparrowhawk	1	16/8	Bellambi Lagoon	woodland	GB
U	Sooty Oystercatcher	6	04/8	Berrara	rocky shore	KM
R	Pied Oystercatcher	2	20/8	Koona Bay	lake shore	CJC
R	Pied Oystercatcher	2	27/9	Giffins Bay	lake shore	KC
R	Hooded Plover	4	04/8	Cudmirrah	beach	KM
R	Hooded Plover	3	04/8	Berrara	beach	KM
S	Grey Plover*	2	24/9	Windang	sandflat	CB
U	Black-fronted Dotterel	1	24/9	Griffins Bay	lake shore	CJC
S	Great Knot*	3	24/9	Windang	sandflat	CB
S	Sanderling*	4	30/9	Windang	sandflat	CJC
S	Pacific Gull (imm)	1	10/9	Bellambi Point	rocky shore	GB
S	Pacific Gull (imm)	2	30/9	Windang	sandflat	CJC
U	White-fronted Tern	1	27/8	off Wollongong	marine	AW
U	Crested Pigeon	1	20/8	Jamberoo Mountain	rainforest	GW
S	White-headed Pigeon	4	Aug	Gwynville	urban	NA
U	Yell.-tail Blk-Cockatoo	60	03/9	Berrima	overhead	GB
U	Musk Lorikeet	100s	03/8	Sanctuary Point	forest	KM
U	Musk Lorikeet	10	03/8	W'gong Botanic Gardens	parkland	BO'B
U	Little Lorikeet	10+	03/8	Sanctuary Point	forest	KM
U	Little Lorikeet	2	27/8	Blackbutt Reserve	overhead	CB
U	Channel-billed Cuckoo*	1	18/9	Mt. Ousley	overhead	DT
U	Barn Owl	1	01/8	F6, Figtree	roadkill	KM
U	Restless Flycatcher	1	22/8	Lake Heights	schoolground	KC
U	Southern Emu-wren	1	19/8	Maddens Plains	heath	GB
U	Red-browed Treecreeper	2	20/8	Mt. Murray	forest	GB
R	Little Friarbird	10	10/8	Primbee	golf course	IM
U	Fuscous Honeyeater	50+	03/8	Sanctuary Point	forest	KM
U	White-cheeked Honeyeater	10+	03/8	Sanctuary Point	forest	KM
U	White-cheeked Honeyeater	4	16/9	Currarong	woodland	IM
U	White-cheeked Honeyeater	3	19/8	Maddens Plains	heath	GB
U	White-plumed Honeyeater	2	02/9	Towradgi Creek	riparian	BO'B
U	Beautiful Firetail	2	20/8	Barren Grounds	heath	GW
U	Dusky Woodswallow*	10	27/8	Primbee	golf course	CB

NA - Norma Almond; GB - Graham Barwell; CB - Chris Brandis; CJC - Chris Chafer; KC - Kerry Chafer; BO'B - Bruce O'Brien; IM - Ian McKinlay; KM - Kevin Mills; DT - Dave Thompson; GW - Geoff Walker; AW - Alex Watson

Comment: Kevin Mills certainly found a plethora of avian delights in woodlands around Sanctuary Point. The swamp mahogany were in full bloom and the species mentioned above are only a few of the many species he observed. Summer migrants are now returning, and I would appreciate observations for any return dates. White-cheeked Honeyeaters make a numerous appearance in this report. A very uncommon species, this honeyeater has a widely disjunct distribution appearing in the north at Thirlmere Lakes, Darkes Forest and Maddens Plains, a few records around Thirroul and then a wide break with only scattered records until we reach Jervis Bay where there are numerous colonies in the heaths and woodlands around the bay. There are less than 20 known records for Little Friarbird, and these are mostly of single birds except for the drought years of 1968-69 when small groups were found between Dapto and Kiama.

