

I. B. C. C. News

Issue No. 188

February 1996



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 *** * * * ***

NEW YEAR OUTING: will be held on **Wednesday 7 February** at Windang Estuary. 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 various gulls, terns and waders, and identify them as we walk along the sand flats. Come along, bring some eats and drinks for supper at the cars after the walk, and spend a pleasant evening birdwatching by the lake.

NEXT MEETING: will be held on **Monday 12 February** at the **Fairy Meadow Community Centre**, corner of **Cambridge Ave** and **Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow**, commencing at **7.30 p.m.** The guest speaker will be **Frank Spolc** who last addressed the club in July 1993, and members were thoroughly entertained by his talk and very impressed with the quality of his photography. This time around Frank has two talks for us: a short one entitled "English as a Foreign Language", and another on "Matters Environmental". If possible, bring a plate of supper to share afterwards (as well as your mug or cup).

NEXT FIELD OUTING: will be held on **Sunday 18 February** at **Ben's Walk, Nowra**. To get there, proceed to Nowra and take the first right-hand turn after crossing the Shoalhaven River bridge and follow it around to the right. This will bring you to the picnic area on the south bank of the river where we will meet at **9 a.m.** There are various lookouts with magnificent views of the river. It's not a strenuous walk, being about 6 Km return.

FILM NIGHTS: If you would like to hold a film night in your home please contact Brian or Barbara Hales on 574431.

WANTED: ACTIVITIES OFFICER or any people to lead walks on a one-off basis. Please think about leading the club on one of your favourite walks, or investigating a new walk.

DECEMBER MONTHLY MEETING

The December meeting again gave members the opportunity to entertain other members in a Christmas fashion. On the subject of giving, long-time member from Berry, Wally Hurst, has donated to the Club the funds to purchase a much-needed new printer to replace the editor's ancient 9-pin job. This will have IBOC News looking much more professional; many thanks, Wal.

The President's Gold Award went to our editor Robyn Wilson in recognition of the untiring effort she has put in over the last three years.

Richard Miller conducted a "So You Think You Know Yorkshire" quiz with the Hales and their visiting relatives competing against the rest of us (who seemed, almost miraculously, to know all the answers). There were so many interesting facts to be learnt about Yorkshire, the most scintillating, I think, being the name and age of that county's oldest pet mouse. Brian beat the rest of the Yorkshire "locals" by scoring 10 out of 30 very hard (even for Yorkshiremen) questions.

Nola Williams provided some interesting facts about why a blue moon is seen sometimes in England. Dave Thomson gave a rendition of "The boy stood on the burning deck", flames and all. Jan Stuart was a fully decked out IBOC'er recording unusual sightings and interesting information on why birds fly in V formation. Lydia, Hazel, Bob, Wal and Dave received certificates of achievement for climbing Mt Warning to catch a first glimpse of the rising sun, with only one working torch between them and disaster.

In the "fashion" parade Robyn wore some Puffin gear that Brian would "kill for" to get into his collection. Robyn, just ensure it is under lock and key when you take it off and refuse all offers as insignificant. And what about Mike Morphett's legs??!!?? - a very Doubtful Firetail indeed.

Barbara's quiz was the hardest yet with Mike Morphett sussing the most cryptic clues to score 16 1/2 out of 25. Kirsten Zealey gave us a guitar solo, showing that those lessons are really worth it and that practice makes perfect. Richard Miller told us of the original Yorkshire pudding recipe which was handed down with love by an angel to a Yorkshireman. Dave Thomson told some interesting bird tales including one about pigeons using the London Underground to save flying time. Wal Emery performed one of his marvellous poems, this one about the woes of the Club's shovel; we will all treat it with more respect from now on.

Santa then visited and delivered gifts to many in recognition of their efforts in ensuring the Club functions for the benefit of all members. Santa had dropped a few presents which had been picked up by Laurie Williams and which were duly distributed to the worthy recipients. We then had a marvellous Christmas supper and wished each other all the best for Christmas and the New Year.

Chris Brandis

EDITOR'S NOTE: Thank you, Brian, for the Gold Award from the club; it is very much appreciated. However, without contributions from members, there would not be much of a newsletter. So, a very hearty thank you to all those good folk who have submitted articles over the years and given me something to edit. RW

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MINNAMURRA RAINFOREST WALK

The afternoon was grey when we arrived at Minnamurra Rainforest - not very good for birdwatching, but it provided the atmosphere of a most beautiful rainforest, with the rivulet cascading over the rocks and quiet pools with their green mosses and surrounding vegetation completing the scene. The first eleven members who had arrived for the outing began the boardwalk in an anticlockwise direction, not wanting to miss out on anything an afternoon in the rainforest had to offer. When about three quarters of the way around we met fourteen members going in the opposite direction. The boardwalk is a wonderful way of getting into the heart of the forest without causing any environmental damage. The birds were hard to see and identify, but their many calls let us know that there was a large number of them in the forest around us. We were privileged to visit this wonderful area and to admire its beauty. On the forest floor was a carpet of fallen leaf litter, with ferns struggling to survive in the shadows of the trees and moss- and lichen-covered rocks. The trees reached for the light, growing straight and tall in soil kept nutrient-rich by the constant recycling of the fallen litter. Some of the vegetation we noted during the walk included Native Tamarind, Brush Bloodwood, Coachwood, Pigeonberry Ash, Stinging Tree, Brown Beech, Bangalow Palms and Cabbage Tree Palms, all in various stages of growth, from small plants to towering giants going to the top of the canopy. Some of the birds recorded on the walk were Lewin's Honeyeater, Eastern Whipbird, Satin Bowerbird, Grey Shrike-thrush, Black-faced Monarch, Australian King Parrot, Wonga Pigeon and Brown Cuckoo-Dove.

At about 6 p.m. we arrived back at the car park, collected our goodies and proceeded to the picnic area to consume them, barbecued or otherwise, in a beautiful covered area surrounded by a garden-type environment. While we were waiting for darkness to overtake us (so we could go spotlighting) Peter Kennedy, the manager of Minnamurra Rainforest, invited us into the auditorium and gave us a very educational talk on the area before showing a brief promotional video for Jervis Bay National Park.

We then stepped out to see the rainforest after dark, each one with a torch, going clockwise around the boardwalk. It didn't take long to find the first of the many fireflies flashing their little bright lights as they flew about through the vegetation, observed to advantage with all torches extinguished. Glow-worms were also in the area with their little lights burning constantly. On our way up the boardwalk a possum was sighted high up in a fig tree, eating the fruit. When some others of the group caught up and were trying to find the possum their torches shone upon a Superb Lyrebird in a nearby tree. When everyone had arrived at the viewing platform at the top of the boardwalk we spent a few minutes there, and with all torches extinguished we sat and listened to the sounds of the forest at night, looking out for fireflies. The rivulet could be heard faintly above some crickets chirring nearby. We completed the walk and returned to the cars at about 9.30 p.m. It was a wonderful evening enjoyed by all, with much appreciation to Peter Kennedy for all he did for us to make our day a great success. We recorded a total of 22 species of bird.

Horrie Ward

PLEASE NOTE. The new Birdline phone number is (02) 2901778.

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SOME SHORT SNIPPETS

1. **NSW Bird Atlassers' Events in Early 1996 (and a commercial).**

The NSW Bird Atlassers (and we're part of that organisation) have a couple of special events coming up in 1996. Some of our members may like to be involved.

On 2nd, 3rd and 4th February they are combining with the NSW FOC in a camp west of Tuggerah and at Easter they are having a camp at Bundarra west of Armidale where they hope to see the Black-throated Finch.

Maybe you'd like to become an Atlasser - gives additional purpose to birdwatching and draws you into some interesting places where you may not otherwise go.

Don't forget their recent publication "The Birds of Western NSW : A Preliminary Atlas" - it's done very professionally and has good information. Of special interest are the maps showing what areas have (and more importantly have not) been atlassed - might encourage you to stop for morning tea when passing through an empty square (you've heard about squares) and make some observations. Our Barry Virtue and Diana Wright were given honourable mention in a recent Atlas newsletter for their good work in several squares "back-o-Bourke". The book costs about \$30.

If you want to pursue any of the above, especially about becoming an Atlasser, then talk to Dave Thomson.

2. **Seed Bells or Bird-Seed-in-a-Block**

Some concern has been expressed lately in bird journals regarding the suitability of the glue used in the making of commercially available "seed bells", those lumps of glued-together birdseed which are sometimes shaped like a bell (hence the name) and designed to be hung somewhere for the cockies to feed on. The upshot is that no guarantees are given by the manufacturers so the bird fraternity has set about devising their own recipes. Below is a recipe borrowed from recent BOCA newsletters and modified a little. Our thanks to BOCA for permission to reproduce it.

Cut the folded top off a 1 litre milk carton. In a bowl mix 250gms* of suitable birdseed (Wildbird seed from Woolies works well), 3/4 cup of plain flour and 1/2 cup of water - rather stiff mix. Place in carton and press down (will about half fill the carton). Cook in microwave for 1 hour on Defrost - yep, 1 hour on DEFROST. Comes out more like concrete than cake (but sure keeps the cockies busy for a while). Doesn't change size much except to shrink clear of the carton allowing easy removal. Drill a hole through the block, insert a wire (coat hanger works fine) and bend over below. It's now ready to hang. Seems to be fairly weather resistant.

* 250 gm
= 1 1/2 cups

If you want to get serious and cook more than one block at a time, then 1 1/2 hours works well for 2 blocks, but we can't offer help beyond that.

3. **I.B.O.C. Camps and Trips.**

In our September 1995 Newsletter we listed, under the above heading, the camps and trips which we've had since we started in 1977. In preparing the list I'd hoped that I'd not overlooked or wrongly reported any events, but, fearing that I might have, invited response. Jack Hyslop has kindly pointed out that I missed the overnight camp at Appin in 1977 where we watched Alan Leishman banding.

Would you therefore please add to your list in the Sept. '95 Newsletter, for 1977 and in the Other Camps/Trips column

3/12-4/12 - Appin-
"Beulah".

and I'd still like to hear if you spot any errors or other omissions.

Dave Thomson. 842876.

IBOC CAMP 21-28 OCTOBER 1995, "WOODLANDS", RAWDON VALE

The journey was interesting as we drove along Bucketts Highway. It was hard to imagine such lush countryside under drought conditions. We needed our map after leaving the main road - following directions can be adventurous in unknown country and it is always a relief when the first IBOC sign is spotted. Travelling along we were amazed at the views, still looking so picturesque with the high rolling hillsides and green valleys, or open country with pockets of trees. The area is cattle-grazing country (no sheep). The cattle looked in wonderful condition; there were many new calves. Our car and camper van shook and rattled along the roads, and we became anxious wondering when we would reach the campsite.

Suddenly, from the top of a hill, we saw a tree-lined river area and after a few minutes spotted some campers - "thank goodness we are here". The last IBOC sign pointed down a steep hill. It was 5 p.m and we were anxious to set up camp. When campers arrive there is a typical IBOC welcome: "Great to see you, how was your trip?", handshakes, hugs and kisses; you sure feel that you belong to a special, large family circle. Seventeen IBOC members had arrived, from the Friday to this Monday afternoon. The camp fire was to be lit at 7 p.m. and I hurriedly prepared tea so that we could get down to the fire, not miss out on anything, and catch up on the day's activities.

On arriving we couldn't help but notice a new green toilet screen; it stood out with its neat fit on the frame and a smart covering on top for wet weather protection. Upon investigation, it was well made, with a modern security door arrangement, very much appreciated.

Laurie was camp chief this time and Nola took over Dave's role as record keeper, noting species and in which 'square' they were found. We had two books to present to our hosts when they came to visit us. Meeting the property owners is always a special time - they get to see just who is wandering over their land and we are able to learn some history of their property and the surrounding countryside. Laurie gave us an itinerary for the next three days, and volunteers were found for some of the camp duties. Someone confessed to finding a tick, so there will need to be regular inspections. The time had come for the fire to be doused, and bed called.

The next morning we heard the usual "good morning" greetings of people being happy and pleased to see each other - it is a great sound that captures the essence of a camp. Some had been out birding already, not wanting to waste any time. At 9 a.m. "all aboard!" rang out and we gathered to fit into as few cars as possible. We then drove part of the way along the road and parked the cars. The steep hill ahead of us sure was a challenge; as we trekked up it two of us were soon puffing. Every now and then a breather stop provided an opportunity to view the properties around. Over on the left was a rain cloud - you could smell the moisture in the fresh, clean air. We realised that, with all the hills and valleys, rain would make the rivers and creeks rise and flow quickly. We crossed over to another hill towards the rainforest area, viewed the lovely rolling hills, the tree line and blue of the mountains behind. Once again "the great world we live in" was mentioned. Next we clambered under a barbed wire fence and went into the rainforest area. It was so pleasant walking along the forest floor and we saw a Black-faced Monarch sitting on a branch close to us. The trees were so tall, the smell of the leaf mulch was invigorating, so many moss-covered stones scattered about, a few Bird's-nest Ferns here and there, and orchids growing on trees. We had morning tea while we listened to the bird calls. Having relaxed we moved off and noticed a creek running

through the forest floor. We noticed a kookaburra taking note of us. What a lovely surprise as we viewed a Tree Martin feeding its young. There were sightings of Lewin's Honeyeater and a female Golden Whistler; we heard a Catbird and grey thrush. Along the creek bed we admired the Orange-blossom and Rat's-tail Orchids. Then we walked through a thickly-growing fern area, so relaxing and lovely with moss-covered rocks throughout. We came to quite a few paper-bark trees shedding their bark, another really beautiful sight.

Hazel had gone on ahead and was on a rise when she was surprised to see a koala sitting not in a eucalyptus, but in a rainforest tree. When she heard us coming she encouraged us to hurry and see it at close quarters. Laurie was feeling generous and offered us another morning tea stop. By now the weather had become dull and cloudy with a slight breeze. While sipping our tea we spotted a Yellow-throated Scrubwren. Wal came and reported seeing a male Red-backed Wren, an unusual sighting for here. We walked a little way up a hillside and then Nola called "There's a bower here". It was a small bower, fairly close to a log, and decorated with broken eggshell, blue feathers, some dried-up snakeskin, rosella feathers, small mauve flowers and half an egg. There was a great discussion about why there were no exotic or household items, and the whereabouts of the male. At 11 a.m. we were amazed by Laurie offering us another morning tea so soon! But we didn't hesitate to accept, and sat on the log near the bower, relaxed and enjoying the peaceful country atmosphere with a light breeze rustling the trees. While we were sitting there we heard a Pallid Cuckoo and Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike calling, adding to our growing bird list.

It was time to return to camp and soon we were walking along a creek bed and seeing quite a few bridal orchids. We seemed to be on a different track as we were dodging many tangled vines as we walked on the carpet of wonderfully smelling leaf mulch. One vine had hooked around the handle of Athol's umbrella protruding from his haversack and luckily Mike discovered the umbrella hanging from the vine as he came along behind us. With much effort we climbed under a barbed wire fence in the rainforest (definitely on a different track). We passed a Yellow Robin's nest and thought of our great friend Ron Almond who admired the robins. The nest was built 2 feet up from the ground, in a fork of a paper-bark tree, beautifully made and camouflaged with dry moss on the outside.

We saw rain over yonder on the mountain: we would be lucky to arrive back dry. We trekked up and down the steep hills, the cars down over on the right were a delight to see. Arriving back we saw a kestrel flying. The afternoon was free for recuperation in preparation for tomorrow's outing, but we could be sure that some birds would be out later, not needing a rest. After lunch showering was the next chore. Later a couple more people said that they had found ticks on them.

There was another beautiful rainforest walk on Wednesday morning (see below) and in the afternoon most people went into Gloucester to ring home and shop. At night we entertained our visitors, later on it started to rain, and rained all day and night Thursday. The Barrington River was rising and people were becoming anxious about moving to higher ground.

We left reluctantly on Friday morning. Fortunately the rain had eased, making packing up easier. All good things must come to an end. After the round of farewells Laurie offered to tow our camper van up the steep rise with his Subaru 4WD. This was a great relief to us as the slope was so slippery. We were grateful to have had the opportunity to share in this camp. Then we were on our way home with lots of great IBOC camp memories.

One hundred and eleven species were recorded all told, the most exciting being the Red-backed Wren, Spectacled Monarch, White-throated Nightjar and all the wonderful sightings of the Pacific Bazas nesting.

Jan Stuart

On Wednesday, due to the wet weather and the cancellation of our trip to Gloucester Tops, we drove to Roberts Brush, a rainforest gully not far from camp, in pursuit of a Pacific Baza (aka Crested Hawk) which had been sighted on the previous two days.

We walked up an old logging trail skirting the gully where we saw or heard several rainforest birds, notably a Spectacled Monarch, until the Pacific Baza was spotted and eventually, as it circled and returned to its nest in a solitary tall tree but level with the track and in clear view of us, we and numerous leeches stopped for morning tea (or one of them).

Further up, as we moved out of the rainforest, the leaders flushed a White-throated Nightjar before we dropped down through more rainforest with many trees hanging with a variety of epiphytic orchids before another morning tea stop by the creek.

Barry Virtue

OWLS AT THE WOLERY

"T'was the night before Christmas,
When all through the house,
Not a creature was stirring"

Hang on a minute!! That's not quite correct. The creatures were definitely stirring. It was in the early hours of the 24th, and it happened outside on the first floor balcony of our house. Two juvenile Sooty Owls - calling incessantly. In the early morning light we could see one preening in between its calls from the balcony balustrade. At least one adult was close by. That evening we were lucky enough to catch a glimpse of two young Sooty Owls (probably the same birds) perched on branches near the road, whilst we were spotlighting along the Jamberoo Mountain Road, and on Christmas night two birds were calling once again outside our house. Unfortunately we were not at home for the next three nights after that and they haven't been around since. But it was the best Christmas present we had!!

Christine Wilder and Richard Jordan, 'The Wolery' Jamberoo

REQUEST FOR OBSERVATIONS OF MUSK LORIKEETS IN 1995

During 1995, flocks of Musk Lorikeets were seen at many more locations in New South Wales than in other years. Some observations were of mobile flocks, others were of feeding birds. These records suggest that food was scarce in 1995 compared to other years and flocks were moving about in search of nectar, flowers or fruit to eat. Alternatively, food sources may have been in normal supply but Musk Lorikeet populations could be increasing.

In order that the episode may be properly documented, any observations that have not yet been reported would be much appreciated. It would be helpful to know whether the birds were in flight or feeding. If there is sufficient information, a short paper will be prepared for publication.

Kevin Wood
7 Eastern Ave
Mangerton 2500 Phone 042-295514

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BARREN GROUNDS COURSES

February to May 1996

All About Seeds

This course focuses on various methods of seed collection and propagation for revegetation. It looks at fruit types, germination, soils, cuttings, bulbs, tubers and any treatments prior to planting. A great course for those interested in saving what's left of Australia's native plants.

Date: 15 - 17 March **Leader:** Gary Leonard

Cost: \$140 (RAOU & BGF \$130)

Easter Escape

A weekend to take it easy and enjoy a leisurely stay at Barren Grounds - walks, gourmet picnics, sunrises, birdwatching and the Easter Potoroo.

Date: 5 - 8 April **Leaders:** The Wardens

Cost: \$190 (RAOU & BGF \$175) 3 NIGHTS

Flying High and Keeping Low (Family Fun)

Join in the search for parrots, honeyeaters and carnivorous plants by day, and gliders, possums and frogs by night. Experience wild creatures up close and in the hand on this course especially designed for families.

Date: 12 - 14 April

Leaders: The Wardens

Cost: \$140 (RAOU & BGF \$130) \$80 child under 15 years

Birds with a Sweet Tooth

At this time of the year Barren Grounds is host to flocks of migrating honeyeaters, as the Banksias are in flower. This course offers you a closer look at honeyeaters through mistnetting and banding. A course for beginners and those with some birdwatching experience.

Date: 10 - 12 May **Leader:** Raoul Boughton

Cost : \$140 (RAOU & BGF \$130)

One Day Courses

Birds

An introduction to the bird world. Learn about major bird groups, habitat preferences, survey techniques and threatened species.

Date: Wed 6 March, Sat 18 May **Cost:** \$55

Orchids in Autumn

Join Leo Cady, local specialist for a full day's tuition on these special orchids of Barren Grounds.

Date: Sat 9 March **Cost:** \$55

Ecology

Learn basic ecological principles such as adaptations, habitats, food webs and survey techniques.

Date: Wed 27 March, Sat 20 April **Cost:** \$55

Special one day courses include expert tuition and yummy lunch.

PROGRAMME OUTLINE FOR 1996

FEB	Wed 7th	Outing	1730	Windang Estuary
	Mon 12th	Meeting	1930	Frank Spolc
	Sun 18th	Outing	0900	Ben's Walk, Nowra
MAR	Mon 11th	Meeting	1930	David Winterbottom
	Sat 16th	Outing	0830	Royal N.F., Jack Hyslop
APR	5th - 13th	Camp		To be advised
MAY	Sat 11th	Film Night	1930	To be advised
	Mon 13th	Meeting	1930	Harry Battam
	Sun 19th	Outing	0830	Northern Suburbs, Mike Morphett
JUNE	Sat 8th	Film Night	1930	To be advised
	Mon 10th	Meeting	1930	Members night
	Sat 15th	Outing	0830	Barry Virtue
JULY	Sat 6th	Film Night	1930	To be advised
	Mon 8th	Meeting	1930	To be advised
	Sun 14th	Outing	0830	Wirrumbirra
AUG	Sat 10th	Film Night	1930	To be advised
	Mon 12th	Meeting	1930	To be advised
	Sat 17th	Outing		To be advised
SEPT	Mon 9th	Meeting	1930	David Siems
	Sun 15th	Outing		To be advised
OCT	19th - 26th	Camp		Crookwell area
NOV	Mon 11th	Meeting	1930	To be advised
	Sat 16th	Outing		To be advised
DEC	Sat 7th	Barbecue		To be advised
	Mon 9th	Meeting	1930	Christmas Cheer

1996 CAMPS

Plans for the Easter and late October camps are progressing and further details will be issued later. For many years now we have relied heavily upon Wal Emery, Dave Thomson and Laurie Williams to follow up leads, survey and generally organise the day-to-day running of our camps. Although I have also been involved, because of the nature of my work I cannot guarantee attendance at the actual camps when they occur, and Wal, Dave and Laurie have been my ever-dependable back-up team. Disappointment was expressed when we didn't hold the usual October long weekend camp in '94. 1996 presents a problem again when our main organisers will be otherwise engaged. Joan and Tom Wylie have agreed to be my "back-ups" for the late October camp and this is greatly appreciated. A camp could still be organised for the October long weekend provided the necessary help is forthcoming. Venues are available but we need a firm commitment to transport and erect equipment, and return it. If you feel you can help or offer ideas please contact Brian Hales.

