

"To encourage the observation and study of the birds of the Toowoomba area."

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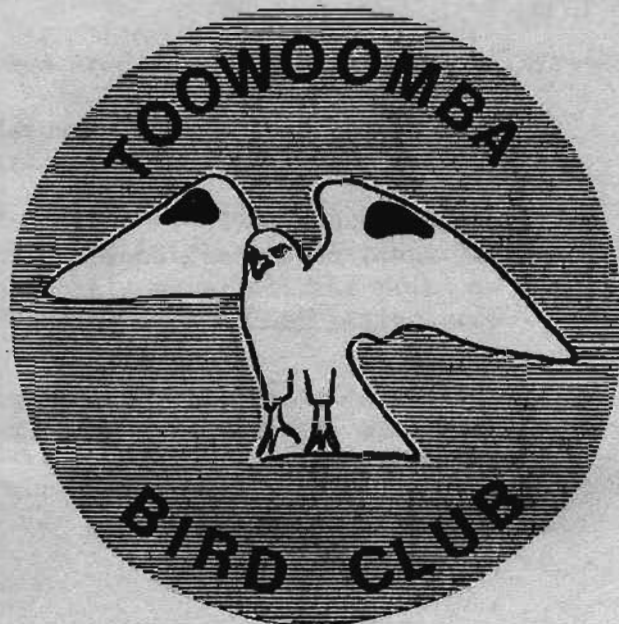
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NEWS-SHEET No. 45 - SEPTEMBER, 1979.

Saturday, October 13th has been set down as the date for the Club's Annual General Meeting. In previous years this took place in the evening but this year it was felt that an afternoon meeting followed by a barbecue would be more suitable to member families. The venue is "Ringmere", Withcott, the home of Bill and Eileen Jolly.

The formal meeting is scheduled for 3pm and should occupy about one hour. The agenda for this meeting appears in this issue, together with nomination forms. Nominations for office must be in the hands of the Secretary by 3pm on the day of the meeting.

"Ringmere" offers plenty of room and activities for children so please feel free to bring them along. Make it a family affair.

The meeting will be followed by the barbecue. This is to be catered on a B.Y.O.G.G. basis but there will be cooking facilities available. We have been fortunate in obtaining some B.B.C. colour nature films for showing after the barbecue. Hope you will be there.

The Club's big day for the year will be Sunday, October 21st, BIRD COUNT DAY. This year's count will be our fourth. Final arrangements for it will be made at the Annual Meeting on the 13th. All members are asked to participate, even if you can only make a half day contribution. Bill Jolly is organising the count this year and is keen to hear from any out of town members who would like to take part. Bird Count - be in it.

Through our arrangement with Reader's Digest we are soon to re-order some copies of Reader's Digest Book of Australian Birds. They are available to members at the discount price of \$21.65 (regular retail \$33.00). If this book isn't on your bookshelf, it ought to be. If you would like a copy contact Bill Jolly, or Mike Russell.

Hope you are planning to join the Club camp-out at Goomburra in November. A camp-out, as distinct from the regular one day Field trips, gives much more scope for early morning and afternoon birding. Check out your duffel and join us in November at Goomburra.

Ill health recently forced one of our staunch members, Ron Wilson, into retirement. Although his busy work load precluded his participation in Field Days Ron has maintained a very keen interest and has been the source of regular monthly checklists. We hope that the ill wind principle applies and that Ron can obtain birding pleasure from his situation.

See you on the 13th.

Ron Hopkinson,  
Editor.

NEW TOOWOOMBA BIRDS.

204. Collared Sparrowhawk. (*Accipiter cirrhocephalus*). 2.8.79. Ocean Street.  
Jim Corbin, Graham Corbin.

Grey back and head - rufous collar - heavily mottled breast - bright yellow legs - long square tail with slight notch.