I. B. C. C. News

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THE CIRCULAR OF THE ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS' CLUB INC.
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THE CLUB'S AIM IS TO JOIN TOGETHER PEOPLE WITH A COMMON INTEREST WHO WISH TO FURTHER THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND ENJOYMENT OF THE BIRDLIFE AROUND THEM

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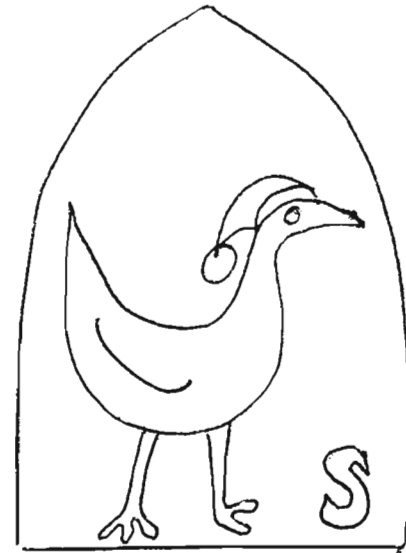
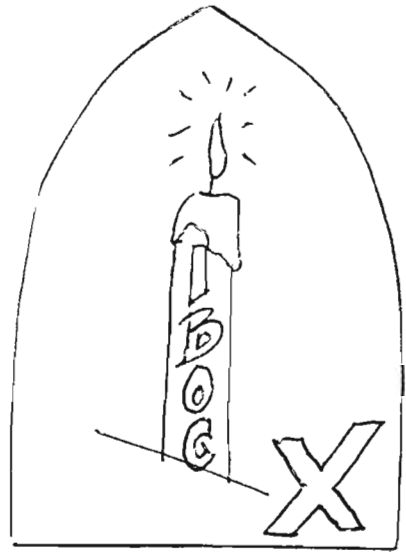
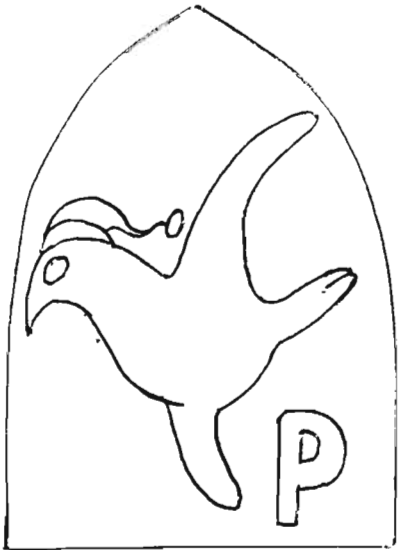
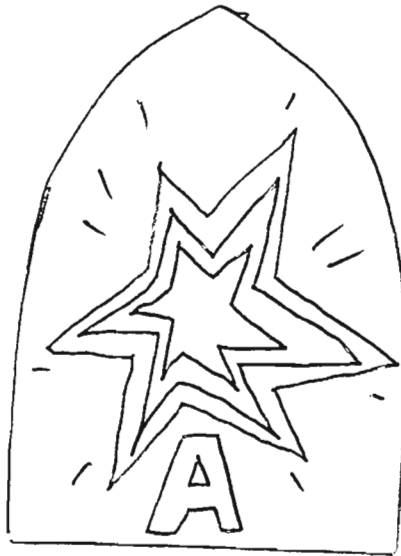
***** COMING EVENTS *****

NEXT MEETING: will be held on **Monday 11 December** at the Fairy Meadow Community Centre, corner of Cambridge Ave and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, commencing at 7.30 p.m. This will be our very informal Christmas meeting, with club members providing the entertainment. So, if you would like to perform a musical number, recite a poem, conjure up a few tricks, tell a tall story or show some slides please contact Brian or Barbara. There will also be a "fashions in the field" parade of ornithologically orientated outfits, ranging in style from the purely practical to the glamorous garb one would wear to a well, to a bird club Christmas bash. All members are invited to participate by wearing any items of clothing or equipment vaguely associated with birds or bird watching. The evening promises to be a relaxed, fun-filled one with lots of superb prizes to be won. Come along and bring a plate of supper to share afterwards (as well as your mug or cup).