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Status	Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
U	Nankeen Night Heron	4	9/12	Bailey's Is., Gerroa	riparian	BV
S	Intermediate Egret	1	3/11	Coomaditchy Lagoon	wetland	PM
S	Striated Heron	1	9/12	Koonawarra Bay	lake shore	CJC
U	Ruddy Turnstone	25	26/11	Bellambi Point	rocky shore	RS
U	Peregrine Falcon	1	10/12	Thirroul	urban	LW
R	Osprey	1	31/12	Swan Lake	estuarine	KM
S	Kelp Gull	1	2/12	Kiama Harbour	rocky shore	CJC
R	Brush Turkey	1	24/11	Barren Grounds NR	rainforest	PM
R	Glossy Black Cockatoo	3	25/11	Swan Lake	forest	KM
R	Ground Parrot	1	13/11	Corrang Mtn, Budawang NP	heath	BV
MC	Topknot Pigeon	6	18/11	Berkeley	urban figs	SP
U	Brown Cuckoo-Dove	2	16/11	Marshall Mount	rainforest	GW
S	Brush Bronzewing	2	23/11	Barren Grounds NR	forest	RJ
U	Tawny Frogmouth	pr	6/11	Gibson Track, Bulli(nest)	forest	PM
U	Tawny Frogmouth	3	31/10	Wollongong Bot. Gardens	forest	SP
S	White-throated Nightjar	1	27/11	nr Woronora Dam	forest	KM
R	Sooty Owl	1a2j	24/12	Jamberoo Mountain	forest	RJ/CW
U	Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	25/11	Thirlmere	woodland	RS
S	Hooded Robin	1	18/11	Menangle	woodland	JP
U	Brown-headed Honeyeater	1	28/11	Woronora River	forest	KM
U	Varied Sitella	4	28/12	Cudmirrah	forest	KM
U	White-winged Triller	1m	6/12	Primbee	urban	RI
U	White-winged Triller	2	Nov	Wilton	rural	LW
U	White-winged Triller	1	Nov	West Dapto	rural	PS
U	White-winged Triller	1	18/11	Menangle	rural	JP
U	White-winged Triller	2	20/11	Swamp Road, Jamberoo	rural	RJ
S	Brown Songlark	1	20/11	Swamp Road, Jamberoo	rural	RJ
C	Red-browed Finch	3	22/11	East Woonona	garden	RS
S	Figbird	2	3/12	Coomaditchy Lagoon	urban	PM
S	Figbird	2	13/12	Ulladulla	urban	KM
S	Figbird	4	2/12	Kiama public school	urban	CJC
U	Cicadabird	1	15/11	Blackbutt Reserve	forest	PM
U	Cicadabird	1	3/12	Conjola State Forest	forest	KM
U	Green Catbird	2	Nov	Dunmore	forest	PS
U	Green Catbird	1	10/11	Wollongong Bot. Gardens	forest	KZ
U	Green Catbird	1	3/11	Conjola State Forest	forest	KM
U	Green Catbird	1	23/11	Mt. Keira	garden	RS
R	Regent Bowerbird	2	18/11	Menangle	riparian	JP
U	White-winged Chough	7	9/12	Beach Rd. Berry	woodland	BV

CJC - Chris Chafer; RI - Ron Imisides; RJ - Richard Jordan; PM - Paul McDonald; KM - Kevin Mills; JP - Joy Parker; SP - Steve Popple; PS - P. Smith; RS - Ronald Smart; BV - Barry Virtue; GW - Geoff Walker; CW - Christine Wilder; LW - Laurie Williams; KZ - Kirsty Zealey

Comment: Yet another good spread of records for this last period of 1995. The highlight is obviously the two male Regent Bowerbirds observed by Joy Parker at Gilbulla Conference Centre, Menangle. Going by the list of other birds she observed here it looks like a must for an IBOC walk this year! The Osprey observed at Swan Lake is also a good record for this region. White-winged Trillers have made a welcomed visit to various parts of the coastal plain. I must say that this is one of my favorite species, and I was fortunate enough to see one near the radio towers at Primbee just after Ron reported it visiting his garden. The juvenile Sooty Owls represent the second known breeding record for this region, the other coming from Helensburgh. The Brush Turkey is the second record for the Jamberoo Pass area in 1995, the other being in January. Finally, the Red-browed Finches from East Woonona have not previously been recorded from this urban environment.

I am now starting to collate records for the 1995 annual report. If you have any outstanding records for last year please send them to me as soon as you can.

I. B. C. E. News

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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 11 March** at the **Fairy Meadow Community Centre**, corner of Cambridge Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, commencing at **7.30 p.m.** Our guest speaker will be **David Winterbottom** whose subject will be "The Birds (and a few animals) of Africa". David will present an historical picture and draw parallels between the birds of Australia and those of Africa. David's father was one of the ornithological pioneers in Africa and, as a professional ornithologist, collected skins for the British Museum. He also compiled the first checklist for the birds of Zambia and was the first director of the Percy Fitzpatrick Institute of Ornithology at the University of Capetown. This promises to be a most interesting address as David discusses his father's contributions to ornithology, and takes us back in time with his memories of the "dark continent".

Next Outing: will be on **Saturday 16 March** on the part of the Illawarra Escarpment Walking Track known as "The Forest Walk". We will meet at the **southern end** of the track and walk it to Stanwell Park. It will be a one-way walk with cars at each end. We'll meet at the turn-off to the Repeater Station tower, on the Princes Highway just south of Maddens Plains and the Boomerang Golf Club. For those travelling north along on Princes Highway the turn-off is 4.2 Km on the right from the turn-off to Sublime Point. Please be early for an **8.30 a.m.** start. The walk will be led by **Jack Hyslop**. Don't forget your usual eats and drinks.

Next Committee Meeting: will be held on **Tuesday 19 March** at the home of Peg McKinlay, starting at **7.30 p.m.**

Easter Camp: will be held from 5 to 13 April. Please see details inside.

Film Nights: These will be held on Saturdays 11 May, 8 June, 6 July, and 10 August. We are looking for venues in which to hold these social gatherings, so if you have room for 20 or so people and a television set with a reasonably-sized screen please contact Brian or Barbara Hales.

October long weekend: A camp can be organised for this weekend provided the necessary help is forthcoming and a back-up team can make a firm commitment to transport and erect equipment, and return it. If you feel you can help or offer ideas, please contact Brian Hales.

WEDNESDAY WALKS: Please note that these walks are not being held this year on an organised basis. Regular Wednesday attendees may like to contact each other and arrange their own outings for the time being.

APRIL EVENTS: Because of the Easter camp there will be no meeting, walk or newsletter in April. Normal activities will resume in May.

FEBRUARY MONTHLY MEETING

The speaker for the evening was Frank Spolc, a well-known photographer, who has spoken previously to the club and demonstrated his talent for scenery photography, but this time he showed us a completely different side of his talent by discussing "English as a Foreign Language" and "Latter Day Environmentalism".

Born in Czechoslovakia, Frank came to Australia and learnt spoken English as an adult, with the differences between the two languages causing him problems in using the correct "Australian" English expression. He started to notice the peculiarities in the spoken language that we take for granted. Especially confusing are the words that are pronounced the same but have different spellings and meanings, and some of those little words like "do", "up", and "in" which are used in expressions that often imply the opposite meaning or have no real meaning at all. It is very confusing for someone who is learning the language and who hears a word used in many different ways, then tries to copy and finds that they have used it in an incorrect sense, causing the usual derogatory comments. Those who have tried learn or have mastered another language can understand the frustration that Frank must have felt, but his mastery in understanding and then playing with the language is a credit to him.

The human race has become very clever at adapting and "improving" the environment to support an exploding population that has lead to pollution, war and disease as the pressure to survive increases. The richer nations can afford to care for what is left of their environment while poorer over-crowded nations cannot, the pressure to survive from day to day overriding the long-term consequences. The scientific "opinions" going around must be viewed in perspective as they are rarely based on facts with the environmental movement becoming fundamentalistic. Once this occurs rationalism gives way to blind belief with the doubters burned at the stake and the only news we get is bad news. We need some optimism to be put back into the world, and confidence that the problems will be overcome and that the good news stories get the headlines rather than the bad news ones. Frank offered to continue to discuss his optimistic and thought-provoking views over a cup of tea, an offer taken up by some with more agile minds.

The vote of thanks was given by Gwen Robinson, with whom Frank and his wife were staying, for a most entertaining and different evening, one that made us all laugh and think.

Chris Brandis

KORRONGULLA WETLAND

As members are probably aware Wollongong Botanic Garden is responsible for the long-term management of Korrongulla Wetland at Primbee. To date the team at the Garden have been able to do only minor maintenance at Korrongulla, but during 1996 there will be an increased presence in this important area. As IBOC members have been instrumental in Korrongulla's preservation, any interested members are invited to participate in working bees several times a year to help with tree planting, etc. If members would like to be involved in Korrongulla Wetland please contact Steve Pople (Curator, Wollongong Botanic Garden) on 277468 (w) or 717687 (h).

NSW ORAC

A Club representative is required to fill a recently vacated position on the Ornithological Records Appraisal Committee. The ORAC committee has members from all the major bird observer clubs in NSW and it promotes the reporting of unusual sightings and then appraises these for inclusion in future official records. The committee comments on submissions, and records are either accepted or not, (they are never rejected), and it meets once a year to discuss its decisions under the guidance of Alan K Morris. Anyone interested in further details or wishing to represent the Club in this position should contact myself for later ratification by our committee.

NSW BIGNET

The Club has been represented at this forum of representatives from all the NSW birding/natural history clubs which ensures all Clubs are aware of what the other Clubs are doing and which places some commonality in the way such things as recording, bird names, etc are kept, under the guidance of the RAOU Sydney Committee. Chris Chafer and myself have been attending these meetings, held twice a year at a venue between Canberra and Newcastle, starting mid-Saturday and finishing mid-Sunday. Because of work commitments we are seeking others who would be able to attend on the Club's behalf. If you are interested please contact me for further information.

Chris Brandis

RAOU SCIENTIFIC DAY

The RAOU will be having a Scientific Day at the University of Wollongong on Saturday 25 May. Fellow member Jack Baker is a co-organiser of this generally very interesting event. Please keep this date free as the meetings have been very enjoyable in the past and we do not often get the opportunity to attend one so close to home.

AFTERNOON OUTING TO WINDANG

We had a great afternoon again, beginning the year's activities in the traditional way with a visit to Windang by 27 members. The weather was typical for the time of year: rather humid and warm, but near the lake it was a lovely cool afternoon with a gentle south-easter blowing. To the west was a bank of ominous-looking clouds which cleared away for a while then built up again later, but fortunately there was no rain.

The short walk is always the same; from the car park the track leads out onto the large area of sand on the north side of the estuary which is very flat and largely covered when the tide is full. On our visit the tide was almost right out, exposing a large area of the sand flats and forming some islands out in the lake which are advantageous to the birds, being free from interference by people and dogs. Birds recorded there included Silver Gull (which always outnumber all other species), Australian Pelican, Bar-tailed Godwit, Red-capped Plover and Crested Tern, mostly grouped together, with other birds such as Red-necked Stint, Greenshank, Kelp and Pacific Gulls, Great and Little Pied Cormorants dotted throughout the area. We moved on to have a look over the ocean, there observing Silver Gull again in large numbers, Crested Tern flying about and an Arctic Jaeger chasing and harassing a gull for some time. The late afternoon sun was shining as the clouds cleared for a time, lighting up a

picturesque scene of sand, surf and, to the east, a beautiful blue sky over the expanse of ocean. As time was moving on we had to move also to have our tea before going home. The walk back across the sand flats to the picnic area, with some low vegetation covering the sand hills to the north, produced the Superb Fairy-wren, Golden-headed Cisticola and a couple of Australian Ravens, also a Nankeen Kestrel perched on a high pole overlooking the area. This very pleasant walk ended just before 7 p.m. during which time we recorded a total of 28 species.

Horrie Ward

FEBRUARY OUTING TO BEN'S WALK

Well! Where were all those sleepyheads on such a beautiful Sunday morning?? You missed such a pretty walk. The sun was out although a wet weekend had been forecast. We met on the southern bank of the Shoalhaven River at Nowra and after the usual cuppa we set off towards the Showground, noticing the white flowering gums beside the road - a great feeding spot for the Rainbow Lorikeets which were having a rather noisy breakfast. We took to the track and began the descent to Nowra Creek and the gorgeous suspension bridge which crossed the creek - who could resist swinging on that bridge? It gave an idea of the feeling a bird might get on a swinging branch. Brian declared a morning tea stop which no-one knocked back, so it was great to sit and look at the bridge and the path we were to take further on. We walked past the picnic area at Depot Farm Reserve and back into the trees until we had to cross the creek again, this time by rock-hopping. There was no way out but to climb up over those rocks and not think about the ducking we would get if we missed our footing. Yes! We all made it without mishap. Thanks to the menfolk for the assistance. We had lunch by the side of the track and by now it had become a rather warm day, so our sandwiches and drinks tasted good. Having refreshed ourselves we wandered back, seeing some flowering trees which weren't at all familiar, and after a steep climb up steps set in the rocks we were on our way home again. Altogether 31 species were seen, the most exciting being 4 Rockwarblers and a female Koel. Brian led us on our walk and I feel he must have been disappointed that only 8 members attended. Thank you, Brian, for a much-enjoyed and relaxing day.

Roxy Janetzki

SOME HEARTFELT THANKS

The editor would like to pass on her gratitude to some people who have contributed greatly to the new appearance of IBOC News:

- 1) To **Wally Hurst** whose generous donation to the club enabled us to purchase a new top-of-the-range bubble-jet printer;
- 2) To **Greg and Tom at Mode Computers, Warrawong** who attended to our (and my) requirements and speedily supplied same; and
- 3) To **Russell Hales** who shamed the editor into upgrading her old XT and who collected the new printer and installed it for her.

Robyn Wilson

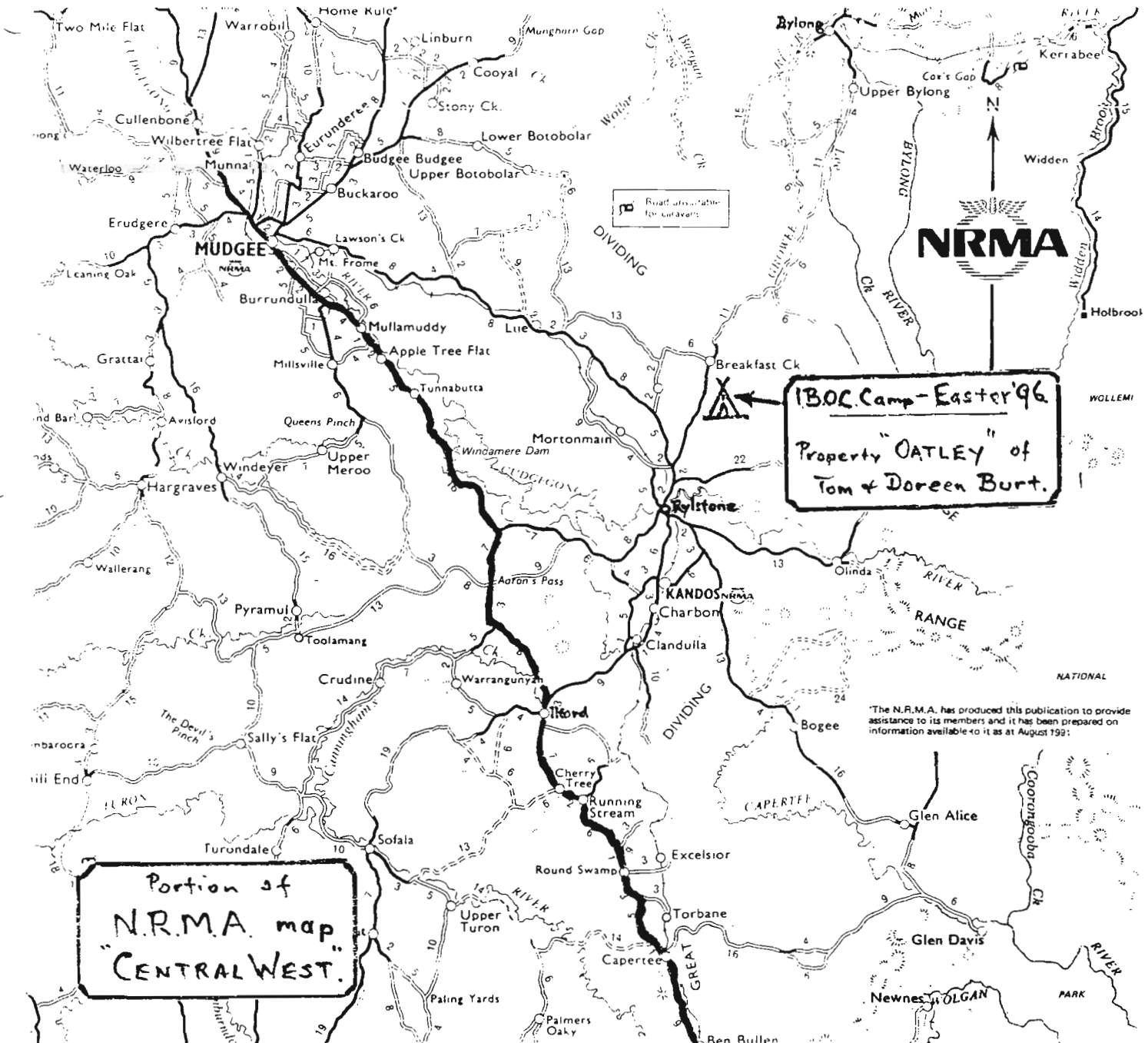
1996 Easter Camp - "Oatley", Rylstone.

Our Easter Camp this year is to be at Rylstone and will run from Friday 5th April to Saturday 13th. It will be on the property named "Oatley" of Tom and Doreen Burt. It's shown on some maps by its old name, "Lilydale", and lies at the foot of 983m Bald Mountain and backs against forest. There's shower water from a dam at the campsite but no drinking water so bring your own. We'll have the usual top class amenities - hot shower, toilet, campfire, good company and plenty of birds - when we camped near here ("Badgerground") at Easter 1993 we recorded in the district 111 species including:

Bn. Quail, Musk Duck, Bk. Swan, shoveler, Gt. Crest. Grebe, Wedgie, Peregrine, Peaceful Dove, Yellow-tailed Black, Red-rump, Powerful Owl, 3 treecreepers, Rock Warbler, whiteface, Bell Miner, W.-brow. Babbler, Spot. Quailthrush, sittella, shriketit, triller, 2 butcherbirds, chough and Double-barred Finch.

It's about 290km from Wollongong, bitumen all the way. You take the Mudgee road from Lithgow (enjoy the fine sandstone escarpment to the east as you climb onto the plateau near Capertee) and turn off a couple of km north of Ilford (well signposted) and then through Kandos to Rylstone. The property is about 12km beyond Rylstone on the Bylong road and on the eastern side, see the map below. We'll have some IBOC signs out as usual. CMA 1/25,000 map "Growee" covers the camp area. Rylstone is a tidy, small town with the usual facilities, including a bakery.

Camp fees will again be \$5 per adult whether you stay one night or for the week. 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'll be there and for how long.



NAME-GIVING AUSTRALIAN BIRDS: 4

LAW and ORDER

*The Law is the true embodiment
Of everything that's excellent.
It has no kind of fault or flaw,
And I, my Lords, embody the Law.*

W.S. Gilbert: *Iolanthe* I

One consideration of how civilised a species we humans are might be the extent to which we enforce and observe rules of conduct through a legal system to ensure our right to safety and well-being. However, for all kinds of reasons we as individuals don't always toe the line, but instead choose to be a law unto ourselves, or take the law into our own hands, or act according to the law of the jungle. This last expedient is based on the belief that sheer power and strength determine who gets the food, territory or mate. There are many instances, though, within the animal kingdom when a life-threatening situation can be resolved by warning calls or submissive gestures and the recognition by both parties in conflict as to who is successful without the need for bloodshed. If wounds are inflicted, however, and seriously so, then the loser may still subsequently die.

In *Genesis* we read that the first fatal blow delivered by a human was at the hand of Cain. God's punishment was that whatever farming methods he used, Cain was cursed to grow only poor quality produce from the land, upon which his brother's blood had been spilt. Figuratively, blood-stained still infers a person's guilt of murder. The **Little Corella** has the common name of **Blood-stained Cockatoo**, not for any murderous deed carried out by this bird, but on account of the small red or pink feathers between its eye and bill, though these are less conspicuous among the immatures. In 1842 Gould gave it the Latin species name *sanguinea*, which now is reserved for the race found in the north and north-west of Australia, distinct from *pastinator*.

Towards offenders who commit murder, the most serious breach of the law and a matter for the legal eagles to debate over, societies have reacted severely, not uncommonly by way of the death sentence. "To let the punishment fit the crime," wrote Gilbert, quoted above, in *The Mikado*. In Australia from 1788 to 1967 the favoured method of penalty among the white population was **hanging**. At the gallows, roughly midway through this period, bushranger, Ned Kelly uttered his last famous words, "Such is life".

Inhabiting only the central east coastal area of New South Wales is the aberrant scrubwren, only 14 cm in size: the **Origma** or **Rock Warbler**, also called **Hanging Dick**. I have chosen to think that such a name is not a slang euphemism for the male pudendum, but derives from this bird's habit of

constructing its nest suspended from the roof of a cave; the analogy of a felon's swinging from the noose is stronger when at feeding time the visiting parent bird causes the nest to swing from side to side like a pendulum. Tapered at both ends with a side entrance and made of root and bark fibre, the nest can also be located in other semi-dark places, such as under road culverts and in mineshafts. The bird's melancholy 'goodbye' call might sound like a eulogy to both victim and perpetrator. I have received local anecdotes of the name Hanging Dickie being given to the similarly suspended domed-shaped nest of the **Yellow-throated Scrubwren**.

A classic novel about bushranging and highway robbery in Australia in the 1860s is Rolf Boldrewood's *Robbery Under Arms*. From Middle English *robben*, derived from Old French *rober* (the Old English *reafian*, meaning to rob or plunder, was a cognate word), a **robber** is one who illegally takes another's property by using, or threatening to use, violence or force. In the insect world, a robber fly is a predator with strong piercing and sucking mouthparts which can catch insects in mid-flight.

On account of their tactics of piracy, Skuas and Jaegers can be regarded as highwaymen of the sea. Two of the five species found round the Australian coastline have earned the title **Robber Gull**: the **Southern Great Skua** and the **Arctic Skua** or **Jaeger**, smaller by a third. Both birds have long and sharply angled wings, which enable them to fly swiftly through the air and make sudden changes in direction in the course of their pursuit of other seabirds, notably gulls (to which they are related), terns, gannets and petrels. By persistently harrying and harassing, they force their victims (dare I describe them as sitting ducks?) to drop or disgorge their food, and then, with the help of their hooked bills, they catch the bounty in mid-air. Ironically, they themselves can fall victim to other robbers of their ilk, thereby reinforcing the adage of there being no honour among thieves. They could hardly complain of daylight robbery, but simply dismiss such a conflict as part of the law of the jungle, if not according to maritime laws.

In flight Skuas have been compared with hawks and falcons, which, together with kites, harriers, eagles, and the nocturnal birds of prey, owls, we generally term **raptors**, a word straight out of Latin. The verb *raptare* meant to seize by force and hence to rob. Each of these birds has a sharply pointed, decurved bill for dismembering prey; eyes that are large and directed forward; and feet that are powerful with sharp talons or claws. Such predatory birds plunder and pillage their victims, or prey, for food. Both predator and prey have linguistic roots in the Latin *praeda* meaning booty.

Having dealt with the villains of the piece, we now turn to those people whose task it is to maintain order by enforcing the law and detecting and preventing crime: the **police**, a word which entered English as a French loanword in the 17th century and stems from the Greek *politeia* (citizenship, state, its condition and welfare). In *Pirates of Penzance* W.S. Gilbert penned, "When constabulary duty's to be done, The policeman's lot is not a happy one".

Not charged with the difficult duties of keeping law and order in the non-human world, however, the **Black-necked Stork** or **Jabiru** is also named **Policeman-**

Bird. Although its source and derivation are unknown, the vernacular name is no stretch of the imagination. With a standing height of 1.2 metres, half of which is taken up by its long red legs, the Jabiru probably meets height requirements for entry eligibility into the police service. It is also a stately bird with bold pied markings, iridescent neck, and heavy, long black bill that it 'clappers' (snaps its mandibles together like handcuffs) to give voice. Its habitat is the north and, to a lesser extent, east coasts, where it strides through the shallow waters, probing for bivalves and frogs in lieu of clues. Seldom gathering in large flocks, it is one of the few solo storks in the world; so we might conclude the Policeman-Bird is generally posted at a small village station, rather than a large metropolitan centre.

When we fear for our safety and welfare through some form of danger or harm, we send out an **alarm**. Similarly, birds, and indeed animals in general, alert not only their own kind, but also other species of the presence of danger, be it predator or human hunter. They raise the alarm by way of noisy calls which differ markedly from their song, which advertises ownership of territory, or their usual contact calls between mated pairs or flock members or during family rearing. Birds that issue warnings can be divided into 'chat' callers that escape attack from predators that usually give up the chase upon hearing such an alarm, and 'seet' callers, betraying the whereabouts of a raptor overhead whilst safe under cover of foliage.

Two Australian species with characteristic loud cry have been singled out for the additional name of **Alarm-Bird**: the Laughing Kookaburra and the Masked or Spur-winged Plover or Lapwing. Known world-wide for its call, the **Kookaburra** of the forests and woodlands of the eastern and south-west zones choruses at sunrise and sunset in particular. There would seem to be a fine line between its so-called chuckles and rollicking or raucous laughter to warn other groups of the species of territory claims or its in-group of the intrusion by a human in particular.

Frequenting wet grasslands and human-made areas, such as school and sports grounds, the **Masked Plover** of the eastern half of the continent gives a penetrating staccato 'keer-kick-ki-ki-ki' call. Its boldness overshadows that of the Kookaburra when it dive-bombs humans and animals that may unwittingly venture too close to its ground nest or young. Not uncommonly it also calls at night; making it a night alarm perhaps.

With an archaic form of alarm, the word alarm, in military terms, meant a sudden call to arms and a warning of danger. Via French it came from the Italian *all'arme*, to arms! This will serve to alert readers to my next group of birds, whose names have a distinct link with military operations and personnel.

Mike Morphett

January 7th, 1996

T. B. O. C. News

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May 1996



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

Next Meeting: will be held on **Monday 13 May** at the **Fairy Meadow Community Centre**, corner of Cambridge Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, commencing at **7.30 p.m.** Our guest speaker will be **Harry Battam** whose subject will be the Wandering Albatross. This is the forty first year of albatross banding and Harry began his adventures three years after the late Doug Gibson started banding. Several species of albatross have been sighted off Wollongong over the years, and Harry will be looking at the the factors influencing population changes in these species, paying some attention to the impact of long line fishing on the ecology of the albatross.