205. Australasian Shoveller (*Anas rhynchotis*). 26.8.79. Hood's Property, Helidon.  
Ron Hopkinson, David Newlands.

A pair of this species alighted on the water of the property dam while the Club was there on a Field Day. The male the more prominent of the two. Yellowish orange legs and feet - distinctive white flank patch - the large bill and lack of discernible forehead, giving the characteristic flat head look, all contribute to the addition of this uncommon species to the Club list.

TRAIL PARK, FLAGSTONE CREEK.

Twice recently members of this Club have had a confrontation with trail bike riders using Jubilee Park. On both occasions we have insisted on their leaving the area and albeit not without argument, they have done so. It is satisfying therefore, to report that the former Trail Park which is situated off the Flagstone Creek Road has been purchased by:

Senior Constable Mark Dunbar, Northern Territory Police Force, Alice Springs.

He has banned all trail bikes from the area but he is not averse to members of this Club using the area for their birding. He has established certain conditions and though members of this Club would hardly need to be told, for the record they are:

No firearms, dogs, cats or trail bikes.

No fires to be lit.

No litter.

Vehicles to be left outside main entrance.

Visitors restricted to Club members only.

Permission to be obtained from Rod Turner before entry.

Rod Turner is the official caretaker and he has intimated that he will gladly give permission provided members check with him first. The park is to be maintained as a flora and fauna reserve so should in time provide some good birding.

Rod Hobson/Ron Hopkinson.

LOCAL STUDY AREA.

In view of the approaching Bird Count and in response to requests from newer members it seems appropriate to restate the boundaries of the Club's local study area. The area consists of two blocks of 10' latitude and longitude East and West of the line of 152 degrees East longitude. This line passes a little East of Katoomba Point and crosses the Range (Warrego) Highway at the entrance to Yukana Vale Camp. This means that all of Redwood Park is included in the Uprange block. On the Flagstone Creek Road the line crosses at the junction with Blanchview Road.

The Northern boundary of the Uprange block crosses the Crow's Nest Road one kilometre North of the Murphy's Creek turnoff. Morris' Road and Gowrie Junction are just within the area.

The Western boundary line crosses the following roads at the points given. Warrego Highway: immediately East of Gowrie Mtn., (cuts the lower slopes). Cecil Plains Road: One kilometre West of the junction with G'Mara's Road. Pittsworth Road: Immediately West of Bunkers Hill (near Westbrook Training Centre). Wyreema-Umbiram Road: Two kilometres West of Wyreema.

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LOCAL STUDY AREA (cont/d.)

The Southern boundary crosses the Wyreema-Cambooya Road one kilometre South of Wyreema. Drayton Connection Road: One kilometre South of Vale View School. New England Highway: At the point where the Hodgson Vale Road crosses the highway (approximately two kilometres South of Lion's Park).

The only major road leaving the Downrange block is the Warrego Highway.

The Eastern border crosses the highway about three kilometres beyond Dinner Corner at a point where the road and the rail line are closely parallel. The point is marked by a small gravel side track which turns North off the highway and passes under the rail line.

Members wishing to enlarge on this detail are welcome to view the maps held by Bill Jolly and myself. The maps used are the National Topographic Series, scale 1:100 000 available from the Lands Office, Toowoomba.

Ron Hopkinson.

NOTES ON BIRDS OF PREY.

For the last two years our yard has been visited by a Brown Goshawk (*Accipiter fasciatus*), at first in juvenile plumage but gradually changing to adult colouration. The identifying feature, the tail, is semi-circular with no squareness to it at all. Then late on the 2nd of August, a Collared Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter cirrocephalus*) appeared, on a dormant fig tree about 40 metres away. It was perhaps slightly more spindly but when it turned, giving a perfect view of the tail, it was definitely not the Brown Goshawk tail.

This bird's tail was distinctly square; very square corners with a shallow notch in the centre, and could not be confused with the rounded tail of the Goshawk. This was the first time the two of us had the time to get binoculars and see a particularly co-operative bird which could only be a Collared Sparrowhawk.