NEXT FIELD OUTING: will be held on **Friday 8 December** at Minnamurra Rain Forest, that is **BEFORE** the next meeting. Meet at the gates at 4 p.m. and bring along your picnic or barbecue (20c coin operated). We will have a walk before having dinner, then do some spotlighting after dark when we hope to see a brilliant display of fireflies. Please let Barbara know if you intend being there as the gates will be closed to the general public at 5 p.m., and if you should be arriving late we can arrange to let you in. Don't forget your torch.

NEXT MIDWEEK WALK: will be held on **Wednesday 6 December** at Puckeys Estate. Meet at the Lagoon Restaurant car park at 8.30 a.m. and bring along some seasonal nibbles for morning tea.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW
YEAR TO ALL MEMBERS AND FRIENDS



Many thanks, Barry

..... contd.

NOVEMBER MONTHLY MEETING

The AGM was held with all current Club officers being returned to their current positions, and best wishes to them for another year in office. A vote of thanks was carried to all those Members and Friends who made the Club activities so successful in 1995 by their efforts throughout the year.

The speaker for the evening was fellow member, Dr Kevin Mills, who has studied the rainforest remnants in the district for many years and, with the aid of historical records and a deep understanding of what rainforests require, has reconstructed the extent of the areas covered by rainforest before the coming of white settlers to Australia. It is hard to imagine that where we see now open fields and suburbia along the Illawarra coastal plain and on the Robertson plateau there was once gigantic rainforest trees and thick tangled vines that made travelling through the area very difficult. As trails were gradually cut into the forest to extract Red Cedar settlers followed and slowly cleared areas with rich volcanic soils which were ideal for farming, leaving only a few small more or less unsuitable or inaccessible patches.

The rainforests were quite varied and followed the general rule of a reduction in species diversity as a cooler climate, more southerly latitude or higher altitude was reached. The more diverse subtropical rainforest of the lowland gives way to the less diverse cool temperate forests at higher altitudes. The three main controlling factors for a rainforest of good volcanic soil, high rainfall and the altitude are combined to produce the subtropical Illawarra Brush that extended from Shellharbour to the Shoalhaven, the Berkeley Brush on the northern shores of Lake Illawarra and the cool temperate Yarrawa Brush on the top of the escarpment around Robertson. There are also patches of temperate and littoral rainforest in suitable locations under the escarpment and behind coastal dunes. With the clearing of the rainforest the habitat could no longer support many bird and animal species and they have now been replaced by both native and introduced species more suited to the area. Gone is the Wompoo Pigeon and now the Crested Pigeon is here and on the increase.

Kevin, together with Jacqueline Jakeman, has put all this information into a recently published book called "Rainforests of the Illawarra District" (Coachwood Publishing), an interesting and fairly easy to read book and a valuable reference for those interested in understanding more about our rainforests. On the following Saturday Kevin led the walk through the Killalea State Recreation Area where some remnants of the Illawarra Brush and littoral rainforest cling to an existence, hopefully safe for the future.

Chris Brandis

DO YOU HAVE A SPARE PRINTER??

Your editor would like to improve the appearance of the newsletter by investing in a new printer - the old 9 pin dot matrix is not all that good for photocopies. So, if you have a spare bubble jet or laser printer (? unwanted Christmas gift) you'd like to sell, please contact Robyn on 291184 (home) or 201302 (work).

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NOVEMBER MIDWEEK WALK

Only four members attended the Bass Point outing; we met at the main car park at 8.30 a.m. The morning was fine and mild with a light northeasterly breeze coming in from the ocean. As we drove into the reserve we stopped inside the entrance where a number of birds were observed. It is an area with a sandy soil and a vegetation consisting mainly of tea-tree and banksia with a few eucalypts. One of the first birds observed was the White-browed Scrubwren, not where it is normally seen - close to the ground in scrubby undergrowth - but high up in a eucalypt, going through the foliage. We also sighted Lewin's and New Holland Honeyeaters there. On driving into the main car park we saw Australian Raven. The grass in the picnic area was lovely and green, attracting some Australian Magpies and a couple of Willie Wagtails which were busy flycatching, coming quite close to us. Up in a eucalypt Grey Fantail, Yellow-faced Honeyeater and Silvereve were observed. When we arrived, a for about half an hour afterwards, Eastern Whipbird was very vocal in the forest across the road. We walked out to the point, past the monument commemorating the rescue of the crew of the US tanker which ran aground in 1943. As the track opened out onto the rocks at the point a flock of about 20 Red-whiskered Bulbuls took to the air from the trees nearby, calling as though something had startled them, then flew back into the trees. Over the ocean and along the shore line some Silver Gull were observed, but fewer in number than usual. A Sooty Oystercatcher was sighted flying past; a Great Cormorant was also seen. When we returned to the car park a Superb Fairy-wren was perched on a branch in some tea-trees, showing off his lovely colourful plumage. For the morning we recorded a total of only 18 species.