Next Outing: will be on **Sunday 19 May** through the old Excelsior No. 2 Colliery area, Thirroul, and part of the adjacent Lady Fuller Park. Meet and park in Seafoam Avenue at **8.30 a.m.** for south-east access to the colliery area. This road runs along the western side of the railway line, linking with Church Street to meet Lawrence Hargrave Drive. The parking area is 600 metres from the main road. The walk will be through woodland and wet sclerophyll, with a mixture of level and steepish gradients, criss-crossing the Flanagans Creek system. It will be led by **Mike Morphett** who has been conducting a nature study of this area over the past sixteen years, and will take in a half-kilometre track he has recently cut. In addition to the coalmining history, Mike would welcome any other bits of information (especially regarding vegetation) during the walk to help augment his study. Bring eats and drinks to maintain your energy cassettes for the best part of the day.

First Film Night: will be held on **Saturday 11 May** at the Hales residence, 32 Shearwater Boulevard, Albion Park Rail, commencing at **7.30 p.m.** If you intend coming, could you please contact Brian or Barbara so that they have some idea of the space needed for the evening. The film program was still being chosen, but it promises to be interesting and exciting. Bring along a fold-up chair and a plate of supper to share afterwards.

Next Committee Meeting: will be held on **Tuesday 21 May** at the home of Chris Brandis, starting at **7.30 p.m.**

MARCH MONTHLY MEETING

The speaker for the evening was long-time member David Winterbottom, who gave a long-promised talk on the birds of central Africa, where he spent much of his youth. David was born in Africa before World War II and his father, J M Winterbottom, was a well recognised professional ornithologist in the area, discovering and describing the birds of the central areas as those areas were opened up. They travelled in the bush using native carriers and his father collected specimens which his mother skinned, treated with arsenic, wrapped in paper and stored for shipping to the British Museum. He even published a number of books including some that were at the forefront of conservation in informing the farmers that many of the birds were in fact beneficial to the health of the country and did not compete with the domestic stock for resources.

David went to school in England and college in South Africa before spending several years surveying the railway that linked central Africa with the east and putting it on the map. His photography was pretty good considering the limitations of light meters and fully manual settings, no telephoto lenses and although some of the slides were showing some age tinting, the birds and animals were quite clear and the dry countryside looked quite similar to that of Australia's inland. Some of the birds we saw have family members in Australia such as the Fish Eagle, Thick-knee and Grey-headed Gull but many are very different such as barbets, hornbills and weavers. There are many more carrion birds in Africa than in Australia, with dead animals as large as an elephant being cleaned up in a day unlike here where dead roos stay around for weeks. David's favourite bird is the Carmine Bee-eater with its brilliant reddish hues but the Saddle-billed Stork, similar to our Jabiru, is also quite spectacular with its bright red knees.

The animals were also plentiful with the most dangerous being the hippo which kills more people in Africa than any other animal, but when David came face to face with an elephant while driving along a track he went from top to reverse gear in one movement. The number of species of large deer and other animals that David managed to photograph under the conditions was a credit to him and in all the time he was there he only heard lions, never seeing them, until returning a few years ago and visiting a National Park. A very interesting evening for all the members with Brian Hales giving the vote of thanks from us all.

Chris Brandis

RAOU BIRDS ON FARMS PROJECT

Do you remember the Atlas, or the ABC? Well now there is BOF, a project where the RAOU wishes to see the success of farm revegetation projects, what it is that maintains bird diversity on farms and what species are in decline in rural areas. You can find your own farm, be allocated one, or nominate a farm to be surveyed four times a year. Anyone interested should contact me and I can pass on the information from the RAOU.

Chris Brandis

FOREST ESCARPMENT WALK

The March outing was attended by 18 members who met just south of the Boomerang Golf Course on Maddens Plains, at the turnoff to the repeater station east of the highway. As it was a one-way walk some vehicles were driven to the Stanwell Park end. The weather wasn't very favourable, with a strong north-westerly wind blowing over the plains, causing the birds to take cover in the open areas, and there was some light cloud, making what few birds there were very difficult to see in the moving branches. Chris Chafer, being the first down the road to the start of the track, flushed a Pilotbird, and a few Welcome Swallows were finding the trip north hard going against the wind. The wind made listening for birds almost impossible and the leaves that were being blown around all looked like moving birds. However we did see a Rufous Fantail and heard an Eastern Yellow Robin. As there had been a fire through the area about two years previously, nearly all the casuarinas had died, leaving the eucalypts to sprout new foliage and the bracken fern to make a seemingly complete recovery, forming a beautiful green ground cover. A few minutes into the walk and the whole habitat changed as we came to the beginning of a rainforest gully which offered protection from the wind and allowed the rainforest vegetation to develop. There were quite a few small blue orchids, some mouse-(smaller than rat-)tailed orchids on the rocks, Gynea Lilies everywhere getting ready to flower, and pink-barked angophora showing evidence of gliders dining on the sap, judging by the gnaw marks in the bark. In the gully the change of vegetation was profound, with taller trees and palms interwoven with vines on a leaf-littered ground. As we walked along the spur the gully deepened and became much wider, with a creek bed running through it, with some water holes in the rocks. At one spot the group walked up onto some rocks to a lookout on the escarpment with fantastic views up and down the coast and into the pub at Scarborough.

As the track became higher and more exposed to strong winds the vegetation changed to dry sclerophyll with a thin topsoil on Hawkesbury sandstone along the spur. The eucalypts and casuarinas were smaller, but the Grass Trees were numerous and growing well. Up to this point some of the birds observed were Eastern Yellow Robin, Brown Thornbill, Grey Fantail, White-browed Scrubwren, Laughing Kookaburra and the beautiful Rufous Fantail which had been seen on three different occasions. The track became rough and narrow as it then led down the gully to a nearly-dry creek bed where there were a few small rock pools. The floor of the gully was quite calm, while the tops of the tall eucalypts were blowing about in the wind. Near where we crossed the creek it fell sharply over a crumbling cliff face. There were some birds here but they were hard to identify in the poor light, although one of them was a Rufous Whistler. The track continued up the other side of the gully to a lookout above Coalcliff Colliery where we had a good view of an immature White-bellied Sea-Eagle riding the wind currents along the cliffs. Some left the group at this point and returned to the repeater station, while the rest of us continued on towards Stanwell Park. On the way down the steep descent to the Wodi-Wodi track a rain squall hit; this made the track rather slippery but we all reached the bottom in one piece to the sound of bulbuls and Eastern Whipbirds. At the car park were more birds than we had seen all day, with about 20 Wood Duck feeding on the grass. All up we saw 22 species and had an enjoyable walk through a variety of habitat which would be worth repeating in better weather. Many thanks to Jack Hyslop for showing us the way on this recently opened track.

Horrie Ward and Chris Brandis

IBOC EASTER CAMP, RYLSTONE

The camp at "Oatley", Rylstone, was attended by 30 members and 10 of their children. June and I left Wollongong on a beautiful Thursday morning for our trip to "Oatley". The run up to the Blue Mountains was clear and cool; we had morning tea at Blackheath, then went on to Kandos for lunch. On arrival at Rylstone we found a lovely bakery for fresh bread and hot cross buns.

Friendly IBOC signs directed us through the gate into "Oatley" and all was okay until we came across a bag of clothes on the track. It had fallen out of the back of Dave Thomson's wagon and been run over by his caravan. The grandson was not too impressed! We arrived at the camp site to be greeted by Nola, Laurie, Dave and his grandchildren.

On Good Friday morning there was much excitement as more members arrived. Some went for a short walk along the forest fence. In the afternoon Tom and Doreen, the owners of "Oatley", brought down the Rylstone Bush Fire Brigade truck filled with spring water for drinking and showering, much to the surprise and pleasure of all. The truck was left there for the week.

Easter Saturday dawned - another beautiful day - and after breakfast Laurie organised two short walks: firstly along the forest fence line and secondly up to a ridge behind the camp. On Saturday night Tom and Doreen joined us at the camp fire; a great night was spent telling the history of the property.

Sunday was another great morning. At 9 a.m. five cars left for a short drive over to Wollemi National Park. There were some lovely walks, but not many birds were seen. We drove back to camp for afternoon tea and a shower.

On Monday Dave organised a drive and sightseeing trip over to Windamere Dam. There were some good bird sightings including Red-rumped Parrot, Sacred Kingfisher, Superb Fairy-wren, and Red Wattlebird - just some of a variety of 20 species. The afternoon drive and walk over to Dunn's Swamp on Tuesday afternoon were really something. It was like going into Kakadu National Park and the bird sightings were good: Spotted Quail-thrush, Musk Duck, Pacific Black Duck and Purple Swamphen were some of the species seen.

Wednesday dawned cool and wet for our trip to Ferntree Gully which lived up to all expectations, and the beautiful sound of the Eastern Whipbird calling down the valley was something to be heard. That evening we put on our glad rags for our by now much-desired night out at the Railway Hotel in Kandos. A lovely meal was had by all ("so much food") and, of course, we had to have a clown in our midst. This time it was Gwen sitting under a dripping pot plant. The room was done out in railway memorabilia, much to everyone's delight and ecstasy of our train driver Athol.

Thursday was cool but sunny. Four cars left for a drive to the sewage treatment ponds at Kandos. Some very good sightings were made including the Plum-headed Finch, which was a first for most members there. Friday was showery and cold for the lowering of our much-loved new shower, and the packing away of our faithful toilet until our camp in October. Members also appreciated the club's new aluminium hot water bucket.

I would like to thank all club members for another enjoyable week and would like to mention some special sightings. The Australasian Shoveler was on Kandos sewage ponds; Wedge-tailed Eagle, Australian Hobby, Black Falcon, Glossy Black-Cockatoo, Australian Owlet-nightjar,

White-throated, Red-browed and Brown Treecreepers were all seen near camp; Rockwarbler, Speckled Warbler, Scarlet Robin, Spotted Quail-thrush, Pied Butcherbird, and a party of 17 Satin Bowerbirds moving together through the tree tops over camp were exciting to see; about ten Plum-headed Finches were in the reeds and grasses beside the sewage ponds; and of course the Comon Starling and sparrow showed that civilisation had come out this far. In all 116 different species were recorded.

Les Potter

To all Members

Notice of a Special Resolution for the Annual General Meeting
That the Objectives and Rules of the Illawarra Bird Observers Club Incorporated for
Classes of Membership be changed from :-

“5. (c) Family membership carries an entitlement to one vote.”

to

“5. (c) Family membership carries an entitlement to one vote each by up to two
members of the family over the age of eighteen years and recorded in the membership
register.”

Moved Brian Hales
Seconded Horace Ward
Date 19/3/96

For acceptance at least seventy five percent (75 %) of the Club’s financial members,
not including other clubs that we exchange news letters with, must pass the resolution.
Proxies will be allowed with any one (1) member being eligible to hold a maximum of
two (2) other members’ proxies. This will require mutual arranging with other members
and to assist, Chris Brandis will keep a register of those holding proxies and can provide
the contact number of those willing to hold proxies for those that can not make the
meeting.

Proxy Form
I

hereby appoint

as my proxy for the Special Resolution to amend rule 5. (c) of the Illawarra Bird
Observers Club Incorporated Objective and Rules
to vote
for/against the changing of the rule as moved by Brian Hales on the 19/3/96.

Contd. . . .

PEREGRINE FALCON - PREYING ON INSECTS

For the last two years I have been observing a pair of Peregrine Falcons. In mid-December 1995 I observed an unusual eating habit by both birds. They were preying on cicadas.

The male falcon was taking the insect in flight, then flying to his perch, biting off the abdomen and dropping the wings. The female was capturing and eating the prey in flight, in the same manner as the male falcon dissected his cicadas. This feeding habit was observed for approximately 90 minutes.

I had found this experience most interesting to observe as the information I had read to date did not reveal that their food consisted of insects. My curiosity aroused, I then made a point of gathering all information obtainable by me with regard to Peregrine Falcons and found that the only record on insects as a food source was in Neville Cayley's book "What Bird is That?"

Books researched:	Hawks in Focus	Jack and Lindsay Cupper
	Australian Birds of Prey	Humphrey Price-Jones
	Reader's Digest Complete Book of Australian Birds	
	Australia: Land of Birds	Donald and Molly Trounson
	Field Guide to the Birds of Australia	Graham Pizzey
	What Bird is That?	Neville W Cayley

Richard Fackender

FINAL CALL FOR 1995 RECORDS

The 1995 Annual Bird Report is well underway in its production. If you have any outstanding records that you wish to be included in the report, please send them to either myself or the secretary by the end of May.

The annual bird report is a composite of all the records submitted to the unusual records scheme (URS), some of which appear monthly in the back page of IBOC NEWS. These records are stored in a centralised database, and are used by community groups, individuals, and occasionally, consultants in the preparation of Fauna Impact Assessments, avifaunal manuscripts, university theses etc. The records also go to the NSW Field Ornithologist Club's annual report for New South Wales, and to the NSW Bird Atlas database. Collectively your records help in understanding the spatial and temporal distribution, seasonality, nomadism, migratory patterns and ecological significance of species, and the conservation importance of locations and habitats. In short the few minutes it takes to properly record an unusual record may, in the long term, be of great scientific benefit to the birdlife we all love.

I take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to the URS so far, and encourage others to submit as many records as you can.

For those unfamiliar with the status of birds in the Illawarra/ Shoalhaven region, copies of "The Birds of the County of Camden", 2nd edition, are available from the secretary for only \$5.

Chris Chafer

Contd....

Status	Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
U	Australian Shelduck	1	14/2	Tallawarra ash ponds	wetland	PM
U	Southern Giant Petrel	1	25/1	Burrill Lake	beachcast	AKM
MC	Australasian Gannet	1	03/2	Lake Heights	lake shore	CJC
R	White-tailed Tropicbird	1	14/1	Conjola Beach	beachcast	AKM
U	Striated Heron	2	15/2	Minnamurra estuary	mudflat	MR
R	Black Kite	1	31/1	Big Island	overhead	LES
R	Black Kite	1	02/2	Primbee	overhead	CJC
S	Little Eagle	2	09/1	Werri Lagoon	overhead	MR
U	Australian Hobby	1	27/1	Bellambi	woodland	GB
U	Peregrine Falcon	1	09/1	Killalea Lagoon	overhead	MR
U	Painted Button-quail	1	10/2	Hoddles Track	forest	CB
U	Sooty Oystercatcher	31	17/2	Crookhaven Heads	rocky shore	CJC
S	Pied Oystercatcher	2	14/1	Lake Conjola	foreshore	AKM
R	Wood Sandpiper	1	28/1	Killalea Lagoon	wetland	GB
U	Ruddy Turnstone	25	03/2	MM Beach	rocky shore	CJC
S	White-winged Tern	1	02/2	Windang	sand flat	CJC
S	White-headed Pigeon	5	16/12	Jamberoo Pass	forest	CW
S	Brush Bronzewing	1	04/1	Conjola SF	woodland	KM
S	Brush Bronzewing	1	30/1	Woronora River	forest	KM
S	Crested Pigeon	1	14/1	Conjola Beach	grassland	AKM
S	Bar-shouldered Dove	2	02/2	Dunmore Quarry	rural	KM
U	Topknot Pigeon	30+	19/1	Macquarie Pass NP	overhead	MR
U	Gang-gang Cockatoo	14	21/1	Hilltop	forest	CJC
R	Glossy Black Cockatoo	1	14/1	Lake Conjola	urban	AKM
U	Common Koel	2	23/1	Blenheim Bch, Jervis Bay	forest	AKM
S	White-throated Nightjar	1	10/1	Canyonleigh	dry forest	KM
U	Azure Kingfisher	1	30/1	Woronora River	forest	KM
U	Red-browed Treecreeper	1	27/1	Cudmirrah	forest	KM
U	Southern Emu-wren	4	15/1	Dunmore (Rocklow Ck)	forest	CJC
U	Pilotbird	2	21/1	Starlights Trail (Nattai)	forest	CJC
U	Bell Miner	many	21/1	McArthurs Flat (Nattai)	forest	CJC
U	Chestnut-rumped Heathwren	1	27/1	Budderoo NP	heath	BH
R	Regent Honeyeater	1	Jan	Balgownie	garden	JW
U	Brown-headed Honeyeater	2	10/1	Canyonleigh	dry forest	KM
U	Brown-headed Honeyeater	4	15/01	Pattimors Lagoon (Conjola)	forest	AKM
U	Crescent Honeyeater	1	14/1	Bungonia	woodland	GB
U	White-winged Triller	2	10/2	Primbee	woodland	GB
"	Figbird	2	14/1	Windang	figtree	GB
U	Grey Currawong	1	10/1	Canyonleigh	dry forest	KM
U	White-winged Chough	3	05/2	Yalwal	dry forest	KM

GB - Graham Barwell; CB - Chris Brandis; CJC - Chris Chafer; BH - Betty Hudson; RJ - Richard Jordan; PM - Paul McDonald; KM - Kevin Mills; AKM - Alan Morris; MR - Mark Robinson; PS - P. Smith; LES - Lindsay Smith; CW - Christine Wilder; JW - Joan Wylie

Comment: I am not aware of any previous records of a gannet being observed in the Lake. The bird was an immature and was fishing between the Yacht Club and Berkeley Boat Harbour. Thousands of seabirds, mainly shearwaters (Wedge-tailed, Short-tailed and Fluttering) were involved in a wreck during early January. However the only unusual species recorded were those from Conjola and Burrill Lake, the Giant Petrel being doubly interesting as it is normally a winter visitor. The Black Kites observed at Big Island and Primbee were probably the same bird, an immature with a characteristic pale tail band. This appears to be only the second record for the County of Camden. The large number of Oystercatchers observed at Crookhaven Heads is double the greatest number previously recorded for that area, a location with 18 years of data. Once again Wood Sandpipers have been reported from Killalea, is this a regular summering locale for this Palaearctic migrant. Finally, a lone Regent Honeyeater that turned up in Balgownie may be the first record for the coastal plain.

Status	Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
R	Brush Turkey	3	10/3	Macquarie Pass	forest	MC,JC
U	Australian Shoveller	2	10/3	Bellangalo	farm dam	CJC
R	Spotted Harrier	1	11/3	Jamberoo Valley	rural	CW
U	Grey Goshawk	2	23/3	Woodi Woodi track	forest	CJC
U	Buff-banded Rail	1	20/3	Bomaderry paper mill	roadkill	KM
U	Sooty Oystercatcher	18	23/3	Wombarra Reef	rocky shore	CJC
U	Black-winged Stilt	20	11/3	Why Juck Bay	lake shore	DG
U	Black-winged Stilt	10	31/3	Lake South	lake shore	KM
S	Lesser Sand Plover	2	24/2	Windang	beach	CB
R	Grey Ternlet	1	11/3	off Wollongong	pelagic	CL
R	Little Corella	20	31/3	Oak Flats	parkland	KM
R	Little Corella	4	23/3	Stanwell Park	forest	CJC
S	Scaly-breasted Lorikeet	2	09/3	Balgownie	garden	RMc
U	Musk Lorikeet	50+	20/3	Nowra State Forest	forest	KM
U	Musk Lorikeet	5	24/3	west of Swan Lake	overhead	KM
R	Pheasant Coucal	1	01/3	Tate Place, Jamberoo	urban	DB
R	Sooty Owl	1	24/3	Jamberoo Pass	forest	RJ
R	Owlet Nightjar	1	22/3	Curramore, Royal NP	woodland	JN
U	Varied Sittella	few	12/3	Mt. Kembla	forest	DG
R	Spectacled Monarch	1	21/3	Currarong	forest	JW,DW
U	Leaden Flycatcher	1	26/3	Blackbutt Reserve	forest	CB
U	Restless Flycatcher	2	22/3	Primbee	garden	RI
U	Dusky Woodswallow	5	02/3	Primbee	woodland	CJC
S	Little Raven	50+	10/3	Bungonia	rural	CJC

CB - Chris Brandis; DB - David Brown; CJC - Chris Chafer; JC - Jessika Chafer; MC - Mitchell Chafer; DG - Daryl Goldrick; RI - Ron Imisides; RJ - Richard Jordan; CL - Carl Love; PM - Paul McDonald; RMc - R. McKinlay; KM - Kevin Mills; JN - Jack Nowaczyk; JW - Jim Wallis; CW - Christine Wilder; DW - Diana Wright

Comment: Well did I get a big surprise when my kids casually pointed out 3 Brush Turkeys pecking around the RTA stock pile as we drove up Macquarie Pass. Sightings of this species have improved over the past couple of years, lets hope the trend continues. Yet another Coucal reported from the region suggests this species is also making a come-back to the Illawarra. The Spectacled Monarch was found in Abrahams Bosom Reserve at Currarong. This is the second known record for the County of St. Vincent. The Owlet Nightjar record is another good find, while the Spotted Harrier has again been observed from the Minnamurra River catchment - is it the same bird? Scaly-breasted Lorikeets reach their southern limit in the Illawarra, so having a pair feed in your garden is a real treat.

I. B. O. C. News

Issue No. 191

June 1996



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 June** at the **Fairy Meadow Community Centre**, corner of Cambridge Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, commencing at **7.30 p.m.** The meeting will take the form of a **Members' Night**, when all IBOC members are invited to participate in the activities. This may involve anything ornithological or something connected with the club's activities or members - some slides or a video, a narrative or poem, some artwork or artefact. So come along and share some of your experiences with your fellow birders.

Next Outing: will be on **Saturday 15 June** to Drawing Room Rocks in Barren Grounds Nature Reserve. Meet at Camp Quality Park, Berry at **9.00 a.m.** If travelling south along the Princes Highway, turn right immediately after Broughton Mill Creek bridge just north of Berry, onto Woodhill Mountain Road. The park is on the left about 100 metres from the turn. We will drive up the mountain to Brogers Creek Road and the beginning of the walk. The track ascends the escarpment to a lookout above Foxground with views down the coast to Jervis Bay and out to sea. The track may be quite eroded in parts and slippery if there has been rain. The walk will be led by **Barry Virtue**. Bring eats and drinks for at least one morning tea and lunch; sticky buns in Berry after the walk are an optional extra.

Next Film Night: will be held on **Saturday 8 June** at the home of Gwen and **Jim Robinson**, 16 Burling Avenue, Mount Ousley commencing at **7.30 p.m.** If you intend coming, could you please contact Jim or Gwen (294213) so that they have some idea of the space needed for the evening. Bring along a fold-up chair (if you have one) and a plate of supper to share afterwards. These evenings provide an excellent opportunity to view some exciting new videos and catch up socially with club members.

Next Committee Meeting: will be held on **Tuesday 18 June** at the home of Peg McKinlay, starting at **7.30 p.m.**

MAY MONTHLY MEETING

The speaker for the evening was member Harry Battam, the driving force behind the Albatross Study Group and the Southern Ocean Seabird Study Association, SOSSA, that started with the banding of Wandering Albatross off the Illawarra coast by the late Doug Gibson. Harry has continued to gather valuable data on this marvellous bird and, naturally, it was the subject of his talk.

During the early part of this century the Homebush Abattoir was discharging about 2 tonnes of fat offal per year into the sewer system. This ended up in the sea off Malabar and became a permanent year-round feeding ground for seabirds including the Wandering Albatross. From 1970 this slowed, then stopped as the treatment of waste became more efficient, leaving the birds to depend on the unreliable and short 6 week cuttlefish breeding and dying season in the winter off the coast from Cronulla to Nowra. This change has been one of the reasons that the number of birds caught has dropped from 400 a year to less than 50, despite four times the number of trips to sea. We saw how Harry and his team find and net the birds, measure them and record the data while keeping their fingers away from a bill that can readily slice up cuttlefish, while being prepared to get covered in regurgitated partly-digested food. Wandering Albatross are mainly scavengers and so freely take bait floating behind long line trawlers which are currently decimating fish stocks for a quick profit, causing a further decline in the species. The data Harry showed indicate that we now rarely see the great southern sub-species and that the number of young birds arriving is almost negligible.

The Wandering Albatross lives on a knife edge, eating a poor diet of squid while having to travel great distances to find a meal. This has made the bird into one of the most energy efficient species. It uses the energy from about a 100 grams of fat to fly 1000 Km; this would require at least 10 Kg of squid to be eaten. This low energy usage has resulted in a slow reproductive cycle and although the albatross live for up to 70 or 90 years, they require about 40% of the fledged young to return to the breeding grounds to make up the natural losses, let alone the effect of long liners. It is thought by many experts that some of the sub-species are below the sustainable population levels already - a sad indictment on human greed.

The vote of thanks for this most interesting and disturbing talk was given by fellow albatross banding member, Lindsay Smith, and echoed by all the members and guests present.