Graham and Jim Corbin.

RE: BIRDS OF PREY.

A word of explanation is due to members who may have been confused by the choice of vernacular in last month's item "Sorting Them Out - Some Particular Birds of Prey". Having read the drafted item our Editor had asked that R.A.O.U. vernacular be adhered to, but unfortunately in the race to catch a deadline which had already passed this very reasonable request was overlooked, and apologies are tendered to Ron for this oversight.

To clarify matters the appropriate R.A.O.U. vernacular for the four birds in question is shown below with the scientific name alongside.

<u>R.A.O.U. vernacular.</u>	<u>Scientific name.</u>
Brown Goshawk	<i>Accipiter fasciatus</i>
Collared Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter cirrocephalus</i>
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Australian Hobby	<i>Falco longipennis</i>

Eileen Jolly.

CURRAWONG PELLETS.

On Ann Shore's comment re Pied Currawong (*Strepera graculina*) pellets. I read somewhere an article stating many native fruits and the introduced Lantana (*Lantana camara*) have highly toxic seeds yet are eaten by many birds. Two systems of seed disposal are used. The complete seed passes through the digestive system of the bird, such as the Mistletoehird (*Dicaeum hirundinaceum*), which plants the seed in its droppings on a branch.

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CURRAWONG PELLETS (cont/d.)

Alternately the soft fruit is digested but the seed is regurgitated which is the system used by Pied Currawongs, quite often using water to assist in cleansing, much to the annoyance of poultry owners obliged to clean the water supply. Torresian Crows (*Corvus orru*) use the latter method and are common on Lantana in winter when food is scarce, so this may also explain the rapid spread of Lantana.

Jim Corbin.

References: Original notes re Lantana toxins - Courier Mail nature notes (David Fleay).  
Telegraph nature notes by unknown naturalist - late 1978.

SIDE-TRACKING.

I was privileged to spend a few days at the end of August as the guest of the Patterson family on their grazing property "Gamarren", approximately 80 miles from Cunnamulla.

I was hopeful of course during this my first visit to the SW, to secure the odd minute or two in which to meet some of the birds of the Mallee and Mulga country. In the event circumstances were to overtake me speedily from the moment soon after my arrival when Sue Patterson was revealed as an avid and accurate student of her environment in general and of its birds in particular.

A short reconnaissance late that first afternoon served to introduce many of the species of wildlife which share Gamarren's 86,000 acres with the Pattersons. A small copse close to the house is the regular haunt of noisy parties of Yellow-throated Miners, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters and the delicately tinted White-plumed Honeyeater, perhaps the most numerous local passerine. The parrots which gently bounced their way between the trees in groups of twos and threes were not Pale-headed Rosellas but the bright multi-green Mallee Ringneck, while squawking gangs of galahs inevitably extended their protection to a few attendant Pink Cockatoos (the erstwhile Major Mitchell) and instead of Satin or Regent Bowerbirds it was Spotted Bowerbirds who coughed and cursed from the cover of the scattered undergrowth.

The next day's round trip of approximately 180 km to three other properties proved to be a memorable experience, the journey through a wide variety of habitats ranging from open forest to salt-bush plains and claypans being punctuated by incidents such as the close viewing of a Red-backed Kingfisher early in the day, numerous encounters with inquisitive Emus, several eye-to-eye exchanges with large red-phase Brown Falcons, adorning fence-posts, delightful lengthy observations of Hooded and Red-capped Robins, and towards the day's end, my first ever meeting with the beautiful Blue Bonnet, similar in so many respects to our familiar Red-rumped Parrots.

In the duskiness of the final 15 or so kilometres of the drive across Gamarren back to the house my last bird-sighting of the day was to be of a party of ten or so russett and grey White-browed Wood-swallows wheeling over my head as I sought to refasten one of those country gates.