Horrie Ward

WALK TO KILLALEA LAGOON AND MINNAMURRA SPIT

On a cool cloudy morning with a fresh northeasterly sea breeze 15 members met at Killalea Lagoon car park. We made our way along one side of the newly restored stone walls and across open grassland towards the lagoon itself, which was overflowing due to the recent heavy rains. From the car park we had seen a large raptor on the far shore of the lagoon and, as we came nearer, it was thought that it was a Swamp Harrier. A raven was seen to walk at what appeared to be from a distance perilously close to the harrier. The lagoon was crowded with large numbers of Black Swan and Hardhead, with the occasional Purple Swamphen and Little Black Cormorant.

We continued along the track around the lagoon, trying to avoid the wettest places, and gradually working our way across to the rainforest still clinging precariously to the band of latite near the top of the ridges. As we negotiated huge clumps of kikuyu grass and dodged tangles of brambles we saw grassbirds, Golden-headed Cisticola, Superb Fairy-wren, pipits and Silvereve.

Entry to the rainforest was prevented by a large band of lantana which provided a wonderful spot for small brown anonymous birds to tease eagerly waiting bird watchers. A Bar-shouldered Dove and Satin Bowerbirds were seen in a large fig-tree. Morning tea was had as we climbed up the ridge on a track through the rainforest to the melaleuca scrub on the top. We were entertained by Rufous Whistlers, whipbirds, and a Shining Bronze-Cuckoo,

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while Golden Whistler, Brush Cuckoo, Grey Fantail and Lewin's Honeyeater all chimed in from time to time, and White-browed Scrubwrens darted about in the thickets.

In the melaleuca scrub Kevin Mills showed us a few remaining plants of *Zieria granulata* which is a rare and endangered species found only in the Kiama/Shellharbour area.

On returning to the cars 12 of us drove to the car park at the end of the road and the start of the track to the spit. By now the cloud had gone and we were grateful for the cool breeze. A steep descent through regenerating banksia woodland led to the ocean beach which we left very soon afterwards to cross the spit to the Minnamurra River. During the day we crossed and recrossed the spit several times, noting its changing vegetation. We walked along sand exposed by the falling tide and those who had endured long pants in the sun had the last laugh as the rest of us swatted sandflies. Several Whimbrel and Bar-tailed Godwits, a lone Little Egret in breeding plumage and Crested Terns were seen on the opposite shore. Small flights of pelicans cruised overhead and the gulls were constantly moving to and fro from the adjacent tips. A shady spot under the tea-trees on the seaward side of the spit provided an ideal lunch spot, and White-browed Scrubwrens the entertainment. A short walk back along the beach enabled us to watch a kestrel hunting along the spinifex on the first sand dunes, without much apparent success. The kestrel came so close that we were able to see that its eyes were totally fixed on "hopefully" its lunch. Little Pied and Great Cormorants and two ravens close to the water's edge were seen here.

Leaving the beach we recrossed the spit yet again and entered the littoral rainforest which is dominated by the cheese tree. Here Kevin showed us a plum-pine (*Podocarpus* sp.) which is a very ancient genus dating back to Gondwanaland. This is not a flowering plant but is similar to the European yew tree. In this area we again heard whipbirds and saw Rufous Whistler, Lewin's Honeyeater, Eastern Spinebill, Brown Thornbill and Grey Fantail. An interesting sight was a clump of suspended lichen which turned out to be a Brown Gerygone's nest, and which was being added to by the energetic birds.