Chris Brandis

MAY OUTING, EXCELSIOR No. 2 COLLIERY

On Sunday 19 May, 22 members of IBOC (plus two children) met in Seafoam Avenue, Thirroul for our monthly outing. The day was cool but sunny - excellent walking weather - and started off well with sightings of a Spangled Drongo sitting on a power line, his forked tail clearly silhouetted against the pale blue sky, Silvereyes, Lewin's Honeyeaters, King Parrots, Gang-gang Cockatoos, and Eastern Spinebills. All this before we'd started walking!!

Our path led us through boggy ground, over murmuring creeks, past swamps and reed beds but we saw no water birds. Here the vegetation was mainly introduced species and of the pest variety such as crofton weed, pampas grass, privet, ochona, black-eyed Susan and fireweed. Further up the mountain the native vegetation took over, literally in the case of devil's twine (*Cassytha paniculata*). It covered tree tops, hung like curtains and provided little traps for the unwary. In a patch of wet sclerophyll forest Mike (our leader) directed us to two bowers of Satin Bowerbirds, handsomely decked out with bright blue treasures, all of which were plastic and all showing up well against the dappled yellow and brown of the forest floor. Life must be much simpler for bowerbirds since the dawn of the plastic age.

On the way back to the main track there was a small tree, species unknown, with a trunk in the shape of a figure eight, but before it started its convolutions it formed a perfect couch for a skinny miner. Come to think of it, was there any other kind in those days? We had our morning tea on the track, some members utilising the remains of clumps of pampas grass for seats and others sitting on the coal refuse of which the track is now composed. This track was where the incline went down to the railway line, Excelsior coal always going by rail; in one place a washaway had exposed a couple of coal skips quietly rusting and rotting away. They were quite tiny by today's standards, but big enough for one man to fill and push till the horses and haulage ropes took over.

When we reached the top of the incline we saw the tumbled remains of once-elegant stone walls which led first to the powder magazine (which had been furnished by the addition of seats from a couple of the rusting relics of cars littering the area) and around to the portal of the Excelsior No. 2 Colliery. This portal was quite low but as the coal seam (Bulli) was only 4'6" here, it didn't need to be palatial. Excelsior No. 1 was at the top of Ford's Road, No. 3, otherwise known as the Corn Beef mine, was off Bulli Pass and here was mined not only coal and coke but the 'white metal' which was used as road base in the days before all roads were macadamised.

Now it was time to look at the view which included large areas of sea, and a gannet, Silver Gulls and one pelican were observed over the ocean, while a Grey Goshawk, Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike, Rock Doves and Brown Warbler were seen closer to hand. On going past the mine, and with the ground still rising, we walked on blue metal which made the going rougher than on coal refuse as it was inclined to slip underfoot. This continued until we reached the Scout camp - a delightful clearing with emerald-green sward neatly cut - and here we observed birds which is what our outings are for, and here we had lunch.

Birds seen in this area were King Parrot, White-throated Treecreeper, Mistletoebird, Eastern Spinebill, Crested Shrike-tit, and a family of Spotted Pardalote which appeared to have broken with tradition and built a nest in a tree hollow. The coral trees in this area were just beginning to flower and appeared to have been pruned at the tips by cockatoos. Oh well, more flowers next year. In a gap through the trees an excellent view was obtained of the Hawkesbury sandstone which forms the top of the escarpment.

At the northern end of the camp was a sign proclaiming "Bulli Pass Scenic Reserve" and the "Gibson Track". It is now 12 years since Doug Gibson died but he has a most suitable memorial. Here we walked on a narrow track which was softly carpeted with fallen leaves, as

pleasant to walk on as a fine carpet with good quality underlay but with a more pleasant outlook. It was rainforest here and we crossed Flanagan's Creek, then went into a eucalypt forest with tall trees, mainly *E. pillularis* (Blackbutt) and a hybrid of *E. saligna* (Sydney Blue Gum) and *E. botryoides* (Mahogany Gum) but all along the way were Cabbage Tree Palms, Red Cedar, and flame trees. This track is easy walking because it is on a bench which is relatively flat, formed by a resistant stratum of sandstone which hasn't weathered at the same rate as softer forms and it is littered with large and small rocks which have slipped and fallen from the heights. These are now frequently covered with moss fern and lichen, all of which add interest to the walk. We continued along to the swamp which is covered with reeds, but again we saw no waterbirds. We did see the lovely view of the escarpment and most were thankful that we weren't going up there but were heading back the way we came. En route we saw a termite nest, lovely spreads of maidenhair fern, a large fig tree with a cabbage tree palm growing out of the main fork, also a flock of Topknot Pigeons, a Brown Gerygone and some bandicoot holes.

The hardier/keener members now took the long way home while the rest of us slipped and slid down the blue metal track to the top of Phillip Street and thence to the cars. We saw 33 species, picked off a few leeches, saw practically no flowers, no flies, mosquitoes or tiger snakes, and had a most enjoyable day.

Many thanks to Mike Morphett for leading the way and to Doug for his love of nature.

Peggy Merrett

NEWS FROM BARREN GROUNDS

There has been a lot happening lately at Barren Grounds. Any of you who have been up there lately would have noticed that the Information Centre is almost up and running. It has been used already for some courses and is proving invaluable, as it can be used by school groups (computer and microscope work), on weekend courses (especially when it's raining) and for slide shows. There still remains quite a lot to do, however. Some painting, paving, cabinet making and landscaping mostly. We are also now looking for volunteers to man the Centre (initially on a Sunday). The volunteers would have some training and would be able to stay at Barren Grounds with free accommodation. There is now the luxury of hot showers and a flush toilet! If any of you feel you could help with any of these jobs we would be very happy to hear from you. You could contact me at meetings or ring the Wardens on 360195. We also have some funds to renovate the Lodge. The idea is to make it bigger, more comfortable and more private, without ruining the cosy atmosphere.

Sue Proust

(4)

contd....

UPCOMING COURSES AT BARREN GROUNDS

Weekend Courses

LYREBIRDS

A great opportunity to photograph lyrebird courtship displays up close from a hide. The lyrebirds will be at the peak of their displays. Don't forget your cameras.

Leader : Iain Paterson Date : 19-21 July

STARS, COMETS, CLOUDS AND STORMS

Rob McNaught and Gordon Garradd from the Anglo-Australian Observatory will be showing the night sky using telescopes, binoculars and the naked eye. By day they will be explaining cloud formations and the science of thunderstorms. Not to be missed!

Date : 2-4 August

AUSTRALIAN BUSH BIRDS

An introduction to the birds of the bush. There will be a chance to mistnet some birds and learn some basic evolution and classification.

Leaders : The Wardens Date 16-18 August

AGILE ARACHNIDS

Graham Wishart, an Associate of the Australian Museum in Arachnology and an expert in Trapdoor spiders, will fill the weekend with spider facts and details.

Date : 6-8 September

BUSHWALKING THE GROUNDS

Join the wardens and some local historians to learn about the history of the reserve and explore Drawing Room Rocks, the old Timber Trail and Flying Fox Pass.

Date : 27-30 Sept (Sat, Sun, Mon)

AUSTRALIAN MAMMAL FAUNA

Join the wardens in this weekend of walks, talks, spotlighting and trapping. Hopefully, the following mammals will be seen - Gliders, Antechinus, Bandicoots, Possums and even, (with a bit of luck) a Pygmy Possum, a Quoll or a Potoroo!

Date : 4-6 October

Costs : \$140 (RAOU&BGF* \$130) 2 DAYS

\$180 (RAOU&BGF* \$165) 3 DAYS

***BGF-- Barren Grounds Friend**

Hope some of these interest you

Sue Proust

Status	Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
R	Australian Brush Turkey	1	29/4	Mt. Keira	forest	SB
R	Australian Shelduck	1m	17/4	Tallawarra Ash Pond	wetland	PMc
U	Great-crested Grebe	11	21/4	Wingecarrabie Dam	lacustral	CJC
U	Great-crested Grebe	1	29/4	Fitzro Reservoir	lacustral	CJC
R	Herald Petrel	1	28/4	off Wollongong	pelagic	PHb
R	Kermadec Petrel	2	28/4	off Wollongong	pelagic	PHb
U	Little Egret	1	07/4	Bellambi Lagoon	wetland	GB
S	Eastern Reef Egret	1	07/4	Berrara	rocky shore	KM
U	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	2	17/4	Tallawarra Ash Ponds	wetland	PMc
R	Osprey	1	14/4	Swan Lake	lake	KM
U	Australian Hobby	1	06/4	Figtree	urban	JZ
U	Buff-banded Rail	1	07/4	Swan Lake	lake shore	KM
U	Black-winged Stilt	50+	May	Koona Bay	wetland	EH
U	Caspian Tern	12	08/4	Windang	sandflat	GB
U	Crested Pigeon	3	26/4	Fairy Meadow	urban	HW
U	Brown Cuckoo-Dove	1	25/4	Jamberoo	garden	EH
S	White-headed Pigeon	8	31/3	Jamberoo	rural	EH
R	Diamond Dove (escapee?)	1	01/4	Bellambi	garden	TW
R	Australian Ringneck	1	April	West Dapto	garden	EH
U	Musk Lorikeet	3	27/4	Conjola SF	forest	KM
R	Masked Owl	1	02/5	Bomaderry Creek	forest	JP
MC	Tawny Frogmouth	1	02/4	Balgownie	gardn	WE
R	Pink Robin	1f	05/4	Yallah	forest	LES
U	Scarlet Robin	1m	13/4	Blackbutt forest	forest	PMc
U	Spotted Quail-thrush	1	20/4	Avon Dam road	forest	GB
U	Varied Sittella	2	28/4	Bendella	forest	CJC
MC	Rufous Fantail	1	28/4	Mangeton	urban	IMc
U	Leaden Flycatcher	1	14/4	Balgownie	urban	WE
C	Magpie-lark	30	01/4	Curramore	urban	KM
S	Spangled Drongo	1	17/4	Lake Heights	urban	KC
S	Spangled Drongo	1	26/4	Primbee	urban	PMc
S	Spangled Drongo	1	29/4	Wollongong Uni	parkland	GB
S	Spangled Drongo	1	30/4	Balgownie	urban	RMc
S	Spangled Drongo	1	06/5	Balgownie	urban	PHz
S	Spangled Drongo	1	08/5	Port Kembla	urban	OR
S	Spangled Drongo	1	10/5	Figtree	urban	SZ
S	Figbird	2	22/4	Ulladulla	figtree	KM
S	Grey Currawong	1	15/4	Sassafras	woodland	KM
S	Grey Currawong	1	17/4	Canyonleigh	woodland	KM
R	Tawny Grassbird	1	13/4	Tallawarra	woodland	CB
U	Bassian Thrush	1	28/4	Bendella	forest	CJC

GB - Graham Barwell; SB - Sam Bosanquet; CB - Chris Brandis; CJC - Chris Chafer; KC - Kerry Chafer; WE - Wal Emery; EH - Brian & Barbara Hales; EH - Betty Hudson; PHb - Phil Hansbro; PHz - P. Hazelwood; PM - Paul McDonald; IMc - Ian McKinlay; PMc - Paul McDonald; RMc - R. McKinlay; KM - Kevin Mills; JP - Judith Parkinson; OR - Olive Rodwell; LES - Lindsay Smith; HW - Horie Ward; TW - Tom Wylie; JZ - Joan Zealey; SZ - Sue Zealey

Comment: A visiting Englishman was well rewarded with his walk around the Mt. Keira ring track, the Brush Turkey being the highlight. The development of several East Coast Lows through autumn have given seabird addicts a wealth of unusual seabirds to view. An osprey continues to frequent Swan Lake, while the small Tawny Grassbird population at Tallawarra continues its precarious existence. Drongos have returned for the winter, with the synchrony of observations through late April proving the usefulness of having many eyes to observe this annual event, and this column as a medium to record its occurrence. The Masked Owl at Bomaderry was a dark morph. A pair is known from nearby Bangalee and this species has been recorded from the Bomaderry-Cambewarra area since the 1920's. This species is becoming increasingly rare in NSW and its occurrence in our region should be fully appreciated. Keep your eyes open for more Pink Robins as they have also invaded the western Sydney area.

T. B. O. C. News

Issue No. 192

July 1996



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 8 July** at the **Fairy Meadow Community Centre**, corner of Cambridge Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, commencing at **7.30 p.m.** The meeting will be addressed by long-standing member **Chris Chafer**. The subject of Chris' talk is "Twenty-five Years of Environmental Change at Shoalhaven Heads" and he will look at the impact of extensive environmental changes on several species of shorebirds over the last 20 years.

Next Outing: will be on **Sunday 14 July** to **Wirrimbirra Sanctuary**, which is situated on the Hume Highway, Bargo, between Bargo and Tahmoor. Meet at the car park just inside the gates at **9.00 a.m.** The area is marked with an extensive network of nature trails and has a large plant nursery as well as picnic and barbecue facilities.

Next Film Night: will be held on **Saturday 6 July** at the home of Sue Proust, 7 Yellagong Street, West Wollongong, commencing at **7.30 p.m.** If you intend coming, could you please contact Sue on 262033 (work) or 294838 (after 6 p.m.) so she will have some idea of the space needed for the evening. Bring along a fold-up chair (if you have one) and a plate of supper to share afterwards. These evenings provide an excellent opportunity to view some exciting new videos and catch up socially with club members.

Next Committee Meeting: will be held on **Tuesday 16 July** at the home of Esme Gay, starting at **7.30 p.m.**

JUNE MONTHLY MEETING

This was the night when members entertained each other and their guests with items of interest, generally with a bird flavour. First was Barbara Hales who gave an update on the Puffinabilia that has been expanded to include other works of art such as a bird made up of many pieces of polished wood types jigsawed together, a beautiful piece of work. Wal Emery then told a tale of his search for the Pink Robin and the dodging of log trucks on the Errinundra Plateau in Victoria, ending with field notes in poetic form on the sightings of a least 9 of these birds. Betty Hudson narrated a story from the Aboriginal Dreaming of how the robin got a red breast and showed some stamps with a bird theme from Australia, New Zealand and Britain. Compared with some countries' stamps, Australia is lax in showing the world some of our beautiful bird species.

Gwen Robinson displayed to members the results of her tapestry effort, quite a boring task she concluded, like filling in numbered squares with a colour, and the resultant bird was unknown to all. Nola Williams read an article on the Bird Man of Belgium who had over 3000 articles of Penguinabilia, even wanting to change his name to Mr Penguin - watch out for Mr and Mrs Puffin. Ron Hanks took us on a slide trip around some of his favourite spots in Australia, which of course included railway and radio museums; there were certainly some places we would all like to visit or revisit. Laurie Williams then put together slides of some of the more unusual road signs he has seen during the many trips he has had about Australia, some character shots of members over the years and one of a group of Subarus awaiting a push start, or so Robyn thought.

Brian Hales showed some of his favourite bird slides from photographers such as Lennie Klumpes, Chris Chafer, Ron Imisides, as well as himself and almost missed the one of a Pink Robin. Kevin Macgregor then told his life associations with birds from when the stork brought him, becoming a legal eagle to driving a petrel engine grey falcon down to get finch and chimps. Joan Zealy finished the evening's entertainment by showing some model owls and a jigsaw owl, almost Owlabilia. Thanks all for the entertaining evening and for the supper afterwards.

Chris Brandis

THE GULF SAVANNAH

The area of northwest Queensland from Cairns to Burketown and Lawn Hill to Undara is encouraging tourists, especially birdwatchers, to the area with offers to stay on stations with impressive bird lists. There are maps provided, information on where to stay, what to see there, and who to contact, and it sounds like just what is required for great holiday planning. If anyone is interested the information is now in the Club library.

Chris Brandis

OUTING TO DRAWING ROOM ROCKS

The June outing was attended by 16 members meeting at Camp Quality Park on Woodhill Mountain Road, Berry. It was an ideal meeting place where we spent an hour walking before driving up to the border of Barren Grounds Nature Reserve. The park is of the typically well kept town variety, with lush green grass and well-endowed with trees, especially along Bong Bong Creek which is lined with large casuarinas along the western border. Other trees in the park included large coral trees, smaller recently planted grevilleas and Lilli Pilli trees. Some of the birds recorded there were Grey Butcherbird, Grey Shrike-thrush, Lewin's Honeyeater, Silvereye, Rose Robin, Willie Wagtail and Yellow Thornbill.

We left the park at about 10 a.m. and drove up Woodhill Mountain Road, turning off after about 6 Km, then on to the entrance to Barren Grounds. This point is at the southernmost part of the reserve and the track leads from here to Drawing Room Rocks. The weather was clear at Berry and along the mountains to the west where we were heading, except for a couple of small patches of fog coming down the mountains into the valleys. As we drove up the road we came into one of these patches as it cascaded down the hillside. We located the walking track and began our walk. Immediately the track rose sharply over some rough, rocky ground which was quite difficult to walk on, and a little slippery, too, after some rain during the previous few days, but the rocky ground did help to give a foothold at times.

As we made our way up in the misty damp atmosphere the tree branches dropped water from their leaves each time they were brushed against, giving us a little shower each time. After a short distance the tall eucalypts could be seen to have their tips out in the sunlight above the fog. Then, as we were still walking in the fog, blue sky appeared through the tree tops and soon we were walking in sunlight, above the mist, in clear air and looking down on the white mist in the valley below us. It was a very beautiful sight, and as the track rose higher the whole valley resembled a huge glistening white lake. It was hard going and we stopped at times to rest which gave us a chance to appreciate the really breathtaking beauty, as we had been walking through the grey misty atmosphere of the fog below which had reduced visibility to about 20 metres, giving the trees a ghost-like appearance. At a lookout point above the mist the sun was shining on the wet leaves of the trees below, making them sparkle like diamonds against the dark green background along the hillside.

It was a truly beautiful walk in this forest which consisted mainly of very tall eucalypts on the steep slopes throwing their shadows on the mosses and lichen-covered rocks and fallen timber, in company with a ground cover of reedy grass and rich green bracken fern which gave way to a dry sclerophyll type of landscape on the plateau along the top of the mountain where smaller eucalypts and banksias survived in the harsher conditions. The native fuchsia with their lovely red and white flowers were doing well there in the sandy environment, accompanied by tea trees and a variety of other native species.

On the way up, with the visibility poor, the birds were hard to see; some we did record were Superb Lyrebird, which was heard a number of times, Lewin's Honeyeater, Spotted Pardalote, Crescent Honeyeater, Australian Raven and Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo. We arrived at our lunch stop which was a wonderful lookout, taking in the full length of Seven Mile Beach, the Shoalhaven and Jervis Bay. As we finished our lunch a call went out - a flock of at least 20 pigeons. Then suddenly two Peregrine Falcons swooped down on them. They just scattered in all directions, literally for dear life, and in a few seconds they were gone, all having appeared to escape the attack. On our return walk we recorded some birds when the fog had lifted and we had a good view of the whole landscape which had been previously obscured. Some of the birds were Variegated Fairy-wren, Large-billed Scrubwren, White-throated and Red-browed Treecreepers, Topknot Pigeon, Mistletoebird and Eastern Yellow Robin.

On our return to Berry we made a detour into the valley which had been previously covered in fog. This proved to be a lovely area. The road ended after a few kilometres at a private property. We crossed the creek flowing through the valley a couple of times. There was a dense vegetation along the valley but we didn't see many birds. We arrived back at Berry at 3 p.m. after a good day in which we recorded a total of 42 species.

Thanks to Barry Virtue for leading such a wonderful walk.

Horrie Ward

FROM THE JUNE NEWSLETTER OF THE N S W BIRD ATLASSERS (NSW BA)

HONOURABLE DISCHARGE FOR JACK HYSLOP

At age 86+ years and after 18 years atlassing with NSW BA, RAOU and IBOC, Jack Hyslop, a foundation member of NSW BA, has laid down his field-glasses and retired from active service.

Jack concedes: "The hills seem to get steeper and longer and the tracks rougher ... my efforts over the last few years have gradually diminished to zero."

Jack commends Dick Cooper and Committee and all members for their work in atlassing for Australia and NSW in particular, and sends best wishes for the future.

On behalf of all members and the Committee, Dick thanks Jack for his valuable contribution over the years, and trusts he will find compensating rewards in his "retirement" from atlassing.

GLOSSY BLACK-COCKATOOS IN THE SHOALHAVEN REGION

I am presently researching the distribution, abundance and ecology of the Glossy Black-Cockatoo in the Shoalhaven region, that is from Berry in the north to Batemans Bay in the south. The Glossy Black-Cockatoo is fairly regularly recorded in some locations such as near Sussex Inlet, and has been recorded from throughout the region. The major food tree in the region is Black She-oak *Allocasuarina Littoralis*.

I am seeking records and observations from people of the Glossy Black-Cockatoo in the Shoalhaven, particularly information on:

- the location of the main feeding areas
- breeding records
- seasonal or other patterns to occurrence at locations

Information or records would be most welcome; the minimum information should contain date, exact location, number and sex of birds, activity of birds and name and address of observer. Historical records would be welcome.

Kevin Mills
222 North Curramore Road
Jamberoo NSW 2533
Tel. 042 360620 Fax 042 360664

1996 TWITCHATHON 26/27 OCTOBER

Every year the RAOU organises a national "Twitchathon" to raise funds for worthwhile bird conservation projects. This year the money raised will be divided between Barren Grounds Bird Observatory and the national Woodlands Appeal (to save birds in one of our most endangered habitats).

The Twitchathon is a fun activity where teams of 3 to 5 people spend 24 hours finding as many bird species as they can - with sponsorship from friends, businesses, etc. of so much per bird or a fixed sum. There are good prizes (such as binoculars) as the reward, and also the knowledge that the money raised will go to help birds. Last year over \$10 000 was raised in southern NSW and the ACT alone.

There are two categories in the event: the 'Serious' section where sleeping and eating are optional extras, and the 'Champagne' event where there is plenty of time for both these activities.

The IBOC representative for this year's Twitchathon is Jack Baker (ph 845740), so contact Jack regarding your team entry, and any other questions you may have.

Richard Jordan

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BULLI GREVILLEA PARK

The work that has been done in the park is extraordinary. All lantana and other weeds have been cleared and ground has been mulched from the 12 acres. Paths have been laid down around the perimeter of the park, with a maze of walking tracks covering the whole area. There is a lake near the lower end which has had ducks rearing young over the past two years. The eastern end, where the main entrance is, has been landscaped then planted with all native plants from many parts of Australia, many from Western Australia, which are growing successfully.

We have had two Tuesday mornings there and recorded a total of 30 bird species, so the birdlife there is prolific. On 18 June we recorded Brown Gerygone, Silvereye, Brown Thornbill, Superb Fairy-wren, and Eastern Spinebill, all in very large numbers and so active that it was impossible to count them. Even the Spotted Pardalote was everywhere in the eucalypts and casuarinas in large numbers.

We are aiming to visit the park every third Tuesday of the month for 12 months to compile a bird list for the park.

Horrie Ward

KOOKABURRA SITS IN THE OLD GUM TREE

Kookaburra sits in the old gum tree,
Merry, merry king of the bush is he.
Laugh, kookaburra, laugh, kookaburra,
Gay your life must be.

That's the song we learnt at school so many years ago. At the June meeting amongst the slides shown was one of a kookaburra eating a sparrow. It reminded me of a similar event I witnessed just before last Christmas.

I was on my front verandah watching the skylarking of about a dozen New Holland Honeyeaters who were chasing each other about in the native garden. On the high television aerial next door sat a kookaburra. Suddenly the honeyeaters gave alarm calls and all together they darted into one thick shrub. At the same time the kookaburra dropped like a stone from the aerial. It went straight into the shrub and came out with a honeyeater in its beak and flew away. Well, what a kerfuffle! The rest of the honeyeaters came out of hiding and hurled abuse at the kookaburra. Then they all flew up into a tree and continued their tirade of abuse. It lasted for a full minute. Then, content with their handling of the situation, they all flew off together.

The song just doesn't sound the same anymore!!