Within a few hundred metres of the house there lies a shallow lagoon fed by a bore drain and much frequented by Black-fronted Dotterels and Black-winged Stilts. It was here just before my departure for home that Sue and I made an unexpected discovery in the shape of two greyish waders with black legs and black decurved bills. In the same way that an acquaintance made briefly at the coast might well pass unrecognised in the contrasting context of Myers, so it took us a little while to accept that we were recording a significant inland occurrence of the Curlew Sandpiper, a bird I have so often encountered on English coastal mudflats and marshes but was in no way prepared to find at Cunnamulla. Not only was Tony Patterson quickly recruited into casting his eye on the birds in question but as I headed homeward Hamish Patterson was making his way speedily towards the lagoon.

My memories of the undeniable beauty to be found in the solitude of the West are many. The perspective of the parallel tracks of a red dirt road disappearing into one-ness with an accompanying row of fence-posts, the line broken only by a pair of

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SIDE-TRACKING (cont/d.)

wandering Emus in the foreground, with a family of kangaroos as red as the soil itself stringing leftwards across the middle distance, served for me as an expression not only of the symmetry of the scene itself but also of the balance between man's intrusion into the environment and nature's adjustments and compensations - a balance which is still to be found at Gamarrren.

I am delighted to be able to report that Sue, Tony and Hamish have joined our club and I don't doubt that members can look forward to learning more of the story of Gamarrren's birds through their bird notes and other contributions.

As an introduction I offer the following list of those species met with over the period 25th-27th August, 1979, either at Gamarrren or close by, which are not represented in our local study area.

- |                       |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Emu                   | White-winged Fairy-wren   |
| Brolga                | Chestnut-rumped Thornbill |
| Curlew Sandpiper      | White-browed Tree-creeper |
| Pink Cockatoo         | Brown Tree-creeper        |
| Red-winged Parrot     | Yellow-throated Miner     |
| Mallee Ringneck       | Singing Honeyeater        |
| Blue Bonnet           | Yellow-plumed Honeyeater  |
| Red-backed Kingfisher | Spotted Bowerbird         |
| Hooded Robin          | Apostlebird.              |

Bill Jolly.

FIELD DAY REPORT - 26.8.79. - HOOD'S PROPERTY, Helidon - GRANTHAM - GATTON.

There is an oft repeated lament among fishermen that no matter when you visit a fishing spot the locals always tell you, "You should have been here last week, they were biting then." The Club could almost have felt that this old saw applied to them when they learned that on the day prior to their visit a Black-necked Stork had been present at Hood's Property. However all was redeemed with the sighting of a pair of Australasian Shoveller. This most uncommon bird has been added to the Club list as a result of the Field Day visit to Hood's Property, Helidon. It is most unfortunate that because of the dispersal of the party at the time more members could not have seen the birds.

This writer would be grateful if any member could supply a proper name for "that body of water on the back road between Grantham and Gatton" (preferably something a wee bit shorter). Whatever its name it produced Pink-eared Duck, which were a first for some members.

From the aforementioned body of water we proceeded to Gatton which has had the grace to name their water bird spot, Apex Lake (cheers for brevity). It was here that the third and fourth highlights of the day appeared. We were treated to a fine close look at a Royal Spoonbill in breeding plumage and an overhead confrontation between an Australian Magpie and a Whistling Kite.

All in all the day was interesting and rewarding, having produced several "firsts" for some members.

Ron Hopkinson.

Species List - Helidon, Grantham, Gatton.

- |                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Australasian Grebe     | Straw-necked Ibis      |
| Australian Pelican     | Royal Spoonbill        |
| Darter                 | Black Swan             |
| Little Black Cormorant | Pacific Black Duck     |
| Little Pied Cormorant  | Grey Teal              |
| Pacific Heron          | Australasian Shoveller |
| White-faced Heron      | Pink-eared Duck        |
| Cattle Egret           | Hardhead               |
| Sacred Ibis            | Maned Duck             |

Species List (cont/d.)