We now started a gradual climb up a track overlooking the mangroves along the river, rapidly leaving the rainforest behind and entering drier eucalypt forest dominated by Forest Red Gums which were almost in flower. As we left the rainforest a Black-faced Monarch and Collared Sparrowhawk were seen.

Two large fig-trees by the old homestead site were heavy with fruit and birds could be glimpsed therein but rampant lantana prevented a close approach to see if they were Figbirds. A final climb up a grassy slope purple with "coastal" Patterson's Curse saw a hot group welcome a return to the sea breeze and the cars.

A total of 50 species was recorded during the day. Many thanks to Kevin Mills for an interesting and informative day.

Since our last visit many improvements have been carried out in the area, with the sealing of roads, landscaping and walling of car parks, new picnic areas and toilet facilities, including a composting toilet. Considerable new planting has also been carried out.

Betty Hudson

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MOUNT MOFFATT SECTION OF CARNARVON NATIONAL PARK

Last August I had a trip visiting 14 excellent National Parks in Queensland and 3 in New South Wales, some well known and others well off the beaten track! All were wonderful, but of course some enchanted me more than others just by their sheer beauty and ruggedness. Such a one was the Mount Moffatt section of Carnarvon N.P. which is separated from the very well known and much-visited Carnarvon Gorge section by the Great Dividing Range.

As we were travelling from the west we went into Mt Moffatt from Mitchell, 220 Km of unsealed road with many patches of bulldust in the last 70 Km! Originally operated as a large cattle run, Mt Moffatt Station (as it used to be) was surrendered by Mr & Mrs D Vincent to the Queensland National Parks when the grazing lease expired in 1979. Much of the area is open woodlands on broad undulating flats. The flats are broken by sculptured sandstone outcrops and ridges rising to the basalt-topped Great Dividing Range in the northeast. There is a great diversity of vegetation due to the mixture of sedimentary and volcanic rocks. The park has an interesting number of Eucalyptus species including the variety of mahogany, *E. laevopinea* var. *consueloensis* which grows nowhere else. The pale salmon-pink trunks of the smooth-barked Apple Gum, *Angophora costata* and the flowering Lancewood, *Acacia shirleyi* were breathtaking.

While little is known about the Aboriginal inhabitants who lived in this area, it is believed the land may have been used by two groups, the Nuri people on the lowland southern area, and the Bidajara on the high northern areas. There are a number of good examples of stencil art to be seen in several caves. Kenniff Cave, named after the two Kenniff brothers, horse and cattle duffers who camped near the cave in the early 19th century, is one of the most important archaeological sites in central Queensland. Excavations in the early 1960s revealed that Aboriginal habitation in this site extended to a depth of 3.28 metres below the floor level, and was used for some 19500 years. One of Mt Moffatt's dominant sandstone formations, and the art site it contains, is known as The Tombs. The numerous natural tunnels in the formation once formed burial chambers for the local Aboriginal people. Skeletons were wrapped and bound in ornately decorated bark burial cylinders. Sadly the site has been stripped of this material, leaving little evidence of the elaborate mortuary culture.

There are many interesting geological features such as Marlong Arch which appears to have been carved out of the soft sandstone of a mountain range by centuries of weathering. Cathedral Rock, The Duchess, Lot's Wife and The Chimneys are other rock structures well worth seeing.

On the way out we took the route via Womblebank Station to Injune which is mainly sealed. However, we still had the 70 Km of bulldust!! But the trip was worth every grain of it.

Diana Wright

The Illawarra Amateur Radio Society has extended an invitation to IBOC members to attend its next meeting on Tuesday 12 December 1995 at the SES Hall, Montague Street, Fairy Meadow. Cyberdome Computers will be explaining the Internet and how it works. The meeting will commence at 7.30 p.m. For further details please contact Ron Hanks on 842691.