Olive Rodwell

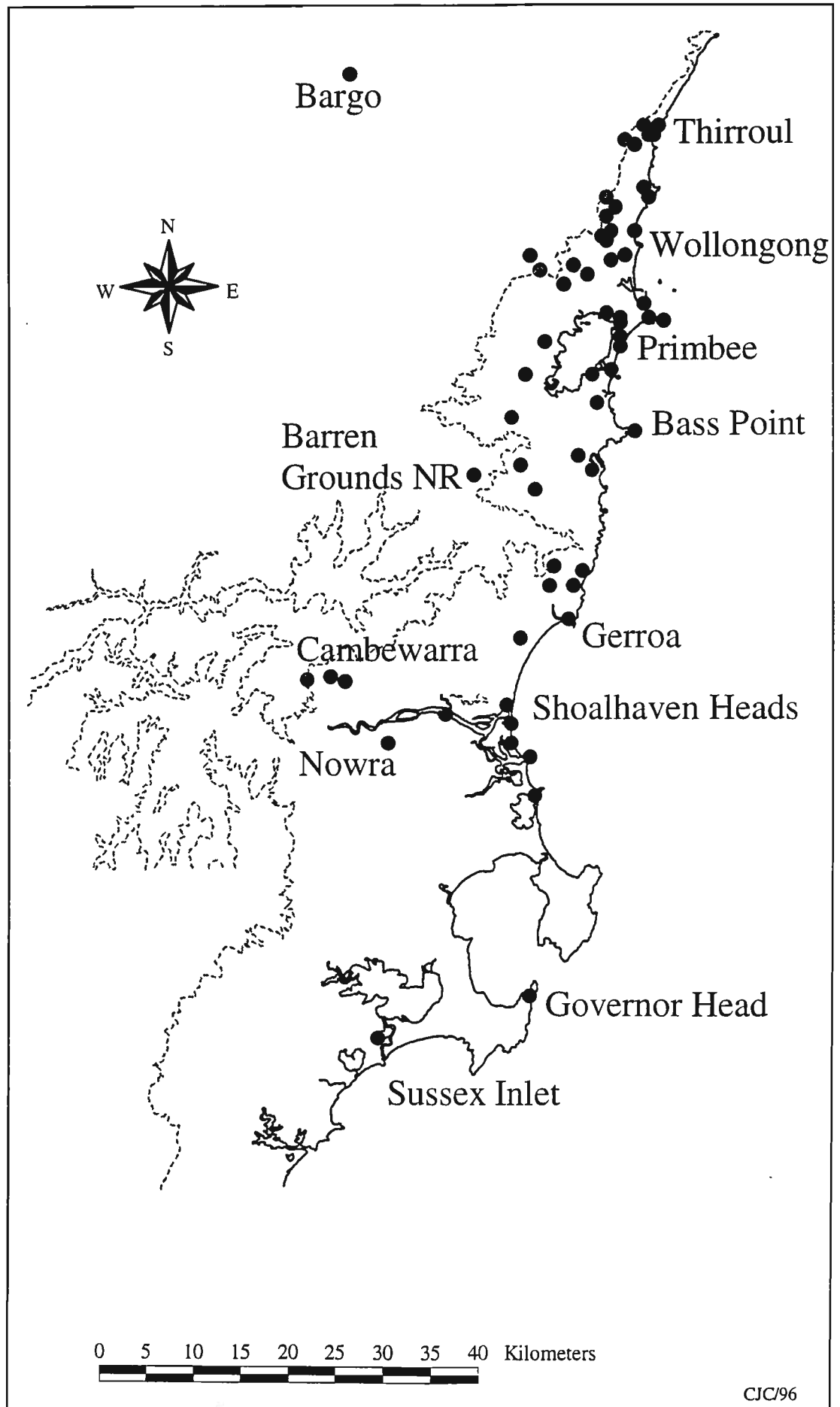
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Spatial distribution of the Spangled Drongo in the Illawarra/Shoalhaven regions of NSW

Chris J. Chafer

The Spangled Drongo *Dicrurus bractatus* is a scarce winter visitor to the Illawarra/Shoalhaven regions of NSW. Although some birds arrive in January, arrival dates from the IBOC/Chafer databases (112 records) clearly indicate that mid February to mid April is the arrival window. Drongos are usually observed singularly, groups of greater than three birds are rare with only one record of four birds from Cambewarra in December 1927, and a group of five birds from Primbee in May 1996. As can be observed from the adjacent map of the Drongos distribution, all but three records are from east of the coastal escarpments, below 200 m asl. Whether this is a reflection of the species' preference for coastal environments, or a lack of observers west of the escarpment is difficult to determine. The timing of departure from the region is more difficult to discern from the database, however the bird(s) that regularly frequent Ron Imisides residence at Primbee over the last 12 years, habitually leave between mid September to mid October. Indeed 70% of the records are from between February and June, with only seven observation locations after August. Data on the Drongos preferred habitat suggest it tolerates any of the coastal environments (urban, parkland, rural, banksia woodland, open forest, rainforest margins) except heathland.



Status	Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
R	Grey-headed Albatross	2	11/5	off Wollongong	pelagic	PH
R	Buller's Albatross	1	25/5	off Wollongong	pelagic	PH
R	Wh-bellied Storm-Petrel	2	11/5	off Wollongong	pelagic	PH
R	Red-tailed Tropicbird	1	02/5	Fairy Meadow beach	beachcast	LES
U	Pied Cormorant	2	16/5	Griffins Bay	lacustral	DGo
R	Australasian Bittern	1	01/6	Dunmore	road kill	MR
U	Peregrine Falcon	1	13/5	Figtree	urban	SZ
U	Australian Hobby	1	18/5	Cudmirrah	overhead	KM
R	White Tern	1	11/5	off Wollongong	pelagic	PH
R	Swift Parrot	6	27/5	Primbee golf course	woodland	PMc
R	Swift Parrot	6	02/6	O'Hares Creek	woodland	CB
R	Red-rumped Parrot	3	27/5	Primbee Golf Course	woodland	PMc
U	Crested Pigeon	1	09/5	Wollongong Mall	urban	NW
U	Crested Pigeon	5	07/5	Port Kembla	urban	OR
U	Crested Pigeon	15	12/5	Swamp Rd. Dunmore	rural	KM
U	Crested Pigeon	10	13/5	Hooka Park, Berkeley	grassland	CJC
S	White-headed Pigeon	1	15/5	Berry Mtn	forest	JPr
S	Bar-shouldered Dove	6	29/5	Terragong Hills west	forest	CJC,MR
U	Azure Kingfisher	2	19/5	Swan Lake	esturay	KM
S	Southern Emu-wren	14	03/6	Lake South-Mt. Warrigal	lake shore	PMc
U	White-plumed Honeyeater	1	26/5	Primbee	garden	RI
U	White-plumed Honeyeater	5	27/5	Nth Wollongong	garden	N&LW
U	Crescent Honeyeater	few	15/5	Tianjara Falls	woodland	KM
R	Regent Honeyeater	2	28/5	Shoalhaven Heads	woodland	DGe
U	Rose Robin	2	-/5	Balgownie	garden	WE
U	Crested Shrike-tit	2	29/5	Terragong Hills west	forest	CJC,MR
U	Restless Flycatcher	1	19/5	Werri Lagoon	wetland	CJC
S	Spangled Drongo	1	23/5	Bellambi Lagoon	woodland	JPn
S	Spangled Drongo	1	26/5	Gerringong	garden	JPr
S	Spangled Drongo	1	26/5	Rose Valley	rural	MR
S	Spangled Drongo	1	30/5	Govenors Head, Jervis Bay	woodland	DW
S	Spangled Drongo	5	27/5	Primbee Golf Course	woodland	PMc
U	Cicadabird	1	19/5	Rose Valley	forest	CJC
S	Figbird	6	26/5	Kiama	fig trees	MR
R	Grey Currawong	1	16/5	Grevillia Park, Bulli	woodland	HW
U	Bassian Thrush	1	31/5	Bangalee Reserve	forest	JPr
U	Bassian Thrush	2	29/5	Terragong Hills west	rainforest	CJC,MR

CJC - Chris Chafer; WE - Wal Emery; DGe - David Geering; DGo - Darryl Goldrick; PH - Phil Hansbro; RI - Ron Imisides; PMc - Paul McDonald; KM - Kevin Mills; JPr - Joy Parker; JPn - Judith Parkinson; MR - Mark Robinson; LES - Lindsay Smith; HW - Horie Ward; N&LW - Nola & Laurie Williams; DW - Diana Wright; SZ - Suzie Zealey.

Comment: Once again the boat trips off Wollongong are turning up some exciting records. Black-winged Stilts had a good breeding season through the summer and are turning up in numbers all over the Lake. Crested Pigeons seem to form flocks during the cooler months, I'd be interested in further records of this event, the records from Wollongong Mall, Port Kembla & Hooka Park are new locations. Swift Parrots visited the region briefly this year, while the Red-rumps at Primbee is a new location for that species. A pair of Emu-wrens established themselves in rank grasslands between Windang Bridge and Mt. Warrigal over ten years ago. Clearly the record above suggests this population is now expanding vigorously. Once again Drongos have been observed from many locations, the group of 5 at Primbee being the largest gathering recorded locally since four were observed together near Cambewarra in 1927. The Grey Currawong is usually only observed west of the escarpment in open woodland.

I.B.O.C. NEWS



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

Next Meeting: will be held on **Monday 12 August** at the **Fairy Meadow Community Centre**, corner of Cambridge Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, commencing at **7.30 p.m.** The meeting will be addressed by member **Pam Robinson** who last spoke to us some years ago on Kakadu and the Top End. This time we visit another World Heritage Area - Lord Howe Island. Pam's talk is titled "Birds and Other Adventures on Lord Howe Island." Climb Mount Gower vicariously and hold a Providence Petrel in your hands!

Next Outing: will be on **Saturday 17 August** to **McPhails Firetrail, Barrengarry Mountain**, and will be led by **Chris Chafer**. This will be a one-way walk involving a car shuffle at the start. We will meet at Bendeela Pondage at **9.00 a.m.** To get there, proceed to Kangaroo Valley by any of the various routes (up Macquarie Pass and through Myra Vale is probably the quickest way from Wollongong) Approximately 500 metres north of the Hampden Bridge is Bendeela Road, running to the west. Follow this road for about 4.5 Km until you come to Kangaroo Valley power station and the pondage (do not turn left to the picnic area). From here a group of cars will drive back up Barrengarry Pass to the start of the walk at the top of the pass. The walk is fairly easy although the downhill section at the end does have a steep bit. We will pass through a variety of woodland and forest types which are home to a wide diversity of birds. The walk will finish at Bendeela Pondage and we'll then drive back to the start of the walk. If time permits we'll stop at Fitzroy Reservoir on the way home to look at Great Crested Grebe.

Next Film Night: will be held on **Saturday 10 August** at the home of Norma Almond, 2 Shoobert Crescent, Keiraville, commencing at **7.30 p.m.** If you intend coming, could you please contact Norma on 298612 so she will have some idea of the space needed for the evening. Bring along a fold-up chair (if you have one) and a plate of supper to share afterwards. These evenings provide an excellent opportunity to view some exciting new videos and catch up socially with club members.

Next Committee Meeting: will be held on **Tuesday 20 August** at the home of **Olive Rodwell**, starting at **7.30 p.m.**

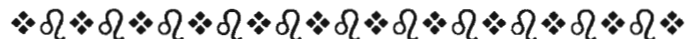
JUNE MONTHLY MEETING

The speaker for the evening was long time member Chris Chafer who spoke on the environmental changes occurring at the Shoalhaven Heads, the basis of Chris's proposed Masters Degree. The Shoalhaven is the fifth most important estuary in NSW with 39 waders, 6 terns and 3 gulls being identified as using the area. The opening to the sea is either closed by a sand bar or is very shallow, and when first discovered, access to the Shoalhaven River was via the Crookhaven River entrance with a channel being dug through the sand bar which separated the two systems. This channel is still the main access of the Shoalhaven River to the sea with the resultant Comerong Island being accessible by a punt, leaving the brackish salt marshes formed between the Shoalhaven Heads to develop into a waders' paradise. Over about a seven year period large floods open the entrance again and the system becomes controlled by the ocean; shellfish eat all the small animals that the waders feed on and they leave for another suitable site until the entrance closes up again and the cycle repeats itself.

Chris is studying the population fluctuations of Red-capped Plovers, Double-banded Plovers, Pacific Golden Plovers, Red-necked Stints and Lesser Sand (was Mongolian) Plover with the cycles of the opening and closing. With a seven year cycle a lot of counts are needed to obtain significant data and thus show a repeatability of the cycle. The Lesser Sand Plover appears to be in trouble from hunting as it travels across China to and from its breeding sites, with most banding recoveries obtained from the local town markets. With the Shoalhaven entrance now closed for about two years the return of the waders has started and it will again be the place to visit to see waders in large numbers. With the aid of aerial photographs over many years the changes to the entrance were observed with the encroachment of plants onto the dunes, sometimes losing to the tides and other times forming permanent additions to Comerong Island.

The vote of thanks was given by Jack Baker on behalf of us all for this fascinating insight into the complex dynamics of estuarine systems that most of us think of as just mud flats.

Chris Brandis



GROUND PARROT ANNUAL SURVEY

BARREN GROUNDS - 9 A.M. SUNDAY 11 AUGUST

A once-in-a-lifetime chance to see the beautiful Ground Parrot and help with some important research. You may even find some of the 'beaters' from last year's survey still lost in the heath. You will need to be reasonably fit and wear sturdy pants and shoes. With about fifty beaters the survey should be done in two to three hours. Bring plenty of warm clothes, raincoat, sun bonnet and a little something to sustain oneself (eg pot of honey, barley sugar, chocolate, hip flask, or all of the above). Why not bring a picnic lunch and go for a stroll once the hard work is over?

For those not up to the rigours of beating, views of Ground Parrots might be had by watching the survey from one of the tracks, or we may be lucky enough to catch a parrot in a net and you will be able to see it being banded.

Jack Baker

IBOC's JULY OUTING to WIRRIMBIRRA SANCTUARY, BARGO

It had been eighteen years almost to the month since Carol and I stayed overnight with other IBOCers in cabins at Wirrimbirra Sanctuary, so it was good to retrace our steps there on Sunday 14th July. We teamed up with fifteen others, including five young folk. Whenever young people attend our Club's functions and outings, I think it's a healthy sign not only for IBOC, but also for the human and non-human communities at large. Together we had a most enjoyable morning's clockwise walk along some of the nature trails within this National Trust property. Wirrimbirra, we were informed, is an Aboriginal word that actually means sanctuary. Back in 1925 the British statesman and three-times prime minister, Stanley Baldwin made this statement: "There are three classes which need sanctuary more than others - birds, wild flowers, and Prime Ministers." I wonder how the birds and banksias of Wirrimbirra would fancy being grouped with top of the pecking order and tall poppy, *Jonus Howardii*?

The night temperature at Wirrimbirra had reportedly dropped to around 5° centigrade, and the weather forecast hadn't been too favourable. However, we were blessed with much sunshine and blue sky as we proceeded along The Wall Track, alongside the sheltered Wirrimbirra Creek to Ockenden Pools, and then to Four Ways and The Well, where the black water looked none too drinkable; then through the Hakea Forest and back through the tunnel under the quite busy railway, groping our way in the darkness under the low headroom and along the double row of planks above the surface of the Culcola Creek, which fortunately was little more than a trickle.

The low-angled winter sunlight accentuated the brightness of the trunks of the scribbly gums. With so much wattle and banksia in flower, it was hardly surprising that Honeyeaters constituted a fifth of our total record of 33 species: the Yellow-tufted and Yellow-faced, White-eared and White-naped, New Holland, Red Wattlebird, and Eastern Spinebill. Bird calls were generally easy to pick up, but at times not so the birds themselves, despite their striking plumage, particularly when stiff breezes triggered off chaotic movements of green in the tree canopies. We were rewarded with fine views of an Olive-backed Oriole at the pools and a Rose Robin back near the native plant nursery, whilst some of us glimpsed an adult fox during our morning tea-break.

The destruction of some banksia flowers, stripped to their central stem, brought about much debate, which was later resolved by the warden, who said that the Gliders, including the Sugar and Yellow-bellied, had really been getting stuck into these flowers lately. Adjoining the nursery was a compound of five Tammar Wallabies, the subject of a research project conducted by the University of Wollongong. Their introduction had been a source of much curiosity to the local residents, the Swamp Wallabies, a larger species and often twice the bodyweight. The Tammars are to be found in south-west Western Australia, a small portion of South Australia, and particularly on Kangaroo Island and are known to drink seawater. Maybe the university researchers periodically have to bring over such water from Belmore Basin for inclusion in the Wirrimbirra Tammars' menu to help make them feel at home.

After lunch at the Field Study Centre, we drove through the nearby township of Bargo to the Nepean Dam, where we walked down from the picnic area to the dam itself, adding the Superb Lyrebird and Rock Warbler to our list. Then over at Avon Dam the very close view of forty-odd Red-browed Finches darting about the archway area to the dam wall nicely rounded off the day for Carol and me.

Perhaps one of these days the Club could organise another overnight stay at Wirrimbirra Sanctuary for us to explore further this area, with some spotlighting of the resident mammals and nocturnal birds, and enjoy the serenity and seclusion to be found there, despite the close proximity of human activity along the old highway and the railway line.

Mike Morphet



NEWS OF OLD FRIENDS

As Laurie and I keep in touch with some former IBOC members, we thought it could be interesting to share some of their news with those who remember them.

Rev Rob and Joan McDonald have lived at Iluka for some years now. Laurie and I visited them recently and shared some time with them in their idyllic little corner of our world. Rob retired from the ministry last year, although he told us that ministers never fully retire. Rob was looking forward to spending a relaxing Christmas Day with Joan and their family including their two beautiful grandchildren, but unfortunately he had a heart attack just before Christmas and spent the day in Maclean Hospital instead. I'm pleased to say he has recovered fully, and he and Joan have recently been on a Bill Peach tour of northern Australia.

Antonio Salvadori of Canada has retired recently from work at Guelph University and is looking forward to spending more time birdwatching. Wife Mary is still teaching at high school and also spends time visiting her mother and other family members in Ireland. Sons Diarmuid and Kevin are both busy in their various fields of work and daughter Marina is now a specialist in childhood infectious diseases. In 1995 she received the "Young Canadian AIDS Researcher of the Year" Award. Marina is married to John, and in March this year they became the proud parents of a son, Aidan Anthony, thus making Antonio and Mary grandparents for the first time. Antonio is still a member of IBOC and hopes to visit us again sometime.

Charles Francis from Canada has started a permanent job working as Senior Scientist for Long Point Bird Observatory and Bird Studies Canada. He will still be spending some time each year in Asia, but he, wife Cecilia and daughter Fiona have now settled into a nice farmhouse out in the country in southern Ontario just north of Long Point on the north shore of Lake Erie, about one hour's drive west of Hamilton. Fiona, who is five, has started school. The whole family is enjoying feeling settled and send their best wishes to their IBOC friends.

Rob, Joan, Antonio and Mary also wish to be remembered to their friends in IBOC.

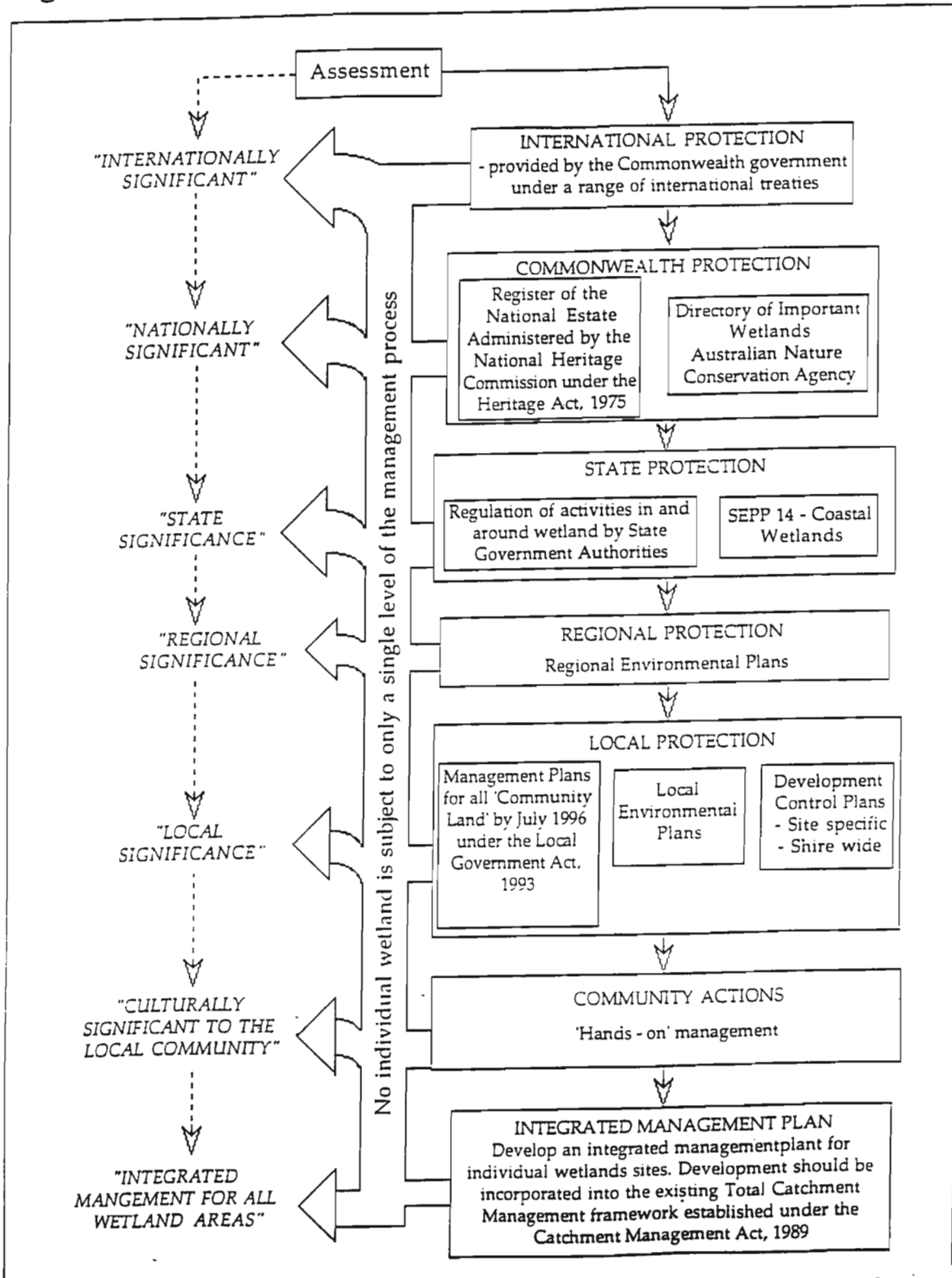
Nola Williams



Urban Wetlands -
Pilot National Estate Protection Study

About a year ago the Total Environment Centre conducted workshops in Newcastle, Windsor, Manly and Wollongong with the Illawarra Catchment Management Committees, local landcare and bush regeneration groups, conservation and natural history societies to find out how they felt wetlands should be identified, rated in importance and who and how should manage these wetlands. The results have been published and are well summarised in the attached figure for an action plan and it is hoped that the enthusiasm shown by the young people conducting the workshop bears fruit in the implementation of these plans. For more details the full report is available from Chris Brandis on request.

Figure 1: An Action Plan for Wetland Protection



Status	Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
U	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	1	24/6	Comerong Island	estuarine	CJC,MR
U	Brown Goshawk	1	05/6	Primbee golf course	woodland	CJC
U	Grey (white) Goshawk	1	23/6	Allans Creek - F6	riparian	CFC
MC	Double-banded Plover	145	24/6	Comerong Island	sand flat	CJC
MC	Double-banded Plover	52	08/7	Windang	sand flat	CJC
MC	Kelp Gull	18	03/7	Budgong wetland	wetland	CJC
U	Topknot Pigeon	30	24/6	Comerong Island	overhead	CJC,MR
R	Barking Owl	1	27/6	Gerringong	garden	JP
U	Azure Kingfisher	1	08/6	Figtree	creek	KZ
U	Azure Kingfisher	1	16/6	Puck ey s Reserve	creek	DW
U	Fuscous Honeyeater	1	05/6	Primbee golf course	woodland	GB
U	Fuscous Honeyeater	1	05/6	Lake Heights	road kill	CJC
S	Scarlet Honeyeater	1	05/6	Primbee golf course	woodland	GB
C	Satin Bowerbird	1	04/6	Primbee	garden	RI
S	Spangle Drongo	1	-/6	Corrimal	garden	PMc
S	Spangled Drongo	2	01/6	Balgownie	garden	PHZ
S	Spangled Drongo	1	02/6	Lake Heights	garden	KC
S	Spangled Drongo	1	05/6	Primbee golf course	woodland	GB
S	Spangled Drongo	1	09/6	Figtree	garden	JZ
S	Beautiful Firetail	1	17/3	Maddens Plain	heath	DW

GB - Graham Barwell; CB - Chris Brandis; CJC - Chris Chafer; KC - Kerry Chafer; BH - Brian & Barbara Hales; PHZ - P.Hazelwood; RI - Ron Imisides; PM - Paul McDonald; PMc - Peg McKinlay; JP - Joy Parker; MR - Mark Robinson; DW - David Winterbottom; JZ - Joan Zealey; KZ - Kirsty Zealey

Comment: Not many records for this winter period though Joy Parker's Barking Owl is certainly an unusual find. Recent surveys in the lower Shoalhaven gorge and floodplain have shown this species to be more numerous than previously thought. The Fuscous Honeyeater from Lake Heights is a first for that suburb. Drongos continue to be observed through the region. Budgong wetland at Berkeley has become a favoured roosting spot for Kelp Gull over the past couple of months. Also at this wetland and at Griffins Bay, Black-fronted Dotterel have been resident all year with a successful breeding attempt at the latter site. White-fronted Chat are also regularly observed here - both sites are well worth a visit. Another first for Primbee, this time a Satin Bowerbird bringing Rons garde total to 117 species - not a bad record is it. Double-banded Plover have hit the region this year with the largest numbers recorded for several years.