Black-shouldered Kite  
 Whistling Kite  
 Wedge-tailed Eagle  
 Aust. Kestrel  
 Purple Swamphen  
 Eurasian Coot  
 Comb-crested Jacana  
 Masked Lapwing  
 Black-fronted Plover  
 Black-winged Stilt  
 Latham's Snipe  
 Galah  
 Little Lorikeet  
 Pale-headed Rosella  
 Laughing Kookaburra  
 Rainbow Bee-eater  
 White-backed Swallow  
 Welcome Swallow  
 Fairy Martin

Richard's Pipit  
 Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike  
 Willie Wagtail  
 Clamorous Reed-Warbler  
 Golden-headed Cisticola  
 Brown Songlark  
 Yellow-rumped Thornbill  
 Little Friarbird  
 Noisy Miner  
 Striated Pardalote  
 House Sparrow  
 Common Starling  
 Common Mynah  
 Aust. Magpie-lark  
 Grey Butcherbird  
 Pied Butcherbird  
 Aust. Magpie  
 Pied Currawong  
 Torresian Crow.

MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES.

Pink-eared Duck. 19.8.79. Nr. Gatton. REH. RGH. WJ.  
Cotton Pygmy-goose. 6.8.79. Rockhampton. RGH.  
 25.8.79. Haigslea. RGH.  
Black Kite. 20.8.79. Ipswich. EJ. WJ.  
Collared Sparrowhawk. 2.8.79. Ocean St. GC. JEC.  
 (eating N. Miner) 4.8.79. "Baringa", Drayton. MR.  
Pied Oystercatcher. 19.8.79. Yeppoon. RGH.  
Banded Lapwing. 5.8.79. Oakey Airport. GC. JEC.  
 20.8.79. Haigslea. EJ. WJ.  
 26.8.79. Toowoomba Airport. WJ.  
Latham's Snipe. 19.8.79. Hood's Lagoon, Helidon. REH. RGH. WJ.  
 29.8.79. "Baringa", Drayton. ER. MR.  
Curlew Sandpiper. (2 birds) 29.8.79. "Gamarren" via Cunnamulla. WJ. SP. TP.  
Silver Gull. 19.8.79. Apex Lake, Gatton. REH. RGH. WJ.  
Barn Owl. 22.8.79. D.D.I.A.E. WJ.  
Blue-winged Kookaburra. 18.8.79. Cammo Caves. RGH.  
Scarlet Robin. 3.8.79. Girraween Nat. Park. AHS. JS.  
White-eared Honeyeater. 30.8.79. Passchendaele. RGH.  
Diamond Firetail. 30.8.79. Passchendaele. RGH.  
Nutmeg Mannikin. 26.8.79. Geebung. JH.

GC: Graham Corbin. JEC: Jim Corbin. REH: Ron Hopkinson. RGH: Rod Hobson.  
 JH: Julie Howard. EJ: Eileen Jolly. WJ: Bill Jolly. ER: Elizabeth Russell.  
 MR: Mike Russell. SP: Sue Patterson. TP: Tony Patterson. AHS: Ann Shore.  
 JS: John Shore.

FIELD DAY FOR SEPTEMBER.

Date: Sunday, September 16th, 1979. Place: Withcott South.  
 Leader: Mick Dolley. Assembly Point: Pigott's Car Park. Time: 8.15 am  
 depart 8.30 am sharp.

NEW MEMBERS.

The Club is pleased to welcome the following new members:  
 Mrs. J. Bartenstein, Nelson Street, Toowoomba.  
 Cheryl Gooding, 41 Mabel St., Toowoomba.  
 Sue, Tony & Hamish Patterson, "Gamarren", via Cunnamulla.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

The Bird Observer, Aug. 1979./Q.O.S. Newsletter, July 1979.