SUPERB DISPLAYS at GLOUCESTER RIVER

When the IBOC camp at Rawdon Vale broke up, I headed for Gloucester River and Tops to make up for the lost day through rain that had been planned for such a trip. After the long steep climb by car to Gloucester Tops, I covered the walks through the antarctic beech forest, to Andrew Laurie Lookout and Gloucester Falls, and then through the sub-alpine woodland and wetland along the River Track. All this was easily manageable during the afternoon and proved to be a spiritual experience, particularly beside the beech forest waterfalls. As no camping was permitted in this top part - so much firewood too - I had to drive back down the 18 kms to the lower grassed area bordering the Gloucester River and pitch tent.

The storm I had observed to the south-east from the lookout arrived about 7 o'clock and returned three hours later. The spectacular flashes of lightning followed on from the pencil torchlight of two fireflies that had zigzagged across the campsite, passing very close to my tent; I wondered if they had been attracted by the luminous hands of my watch.

The river valley mist quickly dispersed as the early morning sun began to dry things out. Breakfast time brought a party of loud trilling superb fairy-wrens, who were evidently familiar with the comings and goings of campers there. Two handsome males and a cute female made frequent visits to my tent, taking turns on the guy-ropes, giving them the gentlest of twangs, as if on a stringed instrument, when they flew off, and bouncing along the top of the canopy with the daintiest of footsteps and hopping over the surrounding shortened grass. Besides pecking at my bread scraps, they tucked into the many insects in the air and on the ground. The female's feeding actions were amusing as she would arch her back, much like a posturing silver gull does to ward off others from a food source, and then cock her tail up with a jerk when taking hold of bigger insects. They were still in the vicinity when I came to dismantling the tent.

While waiting for the canvas to dry out completely, I walked some way along the level Gloucester River Track. Just at its start near the stone crossing and opposite a bush loo with a parking area, I stopped at the sound of a male superb lyrebird, which allowed me a very close and lengthy observation: a real bonus from an otherwise shy and elusive species. His mimicry of at least six other bird calls was easily recognisable, including the black-faced monarch which abounds in this district. I wondered if one day folk stories would claim that this bird's repertoire included the sounds of the lavatory door or four-wheel drive brakes. His imitations were made whenever he was moving about or scratching through the leaf-litter or just standing still. His own "pillick" call accompanied his tail-feathers display and little jumps, just as I later read in the Pizzey and Frith guides. Some of his singing and displaying was carried out on a thick branch about a metre off the ground, and the entire performance in an area about six metres in diameter, with evidence of a natural low mound but not one created by the bird.

Frith's guide also mentions that the males are strongly territorial during the breeding season from April to October. Along the Gloucester River Track I fell upon a pair presumably engaged in such a border skirmish. Among the ferns beside the

track both birds were lying on their sides, clawing and pecking at each other, but quickly stopped and bolted upon my arrival. The extent of disturbed soil and leaf-litter indicated they had been embroiled for quite a while.

Before leaving the campsite and the six ford crossings for home, I also covered much of the Sharpes Creek Track, which produced no bird dramas, but was still rewarding. I would certainly recommend the Gloucester River and Tops areas for a visit, from where the brown menura and blue malurus performances will remain in my memory.

Mike Morphett
October 95

The following poem was submitted by Nola and Laurie Williams, summing up their thoughts about their journey to Binna Burra. Lack of space prevented it being published in the last newsletter. Apologies from the editor.

On 20th August
the troops all started out,
With Wal our fearless leader
no-one had a doubt.
A leisurely trip to Lamington
was what we had in mind
And as we drove along the way
we wondered what we'd find.
With forests and the national parks
to be our camping places
We wandered on through New South Wales
with smiles upon our faces.
The birds we heard, the birds we saw
as through the bush we sauntered
Past rocky creeks and waterfalls
and trees both large and small.
By mossy logs and orchids, we marvelled
at the beauty of it all!
Some got up at half past two
to see the sunrise from Mt Warning,
With spring in the air, flowers everywhere
a whole new day was dawning.
And so we came to Fathers Day
it's time to cross the border,
So thank you, Wal, for a job well done,
for keeping us in order.
For taking us on a forest crawl
and showing us such beauty.
But Grandpa Wal, the best of all:
our trip to Nearly Normal Nimbin!