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TWITCHATHON

LAST WEEKEND IN OCTOBER

Advance warning that the RAOU Twitchathon is on again this year at the end of BIRD WEEK. Start organising your team, think about a novel name and start thinking about some good SPONSORS. Barren Grounds Bird Observatory will be the main beneficiary of the Twitchathon this year, so your efforts will be going to a good local cause. More information at the next meeting and in the next newsletter.

Jack Baker

I.B.O.C. NEWS



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"

Issue No. 194

September 1996

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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 9 September** at the **Fairy Meadow Community Centre**, corner of Cambridge Avenue and Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow, commencing at **7.30 p.m.** The meeting will be addressed by **David Siems**. David was introduced to serious birdwatching ten years ago and now readily admits to being well and truly addicted. Armed with his camera and as much reading material as he can lay his hands on, he travels constantly in search of birds. Tonight David will share with us his experience of "**Birding in South Africa**", which will include the Kruger National Park, the Natal Coast and the Drakensburg Mountains. This promises to be a very interesting evening.

Next Outing: will be on **Saturday 14 September** (not Sunday 15 as per the February programme). It will be to **Bundanon Properties** on the Shoalhaven River, Nowra. The Sydney FOC will be camped on Riversdale property and we have been invited to visit, so it was decided to make this our monthly outing. Travelling from Wollongong to Nowra, turn right into Illaroo Road which is the road immediately before crossing the bridge (the northern side of the river). We will meet in Illaroo Road at the first convenient, safe location at **8.30 a.m.** Please be prompt as we will then drive further on into the property. Bring your eats and drinks for the day.

Next Committee Meeting: will be held on **Tuesday 17 September** at the home of **Horrie Ward**, starting at **7.30 p.m.**

October Activities: Camp at Tuena - please see page 2 for details and a map.
Please note that there will be no meeting, outing or newsletter in October.

Early Warning: The November outing will now take place on Sunday 17th.

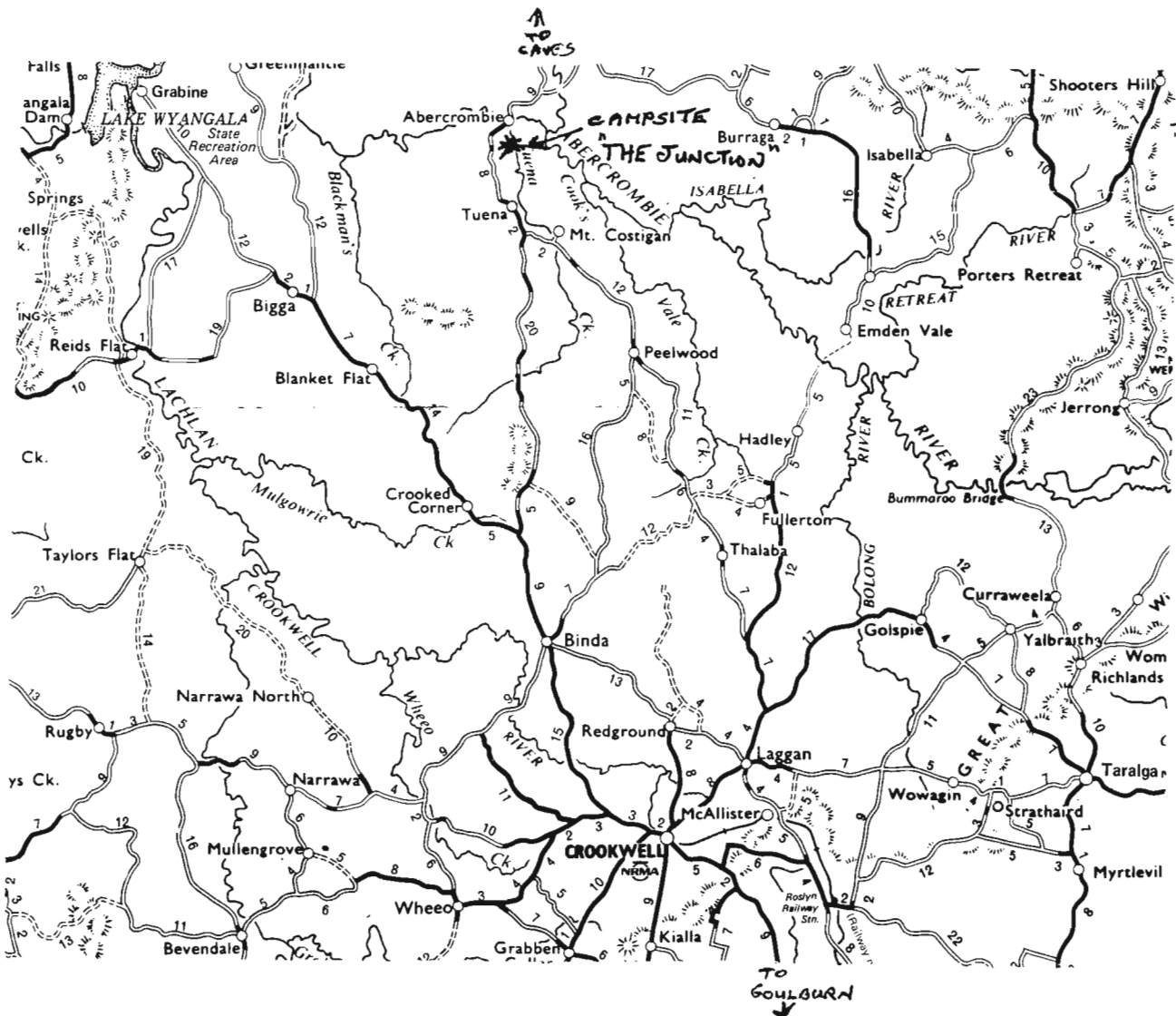
Please remember to bring your mug and a plate of supper on meeting nights.





Tuena Camp 19th to 26th October

This years camp is to be held at "The Junction" beside Tuena Creek on the property of Mr. Ron & Mrs. Beryl Glasson. There will be the usual first class I.B.O.C. camp facilities and for those not wishing to camp there may be room available at the Goldfields Inn at Tuena. The easiest route to the property is via Goulburn and Crookwell, Tuena being 60 km north of Crookwell through Binda and the campsite approx. 6 km north of Tuena. Petrol and supplies are available in Tuena. Historic Tuena was put on the map when gold was discovered there in 1851 and it was officially named in 1859. Education was offered to miners children in 1860 and the Parson family have run the general store since that year too. Although the police station was completed in 1900, police were assigned to "keep law and order" in 1852. This is an interesting area for buildings and birds and Abercrombie Caves are only 20 km away. Day or weekend visitors to camp are welcome. Camp fees are \$5 per adult. Please phone Barbara or Brian Hales, 574431, if you intend going to the camp to have your name added to the list especially if you require accommodation at the hotel as we like to have some idea of how many people will be attending. Day visitors should be in camp by 8.30 am if they wish to join in the walk. Bring your own drinking water and sense of humour. Watch out for the usual I.B.O.C. signs when approaching the property.



AUGUST MONTHLY MEETING

The speaker for the evening was Pam Robinson who told us of her most recent visit to Lord Howe Island, just after some severe storms that caused flooding and much damage to the Island's property. Some of the slides showed brooding black clouds hanging over Mt Gower with rain storms surrounded by rainbows, in contrast to the bright blue skies when the IBOCers visited. With quite a mild climate and a substantial annual rainfall, the Island has some endemic birds and many plants and although it's a part of NSW, the plants are more related to those of New Zealand. An exception is the Wedding Lily that can be found only in southern Africa and on Lord Howe Island and nowhere else in between. Originating as an old volcanic mountain that is gradually weathering into the sea the Island is about 11 kilometres long and about 2 Km wide at the most. At one end are two mountains, Mt Gower being the steeper and quite a challenge to climb, using locals as guides. When first discovered the birds had never seen man and, being so easily caught, within a few years 9 out of the 15 were extinct. The pigs, goats and rats that were released or jumped ship put pressure on the remainder and it was only the very steep slopes of Mt Gower that protected a remnant population of the endemic woodhen to be discovered, captively bred and successfully re-introduced to the lowlands. Now the pigs are gone, goats almost removed, and rats under control but mice have become the latest pest, with Masked Owls and Blackbirds also adding to the pressure on the native birds.

The island is also the breeding place for many seabirds such as the magnificent Red-tailed Tropicbirds, White Terns, Providence Petrels, Masked Boobies, Sooty Terns, Blackwinged Petrels and Wedge-tailed Shearwaters to name a few. The 300 residents and the 300 tourists spend a quiet life living on the Island using pushbikes for transport, the restaurant circuit for entertainment, having a thoroughly relaxing time. Pam also showed some of the IBOC visit slides with some younger faces of old friends to be seen but none of them climbed Mt Gower, therefore no certificate. Pam also had some mementos from the home of the Kentia Palm and recommended the Island for birdwatchers who wanted to see something different and have a relaxing time.

Brian Hales, one of the IBOCers who visited Lord Howe in such good weather, gave the vote of thanks from us all for a most interesting talk on a part of NSW that many of us have not yet visited.

Chris Brandis

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OUTING TO MCPHAILS FIRETRAIL

The August outing was attended by 16 members, meeting at the Bendeela Pondage car park adjacent to the Kangaroo Valley Pumping and Power Station on a clear sunny morning with a strong cold southwesterly wind blowing. The day's outing began with a car shuffle to take us all to the start of the walk, leaving some of the cars at the pondage. It was a one way walk through some very beautiful bushland in Morton National Park. We began the walk at the top of Barrengarry Mountain along an access road which went over a plateau, the vegetation of which was dry sclerophyll forest. The trees here were not large but still beautiful, especially the silver-barked eucalypts which stood out brightly against the dark trunks and foliage of the other trees around them. Wattle trees through the area and along the roadside gave some lovely splashes of golden colour which brightened up the landscape. This part was an easy level walk which ran beside a water channel which formed part of the water scheme there. When it ended a huge pipe led off down the mountain. The birds were few, and as the cold wind swept across the area they kept a low profile - the Yellow-faced Honeyeater was one of these, heard more often than sighted, like the Eastern Spinebill

which was seen a number of times darting from one place to another, then out of sight. A party of Superb Fairy-wrens was observed making its way through a patch of bush. The White-throated Treecreeper was heard frequently but was hard to see, also the Australian Raven, Brown Thornbill, Spotted Pardalote, Satin Bowerbird and Brown-headed Honeyeater were observed.

Soon after the end of the water channel the trail began to fall away into a steady decline until we came to McPhails Firetrail. The vegetation changed to a taller and healthier looking forest. We turned off the access road and followed McPhails Firetrail which led along the side of a valley with a dry creek bed along it. We were walking along in a most delightful forest with quite tall eucalypts and a rainforest undergrowth, with a lot of regrowth in it. There was evidence that timber cutters had been at work in days gone by, as there were many large diameter stumps remaining. The forest had regenerated well. Some of the birds recorded there were Red-browed Treecreeper, Crescent Honeyeater, Eastern Whipbird, Lewin's Honeyeater, Olive-backed Oriole and Australian King Parrot.

At about 1 p.m. we came to a small clearing where we had lunch and a short rest, then started out on the afternoon walk along the trail which continued on through a lovely sclerophyll forest with tall straight eucalypts. The trail rose up sharply for a while over a hill, then began a steady descent for a while before the really steep section to the valley below. The hillside was so steep that the trail zigzagged all the way down to the floor of the valley where it joined a trafficable road to the power station. Along the valley we recorded Welcome Swallow, Noisy Friarbird, White-faced Heron, Magpie and Jacky Winter. The last couple of kilometres were through open farmland with some old eucalypts lining the road, and a couple of patches of forest. When we arrived back at the pondage there were about 15 Hoary-headed Grebe the. For the day we recorded 41 species.

Special thanks to Chris Chafer for organising and leading such a beautiful walk (and wearing some of us out so thoroughly).

Horrie Ward

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AUSTRALIAN BEACHWATCH

Between November 9 and 17 the Australian Waders Study Group, with all the NSW bird clubs, is attempting to survey all the beaches in NSW and Victoria and as many in S.A., W.A. and Tasmania as possible to determine the status of shorebirds such as the Hooded Plover, Pied Oystercatcher and Little Tern as well as any migratory waders using the area. IBOC has been allocated the beaches from Stanwell Park to Crookhaven Heads and we need a least 7 people to walk the 35 or so beaches once and record t. shorebirds using them. Some of the long beaches would be best surveyed by teams with one walking or riding a bike and the other driving to the other end of the beach to pick up. The count can be done on any day but the 9th or 10th are preferred as the tides should be low at midday. So if you can help please give me a ring before September 20 so that any extra resources may be conscripted from the FOC, CBOC or COG to ensure the data collected are as complete as possible.

Many thanks.

Chris Brandis

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HOLIDAY BIRDING IN THE DEEP NORTH

Unable to wait or organise ourselves well enough to join the Cape York expeditioners, our little family group hit the tourist trail for Cairns and vicinity. Our only concessions to "roughing it" were binoculars, bird books and walking shoes - it was 5-star champagne on the deck and barramundi à la carte morning, noon and night in chic Palm Cove.

But we did see some birds. We could hardly move for White-breasted Woodswallows, Magpie-larks, Rainbow Bee-eaters, and Spangled Drongos. Around Palm Cove Mistletoebirds were plentiful, as were Thick-knees, Rainbow Lorikeets, Orange-footed Scrubfowl, Figbirds (yellow version), friarbirds, sunbirds and Forest Kingfishers. The local Sea-Eagle commands the Buchan's Point communications tower and all below it but last year's Osprey was absent from the golf course.

Above the cut cane fields and below the Skyway to Kuranda we saw Brahminy Kites and at Kuranda's Birdworld aviary birdwatching was made easy especially if one wanted to view macaws, Eclectus Parrots and some fancy-looking imported ducks.

At the Botanical Gardens the Black Butcherbird gave us a song and some Green Pygmy-geese did a paddle under the eye of a Great Egret. At the mangrove boardwalk the crabs and mosquitoes had driven off almost every bird - or perhaps it was jet fumes and noise.

We spent an extremely wet day driving southwest to Undarra lava tubes but did not see a Blue-winged Kookaburra. Black Kites, a flock of Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos, Red-winged Parrots, a Pied Butcherbird, Blue-faced Honeyeaters and a Cockatiel were seen when the rain dried up near Undarra, and the odd Torresian Crow and Magpie made appearances at this isolated but fascinating location. An overnight stay would be very rewarding.

There were lots of flowers and insects even in far north Queensland's excuse for winter, so there were lots of honeyeaters and flycatchers on show. The Yellow, Yellow-spotted, Macleay's, White-throated, White-naped, Brown, Dusky and Lewin's Honeyeaters were all seen. The Spectacled Monarch, Grey, Rufous and Northern Fantails, Willy Wagtail plus the Leaden and Shining Flycatchers were common on the coast and ranges.

Other interesting sightings included Squatter Pigeon (Tinnaroo Dam), Dollarbird, Yellow Oriole, Emerald Ground Dove, Chestnut-breasted Mannikin, Brush Turkey and Scaly-breasted Lorikeet (Cairns - Palm Cove).

If you are heading in that direction we recommend the Cairns Botanical Gardens-Centenary Lakes complex, Mossman Gorge, Mount Molloy and Tinnaroo Dam as well as Undarra, but any edge of the rainforest or change of vegetation should prove rewarding.

Ian McKinlay

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BARREN GROUNDS NATURE RESERVE GROUND PARROT CENSUS 1996

More than 100 'beaters' turned up for this years ground parrot census and in typical style the Wardens turned on perfect weather. More than 30 of the beaters were from the University of Wollongong and it was fabulous to have this level of local support. All of the bird clubs were represented and many thanks to those who came along and to those who convinced them it was a good idea. The Illawarra Bird Observers Club was represented by their fearless President, Brian Hales. Brian said that Barbara ("the wife") held him up a bit during the census. This was fortunate because Brian looked fit to drop. To quote Brian, "You don't get many people coming back to do this again, do you".

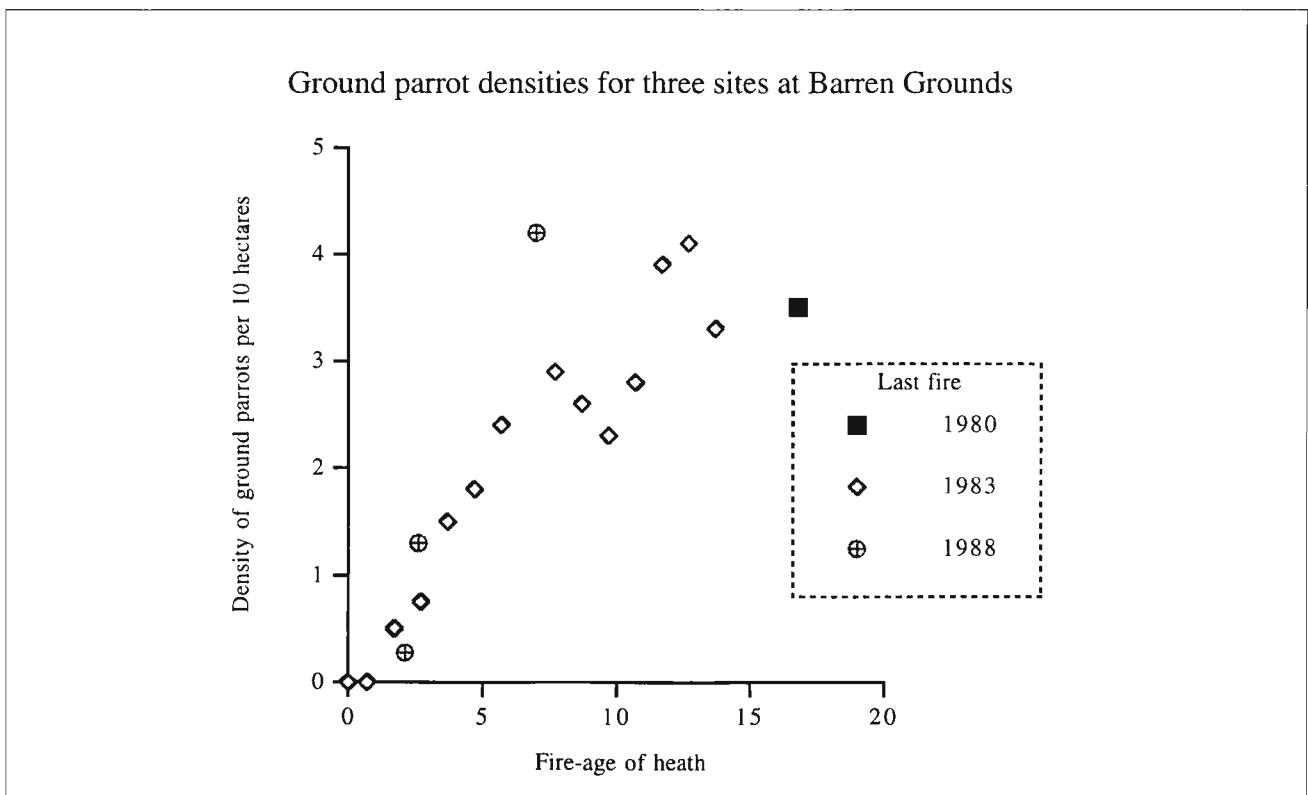
We had so many beaters that we decided to census two areas. In the usual 80 hectare census area, Redbank Gully (last burnt in 1983), we started with at least 75 beaters. A total of 26 ground parrots were counted with a further 28 sightings which were considered to be recounts. Raoul lead a smaller group of 22 beaters through a 20 hectare area of old heath (last burnt in 1980) to the west of the Illawarra Lookout. This is the first time this heath has been censused. They counted 7 ground parrots with a further 6 recounts. These results are graphed below together with results from a third census area which is located in heath which was last burnt in 1988.

An added treat was that Mark Clayton (CSIRO Canberra) and his merry band of banders netted a ground parrot after the census and an appreciative crowd were able to see and photograph this magnificent animal 'in the hand'. To quote Brian Hales again, "a truly beautiful bird".

To the conundrum of ground parrots and fire we have added further fuel. The relationship between the amount of time since fire (fire-age) in a heathland and the density of ground parrots is an important management consideration. The Barren Grounds Bird Observatory-based research continues to be an important determinant in the fire-management prescription for the ground parrot.

Advance notice. Quick get out the diary.

1997 ground parrot census 9am Sunday 10 August 1997



Jack Baker

UPCOMING COURSES AT BARREN GROUNDS

Agile Arachnids 6 - 8 September

Graham Wishart, an Associate of the Australian Museum in Arachnology and an expert in trapdoor spiders, will fill the weekend with spider facts and details.

Bushwalking the Grounds 27 - 30 September (Sat, Sun, Mon)

Join the wardens and some local historians to learn about the history of the reserve and explore Drawing Room Rocks, the old Timber Trail and Flying Fox Pass.

Australian Mammal Fauna 4 - 6 October

Join the wardens in this weekend of walks, talks, spotlighting and trapping. Hopefully the following mammals will be seen: gliders, antechinus, bandicoots, possums, and even (with a bit of luck) a pygmy possum, quoll or potaroo!

Bird Songs 11 - 13 October

Jim Dixon will help sort out the confusion with bird calls and help you identify the bird from its call. He will be looking at alarm, territorial and mating calls.

Form and Function of Birds 1 - 3 November

Bill Buttemer and Walter Boles will look at the biological significance of structural differences in birds, using museum specimens and live birds.

Slithers and Croaks 8 - 10 November

Ken Griffiths will be helping you look for lizards and snakes in the sun, and by night you will be searching froggy haunts for noisy amphibians. This weekend is always popular. Book early!

Cost for all courses \$140 (RAOU & BGF \$130)

The Barren Grounds Nature Study Centre is almost finished. There are some small painting jobs to do and some cleaning up, if anyone can spare some time. The Centre will be officially opened October 26, just before the Twitchathon starts. When the centre is open we will need volunteers to man it on weekends. We already have some but would welcome more (probably for only one weekend per year). If anyone is interested please see me at the meeting. Chris Brandis has already kindly volunteered and helped paint the roof of the centre. Thanks, Chris!!

Sue Proust

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CAPE YORK REPORT

Monday, 1st July, dawned bright and sunny as we set off on our Queensland adventure. Driving across the Great Northern Highway toward Penrith, misty scenes of cattle standing around dams created a good start for our travels. The sun had disappeared and the cold set in by the time we reached Orange and we sat in Cook Park eating our lunch warmed by the company of our friends Neil and Sue Skinner and their Japanese student Asha. The group met up at the caravan park at Wellington, eager to enjoy the experiences and birds that were in store.

Leaving the following morning a lady spoke to us over the UHF radio telling us the highlights of the area and also her concerns about the invasion of English Blackbirds and the devastation they are causing to her vegetable garden in Wellington. The scenery to Bourke amazed us as the countryside was very green with pools of water everywhere. That night we sat around a campfire accompanied by a couple from Toowoomb Bay and, after a short discussion, it was discovered that the lady, Caroline, and I are both members of the NSW Embroiderers Guild and had spent 12 months of classes in 1990 sitting next to each other at Concord West - it's a small world! We went for a short walk next morning with Caroline and her husband and saw Red-capped Robins and a Crested Bellbird sitting high in a dead tree singing loudly.

We stayed at 9 Mile Bore, west of Cunnamulla for 2 nights, always a good birding spot, and here we all saw the Hall's Babbler for the first time, which caused great excitement! For those birds heading that way, the birds were seen on the left hand side of the road to Eulo, between power poles 271 and 272 and they also had nests in the area.

We were programmed to stay at a rest area near Augathella but at Charleville Bob learnt of a good camping spot by the Warrego River which was where we stayed. Within a very short space of time we saw a large flock of Plum-headed Finches along with many other species of birds. Laurie drooled over the White Cedar trees growing wild nearby and at night we had a campfire under millions of stars. However, it rained overnight and we were camped on black soil so there was a slippery exit in the rain the next morning - all the vehicles required some help to get out - even the Subaru!!

Driving toward Tambo the first Bustards were seen but Dave, Laurie and I had to drive many more miles before we saw these birds. The sun was shining brightly on a magnificent display of banners when we drove into Barcaldine and I couldn't wait to find out more about them. It seems that a banner making workshop was held in the town with the aid of a government grant and sponsorship from local businesses and groups. The banners are only displayed in the winter months, even so some have deteriorated and have been renewed by lady from Winton. They depict local scenes, animals and birds of the area and the Girl Guide group sponsored a banner featuring a Cockatiel.

The Drive into Winton was in stark contrast to the area around Bourke as the country is extremely dry with sheep in the paddocks in poor condition. We stayed in a caravan park at Winton which gave us an opportunity to use the washing machines and also to do a trip to Lark Quarry, 200 km return, to view evidence of a Dinosaur stampede 100 million years ago, which is very well protected by the National Park in a specially constructed shed. There is a great sense of pride in the town of Winton, which celebrated its centenary in 1995, and an interesting monument has been built to Banjo Patterson on an island in the centre of the main street.

The following day we saw our first Budgerigars and we had lunch at Combo Waterhole which, local folklore claims, was the inspiration for the writing of the Australian song "Waltzing Matilda". We spent the night at Cloncurry and stocked up on food at the well equipped supermarket before heading north into new country for the majority of the group. We camped beside Leichhardt River on our way across from Burke and Wills Roadhouse to Lawn Hill National Park, a great place to camp and a river we saw and also camped beside closer to The Gulf. We woke to the call of the Barking Owl and many other birds, a beautiful place to wake up!

The following morning we left the bitumen road and travelled on unsealed roads for many days, some rough or corrugated and dusty, creating a few problems and making us appreciate the sealed roads we have at home. Morning tea was enjoyed beside the clear running water of the Gregory River watching the Crimson Finches coming to drink and also carrying nesting material into the Pandanus and, much to my delight, we also saw Purple-crowned Fairy-wrens.

Camp for the next four nights was at Adels Grove, where the postman only calls on Wednesday, 10 km east of Lawn Hill National Park. Lawn Hill Creek flows through both areas and we enjoyed wandering by the creek watching many White-browed Robins and a Johnson Crocodile sunning itself on a log. We made two day trips into the N.P. where the Bloodwoods were flowering and alive with many species of birds. We walked the tracks there, amazed at the beautiful oasis in a very dry part of our country. Waterlilies bloomed on the creek and some of our group hired canoes and enjoyed drifting along in the water watching the Archer Fish and Catfish and the Spinifex Pigeons coming down to drink. We met a lady from Tasmania travelling with her husband painting the wildflowers they saw on their travels. We admired the stars at night and the Milky Way stretching across the sky.

We moved on toward Burketown staying on a 256,000 hectare cattle station in the Gulf Savannah named Escott Lodge, which has a small area set aside for campers and where there are huge white trunked eucalypt trees in the camping area and a bistro where we enjoyed Barramundi and chips for dinner. The Barking Owl flew into a tree beside the open bistro area just on dusk and we later saw a pair flying around. We walked to Horseshoe Lagoon in the morning and saw a large variety of birds and also wild pigs.

Travelling east from Burketown bird watchers are welcome to stay on an 800 sq. mile cattle property named Armraynald where we camped beside a waterlily lagoon and enjoyed the most incredible sunrises which inspired Wal to write a poem. We spent a day visiting other big lagoons and a much wider Leichhardt River and we saw an incredible number of birds, including the Black-necked Stork and our first Bustards, adding many new species to our list. Peter Bastian, manager of the property, came to our campfire giving us a great deal of information about the property which runs 30,000 head of Brahman cattle that are exported live to Asia through Karumba and Darwin harbours. On leaving Armraynald about 50 Flock Pigeons flew overhead to farewell us.

We then camped at Leichhardt Falls, a very rocky, hot area with big pools of water but none coming over the falls. We sat beside the van eating our dinner, watching the sunset reflecting in the water, silhouetting the trees. Karumba was our next camping spot and we travelled past lots of termite mounds, flowering Kapok trees and Savannah Grassland to get there. We stopped at the Burke and Wills Monument just outside Normanton to pause and marvel at the

strength of the early explorers, especially those men who were there in the Australian summer.

We drove across the Karumba Plains where Brolgas were grazing with cattle and arrived at Karumba in time to set up camp & drive to Karumba Point to see the sun set into the Gulf of Carpentaria and watch the sky change colour in the afterglow. We enjoyed a 2 hour boat trip on the Norman River seeing the mighty prawn boats at rest and gliding past the mangroves to see White-breasted Whistlers and other mangrove birds we had seen in Broome and never thought we'd see again. We went for a trip on the Gulflander train at Normanton, a 2 hour bumpy trip back in time and some of our group had the chance to play train driver for a short time. We met a young man from Switzerland who was cycling his way around Australia, he had travelled 14,000 km in 5 months from Sydney to Melbourne via the Snowy Mountains, Adelaide, Ayers Rock, Darwin and he was on his way to Cairns. Oh, to be as energetic as him! We camped at Little River on our way east for 2 days and enjoyed some easy bird watching as it was rather warm there.

We drove from Little River to a lagoon 20 km west of Georgetown, crossing the causeway of the very wide, sandy and 99% dry Gilbert River and, as it was only a 77 km drive to the lagoon, we arrived in time for morning tea and decided to stay the night which gave us plenty of time to have a look around the area. It had been a lovely sunrise with patches of cloud in the sky but as the day progressed the cloud became heavier and threatened rain. As we drove into the area, designated as a picnic area, with a large, brick smelter chimney, fenced off and showing signs of early gold mining, we were welcomed by a large flock of wood-swallows circling in the air and coming to feed on the red flowers of native Bauhinia trees, before rising into the air and moving away like a cloud, constantly returning to the trees again. Four species of wood-swallows were there, Masked, Black-faced, White-browed and White-breasted all in together, a magnificent sight!

We parked the van near a lagoon, a creek that had been dammed up in earlier times, and sat nearby to have morning tea and later our lunch, watching the activity on the water and feeling the magic of it all. About 20 Little Black Cormorants were swimming along in unison diving in and out of the water similar to the penguins that you see on a TV documentary, sometimes accompanied by a pelican and at other times by a Little Egret frantically running beside them on the edge of the water, hoping for some pickings of whatever food they stirred up. Darters were lazily sitting on posts with their wings stretched out to dry occasionally accompanied by the brilliant blue and white Forest Kingfisher if there was an empty post. Black-winged Stilts fed in the shallow water continually disturbing 3 Common Greenshanks and moving them enough for us to see their white rumps and fanned tails as they settled down to feed again. A Comb-crested Jacana and Black-fronted Dotterels were busily foraging for food while a pair of Sarus Cranes wandered along and a Straw-necked Ibis fed on the grass close by. A Great and an Intermediate Egret fed in a much more stately manner than their smaller cousin, a Royal Spoonbill used his own style for feeding and a White-necked and White-faced Heron were there too. Several Magpie Larks fluttered around and our constant companion Willie Wagtail darted here and there.

In the dry grass nearby finches moved about well disguised until they flew to the waters edge for a drink, Double-barred, Zebra, Masked and our first Black-throated Finches for the trip. Black and Whistling Kites patrolled the whole area from above. A little further out in the dry paddocks we saw Sittellas - race Striata - pretty little birds, black and white striped, the male with a black head and female with her black cap, their yellow beak and legs very prominent,

while further on the Brown Treecreeper was seen and a Squatter pigeon wandered by in the grass.

A flock of very yellow thornbills flew in and on closer investigation they proved to be Yellow-rumped Thornbills so bright against the darker colours of the earth and trees and yet they very quickly blended into the scene. There was further evidence of mining, even a white peg announcing a claim as recent as 1985, it made us wonder how many feet had trodden over this earth before ours, humans, animals and birds - we were such a small part of this whole scene!

There were 2 man made dams nearby, on one a lonely duck and a solitary waterlily flowering on the other, obviously this water was of not much interest to the birds but there for the cattle to drink although they also seemed to prefer the lagoon, some going up to their bellies in the water. The rain that had threatened all day finally fell about 5 PM and a flock of Crested Pigeons flew in lying on their side on the earth near the water and holding up a wing to let the raindrops cool their body then changing their position to the other side. Slowly all the life around settled down for the night.

Early the following morning the sky was clear, the morning star shone brightly as colour came into the sky reflecting in the water below. The ducks and grebe that had swum around the previous day ducking their heads or whole bodies into the water, started to stir and move, the roosting birds flew back to the lagoon to resume their quest for food, a bustard flew across the sky, the sun came up and another day had dawned.

Then it was out to Undarra Lava Tubes camping for the last time in the Gulf Savannah & going on a tour of the lava tubes which were formed 190,000 years ago when Undara Volcano erupted. Our trip took us then to the Atherton Tablelands - a whole new scene and in such contrast to where we had been for the last month. We camped in the State Forest beside Tinaroo Falls Dam by the beautiful rain forest and we watched the full moon rise over the water. We went on the forest drive to the Cathedral Figtree, its long strangler roots reaching down to the earth. We saw the Musky Rat Kangaroo feeding nearby, a daytime feeder, in contrast to the Long-nosed Bandicoot we had seen the night before while we were sitting around the camp fire.

Laurie and I drove to Irvinebank, west of Atherton, to have a look at the little tin mining town where my father was born in 1904 when there were 3,000 people living in the area, 4 hotels and 4 churches and where the children were taught to pray "God bless John Moffat", the owner of the mine. Dad lived with his parents at nearby Stannary Hills and we saw photos in the museum of houses and the railway there in those days. All that is left of Stannary Hills is an old cemetery but they are still mining tin at Irvinebank and there is one hotel there now and many less people.

As we drove through the hills from Herberton we marvelled at our forefathers who lived and worked there at the turn of the century. Tomorrow we drive to Cairns, some of our group will be leaving us and others from the Bird Club will join us on Saturday for our 3 week trip to "The Cape" - another exciting adventure. As a group we have seen 306 species of birds so far, seen some hard and interesting parts of our country and shared wonderful friendship and deem ourselves very fortunate.

Nola & Laurie Williams.

Status	Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
R	Grey-headed Albatross	1	23/7	off Wollongong	pelagic	AW
R	Westland Petrel	1	28/7	off Wollongong	pelagic	PH
R	White-chinned Petrel	1	28/7	off Wollongong	pelagic	PH
R	Brown Booby	1	17/7	Port Kembla	harbour	DWi
C	White-faced Heron	35+	7/7	Jamberoo	rural	GE
U	Yellow-billed Spoonbill	4	29/7	Comerong Island	wetland	CJC
U	Australian Shoveller	8	17/7	Tallawarra Ash Pond	wetland	KM
U	Australian Shoveller	3	20/7	Swan Lake	estuary	KM
R	Osprey	1	17/7	Tallawarra Ash Pond	overhead	KM
U	Brown Falcon	1	16/7	Swamp Rd., Jamberoo	on fence	DG
U	Grey (white) Goshawk	2	06/7	Marshall Mount	rural	AK
S	Little Eagle	1	07/7	Blackbutt Reserve	overhead	CB
S	Little Eagle	2	08/7	Windang Island	overhead	JW
R	Hooded Plover	2	21/7	Berrara	estuary	KM
U	Black-fronted Dotterel	1	31/7	TomThumb lagoon	wetland	GMcC
C	Masked Lapwing	nest	27/7	Wollongong CBD	commercial	NMcK
R	Glossy Black Cockatoo	1	20/7	Cudmirrah	forest	KM
R	Long-billed Corella	9	11/7	Coledale	urban	GB
R	Red-rumped Parrot	1	17/7	Tallawarra Ash Pond	rural	KM
R	Peaceful Dove	2	13/7	Flat Rock (w of Nowra)	woodland	DWr
S	White-headed Pigeon	1	01/7	Bulli	rainforest	RT
R	Powerful Owl	1	13/2	Bangalee	forest	DWr
U	Azure Kingfisher	1	-/7	Currambeen Creek	riparian	SP
U	Tawny Frogmouth	1	01/7	Balgownie	urban	RMc
U	Tawny Frogmouth	3	07/7	Mt. Ousley	urban	LP
U	Southern Emu-wren	few	22/7	Puckies Reserve	sedgeland	DWi
U	Southern Emu-wren	5	06/7	Hyams Beach, Jervis Bay	heath	DWr
S	Scarlet Honeyeater	1	21/7	Comerong Island	forest	SP
U	Spotted Quail-thrush	6	24/7	Palmer Creek fire trail	woodland	DWr
MC	Rufous Fantail	1	18/7	Moyean Hill (Berry)	forest	DWr
S	Spangled Drongo	1	23/7	Bass Point	forest	SP
U	Figbird	7	27/7	Primbee	figtree	RI
U	Green Catbird	1	07/7	Coachwood Park	garden	LP
U	Common Blackbird	1	31/7	Bellambi Lagoon	woodland	GB

GB - Graham Barwell; CB - Chris Brandis; CJC - Chris Chafer; DG - Daryl Goldrick; PHa - Phil Hansbrough; PHz - P.Hazelwood; RI - Ron Imisides; AK - Andy Knowlson; GMcC - Gordon McClutchie; NMcK - Neil McKinlay; KM - Kevin Mills; LP - Les Potter; SP - Sue Proust; RT - Roger Truscot; AW - Alex Watson; DWi - David Winterbottom; DWr - Diana Wright; JW - Joan Wylie.

Comment: July was quite a good month for birding. Davids Booby is a most unusual winter record, the few Boobies that have made it this far south are all summer records. Nevertheless the has bird been subsequently observed on several occasions by other observers in the harbour. The Tallawarra Osprey has now been with us for over two years, but is there one or two? Tawny Frogmouths have often been reported from foothill gardens between Kieraville and Bulli over the years, however records from elsewhere are few and far between. Common Blackbirds may have finally got a foothold on the Illawarra coast. There have been several reports in recent months from Bellambi and Puckies. Flocking in White-faced Heron is a periodic event in the Illawarra, probably reflecting breif periods of over-abundant food supply at specific sites. In July I wrote about the Spangled Drongo. Since then there have been a number of further records and research has come up with other sites with other long term repeated observations including Mangerton Park since 1976, Bass Point and Puckies Reserve since 1984 and Lake Heights since 1986. Could these records be also of the same individuals as has occurred at Primbee?, I guess we'll never know for sure. The Rufous Fantail would appear to have overwintered, while the Flat Rock - Bamerang area is one of the few coastal places where you can find Peaceful Dove. Finally the Lapwing nest is unusual because it was on a roof top!

I.B.O.C. NEWS



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"

Issue No. 196

December 1996

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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, 9th December**, at the **Fairy Meadow Community Centre**, corner of **Cambridge Avenue** and **Princes Highway, Fairy Meadow**, commencing at **7.30 p.m.** This will be our very informal Christmas meeting and members are asked to participate in the programme, especially in the fashion parade, so dig out those bird related T shirts or ~~clo~~thing to be in the running for those special prizes. If you would like to sing, dance, recite, act or entertain your fellow members in any way contact The Hales for a place in the programme, all offerings gratefully received, please put on your thinking caps. Please bring a plate of supper to share afterwards and also your cup or mug.

NEXT FIELD OUTING: takes place **Saturday, 7th December**, and this year we are going to the **Barren Grounds Reserve** meeting in the car park at **4 p.m.** Please note that this outing takes place **BEFORE** the next meeting. We will do a short walk in the area and then have a picnic/barbecue, so bring along your eats and drinks and good cheer. This will be followed by a slide show and hopefully spotlighting after dark with the wardens.

**Seasons
Greetings**

1996 Annual General Meeting

The AGM was attended by 46 members and Laurie Williams declared all the office bearing positions vacant and called for nominations for the positions of :-

President : - Brian Hales only - nominated by B Wilson, seconded by H Ward, accepted and carried.

Vice President : - no nominations received.

Secretary : - Chris Brandis only - nominated by H Ward, seconded by B Ward, accepted and carried.

Treasurer : - Bronwyn Wilson only - nominated from the floor by B Gibson, seconded by P McKinlay, accepted and carried.

Committee members :- Horace Ward - nominated from the floor by B Hales, seconded by C Chafer, accepted and carried. Esme Gay - nominated from the floor by M Eskdale, seconded by O Rodwell, accepted and carried. Robyn Wilson - nominated from the floor by H Ward, seconded by E Gay, accepted and carried. Olive Rodwell - nominated from the floor by P McKinlay, seconded by T Wiley, accepted and carried.

Laurie Williams proposed a vote of thanks to the 1996 Office Bearers for the work carried out over the year and urged members to actively participate in the running of the Club.

Kevin McGregor conducted the vote for the Special Resolution as stated in the May News Letter that :

5.(c) be changed from **“Family membership carries an entitlement to one vote.”** To **“Family membership carries an entitlement to one vote each by up to two members of the family over the age of eighteen years and recorded in the membership register.”**
2 proxies received. Carried 38 for and nil against.

The Financial Statement for the period 1 July 1995 to the 30 June 1996 was tabled by Bronwyn Wilson and copies are available on request.

November Monthly Meeting

The speaker for the evening was fellow member Joan Zealy who had lived for 3 years in Hawaii and told us of some of the natural history of the Hawaiian Islands with impeccable pronunciation of the Hawaiian names used. The Islands are a chain of volcanic mountain peaks that are slowly sinking into the ocean but maintained above sea level by either volcanic action in the south or by the growth of coral and stretch in a line over about 1500 miles.

Joan described the various types of lava and volcanic formations with the aid of excellent slides with the night shots very spectacular. The volcanic mountains in the southern main island are so large that they even deflect cyclones away and create extremes in weather conditions from a desert on one side to lush tropical fern forest on the other where the rain shapes the land and has even created Hawaii's own “Grand Canyon”. The high mountains rise into the jet stream with the occasional snow falling and where observatories monitor the worlds green house gasses.

The arrival of plants and insects on to the bare volcanic rocks were described but how the original birds, that eventually evolved into a number of species similar to Darwin's finches of the Galapagos, got to the Islands is still a mystery. A number of waders regularly migrate to the Islands and a Canada type goose arrived from America and changed considerably the thousands of years of isolation. Man brought mosquitoes in 1828 that carried avian malaria which has virtually wiped out the native birds up to 3,000 feet and their places have been taken by the many introduced species such as Indian Mynas, Spotted Doves and House Sparrows as well as animals such as Cane Toads and the Indian Mongoose, cattle and goats to put pressure on the fragile environment that had never needed to develop protection for survival. There are many sea birds, especially away from the bigger inhabited islands, including the rare Laysan Albatross, and fish abound in the tropical waters making Hawaii a fascinating place to visit once you are away from the cities and the famous beaches.

The vote of thanks was given by Brian Hales on behalf of us all for an insight into a Hawaii that the travel brochures do not cover.

Chris Brandis

TUENA CAMP 19 - 26 OCTOBER

The Tuena camp was attended by 33 members, including 5 children - it is very good to see young people being introduced to the things of nature. It was another great camp in every respect; even the weather favoured us all week with calm, sunny conditions, except for one short shower on Saturday night just before the campfire was about to be lit. With the campsite only 10 km from Tuena, where there was a comfortable country-style pub with an owner very anxious to please the patrons, 7 members were able to join the campers on outings and around the campfire.

The property which we visited, "The Junction", is owned by Mrs. & Mr. Glasson, to whom we are indebted and thankful for the privilege of being allowed to camp there. It is a large property on Tuena Creek which flows eventually into the Abercrombie River near the Abercrombie Caves. On the property Tuena Creek is lined with large casuarinas which attract many birds and the whole area is beautiful but very hilly. "The Junction" grazes sheep and was covered in lush green grass at the time we were there, with scattered eucalypts and some tree communities on the hills away from the creek.

Memories bring to mind the campfires at night, a pleasant way to wind down as the group meets to discuss the day's events and go through the bird sightings. At this camp we were entertained by the sounds of the night: a Masked Lapwing calling occasionally to make its presence known, frogs croaking in the nearby dam and the distant bleating of sheep.

The activities began on Saturday afternoon, with a walk along the farm road through grassland to an area which had been selected for the campsite but had to be abandoned when rain fell a couple of days earlier and Tuena Creek broke its banks, flooding the area where Tom and Joan were already camped. They had to retreat hastily to higher ground but not before their smaller items were lost down the creek. A familiar bird club story! The debris in the trees afterwards showed that the level was up at least 5 metres - an incredible amount of water coming down the creek. The flood waters went through Forbes a few days later. Returning to the walk, we went back along the creek which by then had fallen a couple of feet, but the water was very muddy. We walked through the casuarinas for a while then joined the road and returned to the campsite. The afternoon produced a total of 34 species, some of which were the Grey Fantail, Mistletoebird, Sacred Kingfisher, White-throated Gerygone, Eastern Yellow Robin, Dollarbird, White-faced Heron and Peaceful dove.

Sunday: we drove to Abercrombie Caves, about 20 km north of the camp. The sky clouded over for a while, then the sun came out for the rest of the day. From the parking area we followed the road along a deep gorge with Grove Creek flowing through it. After we crossed the creek the sides of the gorge became vertical and very colourful with the colours of pink, grey and cream. The track became narrow, winding up the gorge and steep in parts as we began the walk up the Mount Gray Track. Here the vegetation was mostly stunted eucalypts on rocky terrain with little ground cover except for some small blue and yellow flowers. The rough track ended at a lookout, overlooking a valley with hilltops on the distance. We rested for a while and had morning tea then returned along the same track to the car park where we had lunch. Our next stop was Grove Creek Falls - a Wildlife Refuge in a beautiful area of eucalypts and Cypress pine. From the car park a track led down to the falls which were spectacular as the white water tumbled over a rocky cliff, dropping some 40 metres - a great sight with that volume of water cascading over from the swollen creek. In this area we were hoping to see a Flame Robin, but, alas, it didn't show up. In all we had a wonderful day, observing Crimson and Eastern Rosellas, Dusky Woodswallow, Laughing Kookaburra, Weebill, Shining Bronze-Cuckoo, White-winged Chough and Leaden Flycatcher.

Monday: We drove via Bigga to the Grabine State Recreation Area, on the shore of Wyangala Dam, through open country and past some forested hills. Most of the roads in the area are dirt where shinglebacks and other lizards love to sunbake and warm themselves - we stopped twice to move them off the road. The scenery was just great all through the area, passing through tall forests and open country. We came to the Lachlan River and followed it for some time until it became lost in the waters of Wyangala Lake. We arrived at the caravan and picnic area where we had lunch; a great spot with tables and large trees for shade, a good grass cover over the area and a view over the large expanse of water where Australian Pelican, Little Black Cormorant and White Ibis were observed. After lunch we had a walk through the area with its beautiful flowering eucalypts, the trees attracting many honeyeaters including White-plumed and Yellow-faced, Noisy Miner and Noisy Friarbird which was the most common honeyeater recorded through the week. Little Lorikeets were active in the flowering gums. At one stop on the way back we observed Southern Whiteface, European Goldfinch and White-winged Chough.

Tuesday: We visited "Wren's Nest", the property of Jim and Marie Hearn who are the fifth generation on the property which was settled in 1886. The beautiful garden attracted a lot of birds as well as native bees hovering and darting about. Yellow and Brown Thornbills, Grey Fantail, Superb Fairy-wren and Silvereye were observed in the garden and a Brown Falcon was sighted in the gully behind the house where Back Creek flows. We moved then to Wrens Nest Creek,

a few km south along Junction Point Road where we walked along the creek through a gully with stringybarks, weeping willows and wattles; all along the creek banks were blackberries which were planted there years ago with the idea of stopping erosion. On the hillside away from the creek the dry rocky ground was covered with a variety of eucalypts, predominantly stringybark. At the start of the walk were the remains of the early settlers' dwelling made of wattle and daub (a common building material in those days), built in 1886. The walk along the creek was a pleasant one and we often heard the calls of the Yellow-faced Honeyeater and the Rufous Whistler. We had lunch at a spot where Wrens Nest Creek joins Neggerty Creek, a quiet place where we found some shade in the warmth of the day. Along the creek we recorded Silvereye, Brown Thornbill, Spotted Pardalote, Golden Whistler and Mistletoebird.

Wednesday: We visited another property, owned by Mal McKenzie, which was a short distance along Peelwood Road. When we arrived there we found that the recent flood had built up a quantity of debris against the gate and this had to be removed before the gate could be opened. Once we got through the gate we followed a track above Back Creek which led through a lush, green grazing area with scattered eucalypts. The weather was sunny and calm, a lovely day to enjoy peaceful surroundings. The walk lasted for a couple of hours with some of the group walking back higher up the hillside where there were a few more trees. The walk produced 17 species some of which were Willie Wagtail, Noisy Friarbird, Grey Fantail, Laughing Kookaburra, White-faced Heron, Brown Falcon and Australian Hobby. We then visited another property closer to Tuena which was a great spot to have lunch, being on a bend in Tuena Creek with tall casuarinas decorating its banks. The birds fluttering through the foliage, their songs accompanying the rippling of the swollen waters of the creek, gave great delight to us as we sat on the stony bank to have our lunch, hoping for a flash of blue of an Azure Kingfisher but no bird. After lunch we drove to Trunkey Creek, a little town 25 km north of Tuena on a dusty dirt road through grazing land and forest. At Trunkey we had some refreshment as it was quite warm when we arrived there. After a look around we set off back to camp, stopping at Abercrombie Nature Reserve which was an area of beautiful tall eucalypts; there we recorded Wood Duck, Grey Butcherbird, Crimson Rosella, Grey Shrike-thrush, Striated Pardalote and White-throated Gerygone.