Nola and Laurie Williams

Channel-bill's and Koels: the cuckoo season.

Chris J. Chafer

This year there has been more of these cuckoos around than in any year previous, and I have received many records for the past couple of months. Instead of using up space in the unusual records column, I thought a list of where these two marvelous parasitic have been observed was in order. If you have a location that doesn't appear on this page I would very much like to hear about it. A detailed account will appear in the annual report which will be published around mid 1996. However, it can be said that there is a definite increase of Channel-bill's over the past decade, while Koel distribution is about the same as it always has been. The club now has records from several sources dating back to the early 1900's, and this helps evaluating more succinctly long-term changes in avian distribution. Nevertheless, it is only the continuous reporting of unusual records by club members that allows this change to be analysed. I take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed over the past couple of years to the URS. The 1994 annual report is now available (free to members), it illustrates the limits of the IBOC database and summarises the highlights for last year. To demonstrate the value of the records scheme I am currently compiling a preliminary atlas of unusual species found within the area defined by that map. It and the 1995 annual report should be available around mid 1996.

Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
Channel-billed Cuckoo	3	16/9	Thirroul	urban/forest	Mike Morphett
Channel-billed Cuckoo	2	19/9	East Nowra	urban	Diana Wright
Channel-billed Cuckoo	2	22/9	Mt. Pleasant	urban	Dave Thomson
Channel-billed Cuckoo	2	27/9	Thirroul	urban	Richard Miller
Channel-billed Cuckoo	2	28/9	Kieraville	urban	Esme Gay
Channel-billed Cuckoo	2	28/9	Kieraville	urban	Mary Eskdale
Channel-billed Cuckoo	3	5/10	Mt. Ousley	urban	Gwen Robinson
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	6/10	Corrimal Heights	urban	Toni O'Neill
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	7/10	Gerringong	urban	Joy Parker
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	14/10	Blackbutt Reserve	urban/forest	Chris Brandis
Channel-billed Cuckoo	2	-/10	Blackbutt Reserve	urban/forest	Phil Bath
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	16/10	Jamberoo	urban	Betty Hudson
Channel-billed Cuckoo	2	16/10	Wollongong Uni	urban/park	Chris Chafer
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	28/10	Cordeaux Heights	urban	Ronald Smart
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	30/10	North Wollongong	urban	Laurie Williams
Channel-billed Cuckoo	3	21/10	Figtree	urban	Joan Zealey
Channel-billed Cuckoo	3	21/10	Bendella	overhead	Chris Chafer
Channel-billed Cuckoo	2	1/11	Dapto	urban	Brian Hales
Channel-billed Cuckoo	4	4/11	Farmborough Heights	urban	Brian Hales
Channel-billed Cuckoo	3	10/11	Balgownie	urban	Wal Emery
Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	13/11	Corrimal	urban	Peg McKinlay
Common Koel	1	13/9	East Nowra	urban	Diana Wright
Common Koel	1	27/9	Thirroul	urban/forest	Richard Miller
Common Koel	1	29/9	Wollongong Uni	parkland	Richard Miller
Common Koel	1	3/10	Stanwell Park	urban	Jack Hyslop
Common Koel	1	11/10	Gerringong	urban	Joy Pegler
Common Koel	1	-/10	Barrack Heights	urban/forest	Phil Bath
Common Koel	1	30/10	Balgownie	urban	Wal Emery
Common Koel	1	31/10	Balgownie	urban	Ron Hanks
Common Koel	1	-/11	Mt. Ousley	urban	Gwen Robinson