Thursday: We were favoured with another cloudless sky. It was a free day so we could take it easy. A few of us went along the creek to a quiet spot and spent some time under the casuarinas, sitting and watching birds as they moved past. We watched a water dragon on a log on the opposite bank as it sunned itself then slowly moved off, it was about 60 cm long. Some interesting sightings were Rufous Whistler, Varied Sitella, Scarlet Honeyeater and Olive-backed Oriole.

Friday: This was an interesting day: we drove out along Peelwood Road, south-east of Tuena for about 25 km and turned off to Kangaloolah and a property owned by Beryl and Allan Ducksbury located on Peelwood Creek. The vegetation there is a mixture of open grazing land and dry sclerophyll forest. Beryl is a sister of our member June Potter. We were shown a lovely spot where we could have lunch. The area around there was also lush, green pasture when we visited it. We could walk in any direction from where we stopped so we started off up a gully where, among many bird calls coming from the trees, we could hear Rufous Whistler, Fan-tailed Cuckoo, Noisy Friarbird, Shining Bronze-Cuckoo and Grey Fantail. We followed a dry vreek bed into a forest of eucalypts, scribbly gum, stringybark and wattles, with very little ground cover. There we observed Buff-rumped, Brown and Yellow Thornbills, White-eared Honeyeaters and Pied Currawong. We had a walk along the road overlooking Peelwood Creek and on the top side was a woodland covering the hill and this was the only place we sighted the Scarlet Robin. We moved along to the border of the forest and grassland, a couple of km back along the road, where a bird was seen flying past. As we searched for it Red-browed Finch and Leaden Flycatcher were observed. The last diversion was to "Rockdale", a property a few km north of Tuena. It was grazing property and had the highest elevation of our trip. The farm road rose 120 metres in a distance of 1.5 km. The view was magnificent from the high spot, looking over the distant ranges. The last campfire was held that night, bringing our camp to a close. After Barbara read out the bird sightings, the total came to 96 species for the week.

Cattle Egrets in camp on Saturday brought the total to 97.

Horrie Ward.

For various reasons this newsletter was compiled, edited and printed earlier than usual and at short notice so there may be errors and/or omissions, for which I apologise, and hopefully they will be rectified by your regular editor, Robyn Wilson, in the January edition.

Barbara Hales.

10th FEBRUARY, 1997. This will be the **TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY** of the formation of the **ILLAWARRA BIRD OBSERVERS CLUB**. Please attend if you can and as we expect higher numbers for this night it would be helpful if you could phone (042) 574431 (or any committee member) to let us know if you intend joining us for this extra special meeting.

CAPE YORK REPORT

Hello, here we are again with our third newsletter to you for our Queensland trip and before I go too far I must tell you a bit more about our stay in Cooktown. While we were there 68 off road BMW motorbikes, riders and some pillion passengers arrived as an extension to the trip to Cairns by 400 BMW roadbikes and riders who were enjoying Cairns while waiting for the return of the 68 off road bikes from Cooktown. They were taking part in a rally which started on the Gold Coast, however, one rider had come from Western Australia to participate. Most of the off road bikers had breakfast at the guest house where we were staying and the arrival of these bikes and people caused quite a stir in sleepy Cooktown.

On our return to Cairns we said goodbye to several of our friends leaving a small group of 7 to continue our travels. We all had general housekeeping duties to perform after our 3 weeks in The Cape but Laurie and I did find time to drive to Kuranda to visit the Butterfly Farm which was a highlight for us. We were given a guided tour of the very large aviary where several species of butterflies were living amid the greenery and then we were taken into the museum where Australian butterflies and moths are displayed along with several species of both from around the world. We were then at liberty to go back into the aviary to take photos and to spend as much time as we liked to look at these beautiful creatures. Ulysses Butterflies were flitting nervously around, flashing their brilliant blue and black wings while the slower Cairns Birdwings were gliding around among the several other species, each in their own way beautiful. We have been fortunate to see hundreds of lovely butterflies on our travels.

On our way north to Cape Kimberley we stopped at Port Douglas by the beach for morning tea. We sat beside a lovely little white weatherboard church with a sign saying it was built in 1880, destroyed by a cyclone and rebuilt in 1911, relocated in 1988 and restored in 1989. The church has a large window overlooking the sea and is now a popular venue for weddings. We continued north, crossing the Daintree River by ferry to our campsite in the rain forest at Club Daintree. A short walk from camp and we were standing on the beach where we would see the Low Isles with the lighthouse flashing its warning to passing ships. The sand sparkled with flecks of mica and the rocks were many fascinating and different colours. We watched a young Osprey being fed by its parents on a branch and Dave saw a Cassowary while we were there. We went for a trip to the little town of Daintree and visited a woodwork shop and museum with beautifully crafted wooden articles which were admired by us all.

We drove up river for a few km to the start of the CREB track to Cooktown, a road we had travelled on our return to Cairns 14 years ago but it was closed. We walked in Mossman Gorge through beautiful rain forest and called into Bouncing Stone Beach on our way back to camp. Another day we went on Chris Darhlbergs bird watching cruise on the Daintree River, a great experience. We saw the rare Great-billed Heron building a nest and a Wompoo Pigeon sitting on her very flimsy nest as well as many other species of birds. We also saw 3 saltwater crocodiles, a green tree snake and an Amethystine Python in the 2 hours we cruised the river, a very worthwhile morning. We called into Chris' home in Daintree and saw a beautiful Little Kingfisher flitting around by the pool in his garden. We enjoyed a delicious lunch at High Falls Farm near Miallo which promotes the tropical fruit they grow and we enjoyed our first taste of Plantain, a type of banana, grilled with bacon and cheese and also boiled and served as a type of potato salad - followed by the most delicious fresh tropical fruit salad we have ever tasted and served by a very entertaining young waitress.

We stayed at Kingfisher Park at Julatten, a caravan park well known and catering only for bird watchers. Spot lighting at night we saw a Lesser Sooty Owl bringing food to its young in the nest and saw a young Barn Owl calling loudly to be fed. We saw the Barking Owl during the day. We spent a day at nearby Mt. Lewis and caught up with the Eastern Spinebill, a bird we have visiting our gardens at home. We sat quietly in the bush watching the male Golden Bowerbird decorating its bower with lichen to attract his lady, a special experience. We saw the Tooth-billed Bowerbird and Mountain Thornbill, adding 2 more birds to our life list.

We then said goodbye to Jim and Gwen who left to make their way home to Wollongong while Dave, Bob, Lydia, Laurie and I drove to Chuillagoe passing tobacco, mango and sugar plantations on the way. We stopped for lunch beside a dam at what used to be the mining town of Koorboora where my dad went to school in 1911. Earlier enquiries we had made at Irvinebank told us that there was nothing left of Koorboora although we were given the location of the cemetery when we made further enquiries at Chillagoe. It is rather eerie and strange standing in a place where people used to live and work and now there is no sign of such activity - another ghost town in the history of our country and there are many. We enjoyed our stay in Chillagoe - such a contrast to the lush rain forest country we have spent so much time wandering in northern Queensland.

Chillagoe and the surrounding area is very dry, with a lot of rocky limestone outcrops and caves. We visited some of the caves and were fascinated by the formations and we drove further west to Walsh River which was almost dry and hot with the sun reflecting off the rocky river bottom but even in that harsh, hot environment we found some birds. There are the remains of old smelters at Chillagoe and the population is on the increase as gold and marble are being mined and exported. Nearby Almaden is a small town but the residents are unhappy as the railway line and local post office have recently been closed.

We drove through beautiful scenery from Mareeba to Atherton and on to Palmerston N.P. with Queensland's tallest mountains Bellenden Kerr and Bartle Frere dominating the skyline for a long way. We camped at Henrietta Creek in beautiful rain forest and although some of the walking tracks have been closed the 5 km return walk to Nandraya Falls was fabulous! We took our time wandering quietly along the track being rewarded with sightings of new birds for us all and enjoyed the walk so much we did part of it again the next day to have a better look at the Fernwrens and Superb Fruit Doves. We also saw Platypus and Musky Rat Kangaroos during our stay. We drove to some of the other waterfalls in the area and saw a Barred Cuckoo Shrike sitting quietly in a rain forest tree with the lovely Bridal Veil Orchids flowering above him at Zillie Falls.

We drove down the Palmerston Highway past sugar cane and tea plantations to spend some time at Etty Bay where the rain forest meets the sea. We spent a day travelling north to The Boulders where the clear waters of Babinda Creek flow over huge granite rocks and once more saw the beautiful Ulysses Butterfly. On the way to the Eubenangee Swamp where we saw a lot of water birds including the majestic Black-necked Stork, we saw a pair of Pacific Bazas flying high in the sky and displaying by almost clapping their wings above their heads. Bob and Dave felt the day was complete when we had tea at their favourite restaurant, McDonalds at Innisfail.

The next day we headed south to Mission Beach, caught a water taxi to Dunk Island and did the walk to the lookout on Mt. Kootaloo stopping to talk to 2 young ladies from Switzerland and finally eating our lunch looking at the breathtaking scenery in the company of 2 ladies from England and a family from Victoria. Back at Mission Beach we went on the Lacey Creek walk and just missed seeing a Cassowary by a minute or so according to some Dutch people we met. However our day was complete when we saw a Cassowary crossing the road in front of our car on our return to camp - there's a lot of luck in bird watching!

We then stayed in Murray Falls State Forest, a lovely area south of Tully. On the boardwalk to the bottom of the falls we saw a Noisy Pitta on our walk through rain forest to the top. At night we had 2 Lesser Sooty Owls in the camping area. Travelling on we stopped by the beach at Cardwell and watched 2 little sharks swimming along by the shore while we admired the view to the Hinchinbrook Islands. We had then planned to stay at the Crystal Creek NP south of Ingham but the NP people have had trouble with vandalism in the area and we had to get a key to the gates of the park either at Ingham or Townsville which we had to return to the same office which was rather difficult. The Uniting Church have a camping ground nearby which was a better option so we camped there.

Our stay was very exciting as we saw 2 Noisy Pittas and a pair of Rufous Owls in the rain forest between the camp and Crystal Creek and we were able to give the manager a list of 62 species of birds we saw during our stay. Laurie and Dave enjoyed a swim in the creek while I watched several Dusky Honeyeaters feeding in the red flowering callistemons. It was quite warm and the mosquitoes were out in big numbers. We spent a day travelling up Mt. Spec to Paluma, stopping at Little Crystal Creek for a cuppa and driving up to the mountain looking for and finding the termite mound the Buff-breasted Paradise Kingfisher is known to nest in every year. We would love to have seen the birds but they don't come down from New Guinea until the end of October.

Ivy Cottage at Paluma is one of the highlights of our trip as we enjoyed Devonshire Tea on the veranda with the birds. Female riflebirds and Macleays Honeyeaters joined us and shared our jam and cream, we had 20 Macleays Honeyeaters at once sitting watching us and the cameras were clicking! There is great concern about the newly arrived Papaya Fruit Fly up north and there is a fruit and vegetable inspection point north of Townsville so as we had eaten all our fresh fruit and vegetables at Crystal Creek our first stop at Townsville was to buy fresh supplies. We stayed at Bowling Green Bay NP just south of Townsville and caught up with Ron and Rita Imisides who were heading north to The Cape hoping to see some of the summer migrant birds. There were several species of wallabies and some possums in the camping ground and we had a possum on the roof of our van during the night. We also saw a small snake in the creek, a huge eel and several tiny black frogs only about 1 cm in length and also lots of Mosquitoes.

We spent a day in Townsville visiting The Common and seeing Brolgas, a Bustard and several other birds - 62 species in all. The country is very dry as there hasn't been any good rain for 5 years. On our way back to camp we spent some time at the marina watching a yacht being lowered into the water and then we had an enjoyable

meal at Sizzlers. We arrived back at the NP after 6.30 when the gates are locked but we were able to get a key from the resident ranger. I was sitting by the van next day when a pair of Yellow-breasted Sunbirds flew in, the male landing beside me on the arm of Laurie's chair while the female sat on the rope of the awning - they are beautiful little birds and I felt very privileged to share their company for a few precious minutes.

We passed more sugar cane plantations on our way to Airlie Beach and set up camp in Flametree Caravan Park, a very nice park with lovely tropical gardens. A pair of Bush Stone Curlews were resting in the shade of a garden opposite our vans and a Buff-banded Rail had a wonderful time under the sprinkler of the hose while we were there. The park backs onto an airport where small planes and helicopters take off on trips to the Whitsunday Islands so the men in our party enjoyed watching the action. We did a walk in nearby Conway NP, watched the boats at Shute Harbour and admired the view from the hill overlooking the Whitsunday Islands. We went on a boat trip around the Whitsundays, stopping on Hamilton Island for lunch after a short bus trip of the island. I was surprised to find that there is a school there with 46 children, 2 teachers and 2 teachers aids. The older children attend high school on the mainland travelling each day by boat. We had afternoon tea on Daydream Island before travelling back to Airlie Beach - another lovely day.

Laurie and I visited Cape Hillsborough, just north of Mackay, 14 years ago and we enjoyed our couple of days there this time just as much. We saw hundreds of butterflies on our walk on the Andrews Point track. We stopped at several lookouts, one aptly named Turtle Lookout where we were able to see several turtles swimming. At low tide we walked across the spit to Wedge Island and were able to see the native orchids flowering on Orchid Rock. We walked to Hidden Valley where we were frustrated by the calls of the pigeons in trees high above our heads, so high we couldn't see the birds. Later back at camp Lydia found the beautiful Rose-crowned Fruit Dove feeding quietly in the trees. We got up early one morning and watched the sun rise over the ocean and the kangaroos came down to the waters edge.

We then drove into busy Mackay and along the Pioneer Valley to Eungella 680 m above sea level. As the NP camping ground was booked out due to the Queensland school holidays we stayed at Eungella Holiday Park which is at the head of the valley with an incredible view back to Mackay over 70 km away. We also watched the sun rise there one morning, quite a lovely sight and at night we had a full moon. We went for a walk in the Eungella NP where we saw 2 Green Tree Snakes, several platypus and a Brush Turkey chasing a very large goanna. We searched the rain forest for the Eungella Honeyeater but it wasn't until nearly the end of our stay that we saw 3 of these birds feeding in the red flowers of the creeping Pandanus Vine. They are described as having a bubbling, laughing whistle and we heard their call and saw the birds for quite a while which was very exciting as it was a new bird for all of us and is only found at Eungella. We also saw the brilliant black and gold Regent Bowerbird, a pair of beautifully coloured Superb Fruit Doves and several Topknot Pigeons and on dusk watched hundreds of Fruit Bats flying overhead.

We then travelled nearly 1000 km in 3 days stopping overnight in roadside rest areas at St. Lawrence and Gin Gin. Unfortunately we drove through Rockhampton and bypassed Maryborough and Bundaberg, places we would have liked to spend time but hopefully we'll come back one day and explore these areas. Our destination was Kenilworth SDtate Forest where we spent 3 nights in a lovely camping ground. We did some of the walks through Eucalypt, Hoop Pine and rain forest and also a Piccabeen Palm Grove and once more we saw some lovely birds including the Wompoo and Wonga Pigeons. We went on the 37 km forest drive through a variety of habitats and as we were walking back from Booloumba Falls we got caught in the rain and got rather wet, we'd left our rain coats in the car! That evening we had a storm with heavy rain which caused the tent campers quite a bit of concern.

We woke the next day and heard the best dawn chorus of our trip, the sun was shining, the sky was blue and everyone had the chance to dry out. Our walk through the forest was made even more memorable as the mosses and lichen had come to life after the refreshing rain and the birds were plentiful and very active.

Then we drove across to the coast once more to stay in a lovely caravan park at Tewantin and prepare for our trip to Fraser Island. Life was much more busy than in the peaceful countryside of Kenilworth. In the Noosa area there were people and vehicles everywhere, some busy with their daily work and others on holiday like us. As it was both Queensland and N.S.W. school holidays there were even more people around and yet in all this activity as Laurie and I drove down the road to the Noosa NP parking area the traffic both ways came to an abrupt halt to allow a koala to run along the road in front of our car and finally cross the road. We walked along the track beside the ocean and were amazed at the number of people using the area and as we walked we watched whales playing in the water. On our way back to the car we saw another koala walking along the track and finally climb a tree.

Then it was time for our Fraser Island adventure. We travelled with Peter and Yvonne Wadley on their Fraser Island Discovery Tour, a very well organised 3 day trip to the most sought after beauty spots on this magnificent island. We were picked up outside our caravan park at 9 am and after a morning tea stop we crossed the Noosa River by ferry driving 65 km along Cooloola Beach past cliffs with coloured sand and the wreck of the vessel Cherry Venture while we saw dolphins and whales swimming in the ocean. We stopped at Rainbow Beach for lunch and then crossed to the island by another ferry and drove along an old mining road and then along the beach once more in the company of many other 4WD vehicles.

We stopped at the Eurong Information Centre where Peter showed us a relief map of the island pointing out places we were to visit in the next two days. We finally arrived at Cathedral Beach where Peter and Yvonne have a permanent camp site with tents and eating facilities. On Saturday we set off at 7.45 am in the Isuzu Bus for a day of adventure exploring the largest sand island in the world. We visited the Pinnacles, a cliff built of cream and golden sand and read the cultural sign of the Aboriginal story of the coloured sands and nearly saw the rusting Mahene shipwrecked in 1935.

We visited Lake Wabby and Lake McKenzie, 2 of the many beautiful fresh water lakes on the island, both very different and where some of our party enjoyed a swim. In the rain forest we walked beside the clear water of Wanggoolba Creek which runs soundlessly over pure white sand and we saw an Angiopterio (King) Fern growing in the creek. This fern only grows in two other places, Carnarvon Gorge and Mt. Lewis. Sunday we drove north of Cathedral Beach to Indian Head and onto the Champagne Pools and while some people had a swim in these beautiful rock pools we admired the magnificent scenery, great stretches of sand and beautifully coloured ocean with dozens of terns, Brown Boobies and Lesser Frigatebird circling over the water in search of food.

We also spent time at Eli Creek, the largest fresh water creek on the island flowing into the Pacific Ocean where people were floating along in the flow of clear, shallow water. We were amazed at the enormous number of people camping on the island with their 4WD vehicles, fishing these waters. We didn't get a lot of opportunity to bird watch but did see about 50 species of birds on the trip in the 660 km we travelled. There is so much interesting history, geography and beautiful scenery involved with the island it is not possible for me to pass it all on to you - you really need to go and participate in the Fraser Island experience for yourself and we have no qualms in recommending Peter and Yvonne of Fraser Island Discovery Tours.

Well it is nearly time to say goodbye, in another 10 days we will be home which is very hard to believe. We plan to visit the craft shops at Malaney and Montville, the Glasshouse Mountains and also spend some time in the Bunya Mountains on our way. Australia is such a vast and diverse country and we have spent the last 3.5 months in a very small part of it. What a wonderful time we've had in the company of some very special people. group sightings 384 our bird sightings 320.

Nola & Laurie Williams

FRECKLED DUCKS

During our recent trip to Queensland we stayed on the property known as Armraynald, 41 km east of Burketown. On 19th July, we drove 8 km north of the homestead to a lake (17 degrees 52'S/139 degrees 44'E) where we saw 40+ Freckled Ducks swimming in the water, which we considered an unusual sighting for the area. This lake is approximately 27 km S/E of Burketown as the Freckled Ducks fly.

Nola Williams & Dave Thomson

SCRUB ITCH MITES!!!

Tiny juvenile scrub-itch mites bite humans, their favourite holds are skin folds and areas constricted by clothing such as waistbands. They live on the ground and in dry logs, so use a ground sheet. If bitten, remove mites with head lice treatment and wash all clothing. Adult scrub ticks are more serious as a deeding female's toxin can cause fatal paralysis. Avoid walking and camping in thick undergrowth. When bitten an itchy, raised, crater-like swelling occurs, often followed by a headache and numbness or pain in the affected area. Kill the tick by applying insecticide or alcohol.



SAVANNAH SUNRISE

Slowly the black turns to shadings of grey,
The dark night gently yields, to the dawn of the day,
Mist clings to the water in a filmy wisp,
A breeze lightly stirs, the air is crisp.
Air currents caress the flowering lilies, beneath the low bank of
Then gently lift the veil of the gossamer shroud. (cloud
Soft mauve rosy hues are the first sign of light,
The dawn is the victor, it has vanquished the night.

A lead grey band of cloud, still hangs low to the east,
Darters dry their wings, after their pre-dawn feast.
Suddenly, shadowy dead trees explode with white,
A thousand Corellas awake from the night.
The leaden cloud transforms to a warm peachy glow,
Reflecting all its beauty on the water below.

Waterfowl silhouettes take on colour and form,
The sun's strengthening rays turn the early chill into warm.
A Magpie Goose swims to the opposite shore,
Passing Green Pygmy Geese, a dozen or more.
Lone Jabiru stalks the shallows in strengthening light,
Its long stilted legs stretching half of its height.

Then a bright golden orb emerges from the dispersing cloud,
The Corella crescendo becomes deafeningly loud,
Geese, duck, cormorant, heron, egret amongst green mirrored trees,
Golden rays reveal all with consummate ease.
Small fish break the glassy water seeking insects for prey,
We have witnessed the birth of our Armraynald day.

WAL EMERY

Status	Species	#	Date	Location	Habitat	Observer
U	Pied Cormorant	6	27/10	Korrongulla Swamp	wetland	BOB
U	Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	07/10	Robertson	overhead	JT
U	Peaceful Dove	1	15/10	South Nowra	dry forest	KM
U	White-headed Pigeon	2	10/11	Kieraville	urban	ME
U	White-headed Pigeon	5	30/10	Bulli Heights	urban	RT
U	Topknot Pigeon	22	08/10	Windang	overhead	CJC
U	Crested Pigeon	2	8/10	Bulli Pass	urban	RM
R	Long-billed Corella	1	10/10	Dalton Pk., Fairy Meadow	parkland	DWi
U	Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	02/10	Curramore	overhead	KM
U	Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	05/10	Bulli Pass	overhead	RM
U	Channel-billed Cuckoo	1	24/10	Wollongong CBD	overhead	KM
U	Common Koel	1	07/10	Bulli Pass	urban	RM
U	Common Koel	1	30/10	Cudmirrah	urban	KM
U	Common Koel	1	12/10	Kieraville	urban	EG
R	White-throated Nightjar	1	14/10	Jamberoo Pass	road	RJ
U	Chestnut-rumped Heathwren	2	09/10	10B track, O'Hares Creek	woodland	KM
U	Scarlet Honeyeater	1	23/10	Nth Wollongong	(not given)	JT
U	White-plumed Honeyeater	5	05/10	Kemblawarra	schoolground	CJC
U	Spotted Quail-thrush	1	09/10	10B track, O'Hares Creek	woodland	KM
U	Leaden Flycatcher	2	13/10	Kieraville	urban	ME
R	White-breasted Woodswallow	1	31/10	North Wollongong	urban	JM
U	White-browed Woodswallow	1	03/10	Duck Creek, Yallah	rural	DG
U	Grey Currawong	1	09/10	Appin Rd.	woodland	KM

CJC - Chris Chafer; ME - Mary Eskdale; EG - Esme Gay; DG - Daryl Goldrick; RJ - Richard Jordan; KM - Kevin Mills; JM - Julie Mitchell; BOB - Bruce O'Brien; JT - J. Taylor; DWi - David Winterbottom.

Comment: September and October 1996 produced two of the most spectacular seabird trips off Wollongong since their inception in 1984 (Brandis et al 1992). Normally unusual seabird records would appear in the column above, however these two trips were so extraordinary I felt they deserved a few extra comments. The September trip reached 29 nautical miles off Wollongong on the MV Sandra-K. Up to 30 Wandering Albatross from several races were observed, probably the best numbers of this endangered fauna for several years. Other highlights included a Royal Albatross, a Grey-headed Albatross, 40+ Cape Petrel, A Westland Petrel and 19 White-fronted Tern. A total of 32 species were observed. In October some 7 genuine rare species were observed. This included a probable Murphy's Petrel (potentially a new bird for Australian if accepted by the RAOU's rarity committee). A Manx Shearwater, an Audubon's Shearwater, a Westland Petrel, a Soft-plumaged Petrel, 2 Cook's Petrels and an unbelievable 55+ Mottled Petrels were also observed amongst the total of 35 species. These trips would appear to be the best trips off Wollongong since the exceptional trips of the mid 1980's (Brandis et al 1992). There is growing evidence that unusual seabird movements are closely linked with the El Nino phenomenon, and can be anticipated when the Southern Oscillation Index is well into the positive range as it is now.

These data were obtained from the BIRDING-AUS discussion digest on the internet, and were reported by Dr. Peter Milburn and Tony Palliser.

Reference

Brandis, C.C.P., Chafer, C.J. & Smith, L.E. 1992. Seabird Observations off Wollongong, NSW 1984-90. Australian Bird Watcher 14, 201-235.