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Status	Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
S	Darter	1	29/10	East Wonoona	wetland	RS
S	Eastern Reef Egret	1	7/11	Murray's Beach	rocky shore	CW
U	Pied Cormorant	1	10/9	Cudmirah	inshore marine	KM
U	Swamp Harrier	1	20/9	Darkes Forest(F6)	overhead	KM
U	Australian Hobby	1	14/10	Wanganderry	woodland	DT
S	Little Eagle	1	14/10	Boxvale, Mittagong	woodland	DT
R	Square-tailed Kite	1	16/11	1km E of Vincentia	overhead	RJ,CW
U	Latham's Snipe	22	26/10	Long Swamp, Yallah	wetland	CJC
U	Black-winged Stilt	2	20/10	Tramway Creek	wetland	MM
R	Little Tern	3	12/11	Comerong Island	sand flat	CJC
R	Glossy Black Cockatoo	2	2/9	Swan Lake	forest	KM
R	Little Corella	8	1/11	Albion Park	not recorded	JZ
R	Little Corella	10	-/10	Stanwell Park	urban	JH
U	Common Bronzewing	2	11/11	Coolendel	woodland	JP
S	Brush Bronzewing	1	22/10	Bendella	rainforest	CJC
S	White-headed Pigeon	6	12/9	Berry Mountain	forest	JP
S	White-headed Pigeon	3	10/9	Woodhill	garden	KM
S	White-headed Pigeon	10	15/9	Willowvale	garden	GW
MC	Topknot Pigeon	15	17/10	Rose Valley	over rainforest	MR
MC	Topknot Pigeon	40+	28/10	Gooseberry Island	over rainforest	CJC
R	Pheasant Coucal	1	16/10	east of Loddon River	woodland	RF
R	Pheasant Coucal	1	24/10	Gerroa(near Omega)	wetland	JP
R	Sooty Owl	2	28/10	Jamberoo Pass	forest	RJ
U	Tawny Frogmouth	1	29/10	Corrimal	forest	IM
U	Tawny Frogmouth	1	1/11	Blackbutt Reserve	forest	CB
U	Rainbow Bee-eater	2	11/11	Coolendel	riverine	JP
U	Leaden Flycatcher	1	15/10	Gerringong	urban	JP
U	Leaden Flycatcher	1	26/10	Long Swamp, Yallah	woodland	CJC
U	Leaden Flycatcher	2	19/10	Thirroul	urban	MM
R	Spectacled Monarch	2	10/10	Balgownie	urban	RH
U	Southern Emu-wren	1	5/11	Lake South	lake shore	PM
R	Eastern Bristlebird	2	22/10	Jacks Corner, Bendella	woodland	CJC
U	Scarlet Honeyeater	1	14/10	Willowvale	garden	GW
U	Scarlet Honeyeater	1	-/9	Thirroul	garden	RM
-	Crimson Chat	1m	20/10	Gerroa	urban	JP
U	Green Catbird	1	15/10	Mt.Keira ringtrack	forest	IM
U	Green Catbird	1	18/10	Rose Valley	rainforest	MR

CB - Chris Brandis; CJC - Chris Chafer; RF - Richard Fackender; RH - Ron Hanks; JH - Jack Hyslop; IM - Ian McKinlay; RJ - Richard Jordan; PM - Paul McDonald; KM - Kevin Mills; RM - Richard Miller; MM - Mike Morphet; BO'B - Bruce O'Brien; JP - Joy Parker; MR - Mark Robinson; RS - Ronald Smart; DT - Dave Thompson; GW - Geoff Walker; CW - Christine Wilder; JZ - Joan Zealey

Comment: Well, how many of you went down to Gerroa to view the male Crimson Chat? If this record is accepted by the records appraisal committee it will be another new species for the County of Camden. The list above has many other novelties for this time of year, the highlight being the observations of Pheasant Coucal, the Bulli Tops observation being in the same locale they were recorded by Doug Gibson in September 1956! The Square-tailed Kite observation would appear to be the first record for the Jervis Bay area. The Spectacled Monarchs were very close to where they were observed in 1980, whilst the Leaden Flycatchers are also very unusual on the coastal plain. The Yallah record of Latham's Snipe is the largest recorded gathering of this species anywhere in the Illawarra. There is also a few records of Topknot Pigeons, and I would be interested in any other observations of the nomadic frugivore. Don't forget to keep a note of unusual records over the Christmas-New Year break and this column will be back again in '96.