

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

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#### NEWS-SHEET No. 79 - JULY 1982

As you've all been freezing in a lovely winter 'cold snap' I thought I'd give you some warm words to help you through. Barmy October is not far away and birdos minds may turn to our annual bird census. 'What!' I hear you say, 'Advertising the bird count this early in the year!' Yes, please, please put this date on your calendar so that you can keep it clear and help out at this important time. This year the bird count will be over the weekend of the 23rd and 24th of October. Members, who for many reasons are unable to be more active in our club, often find time to support us at this time of the year. Last year such members as Mrs Bartlett, Shane Brady, Elizabeth and Mike Russell, and Andrew Tan were valuable participants. Every little helps and an extra pair of eyes in a group is most welcome.

Don't forget our film evening this month at the Toowoomba Education Centre. There'll be two or three interesting films and a chance to catch up on some gossip. A good supper is always guaranteed and its not a late night as you well know we birdos have to get up early to scan the skies.

Welcome home to John and Ann Shore from their hectic, but enjoyable trip overseas.

Good birding in Brisbane to Patricia Comerford who, luckily, is only leaving us for three months. Hope you'll be back in time for the bird count Tricia.

Lesley Ball, Editor

--ooOoo--

#### NESTING HABITS

Humans aren't the only ones who have building problems. I have been watching the nesting habits of the Brown Honeyeaters who live in our

NESTING HABITS cont'd

yard. Earlier this year they moved into my bush house, after all no cats or big birds, and the building materials are there paper bark, fibre, spiders' webs and plants.

Some time ago two young were reared in a Tree Begonia. Then I noticed the birds inspecting the Tree Begonias again. It wasn't until the eggs were laid and the hen sitting that I disturbed the hen and found the nest when she flew. She survived the heavy frosts and we were surprised to think she had picked the most protected plant, it had green leaves when all the others were dead.

On July 1st I noticed both eggs had hatched and on July 2nd I went to check and, disaster! One leaf had fallen leaving the nest hanging by one side and the two tiny babies who had been all mouth the day before were tiny cold scraps on the ground. Possibly the movement of the mother leaving or entering the nest had caused the weakened leaf to fall from the stalk.

I haven't seen the parent bird near the nest since, no doubt she will build again soon and I will know, as they are very protective of their young.

Jane Corbin

---ooOoo---

EULOGY OF EULO

Earlier this month, Terry Reis and I headed west for five days and set up camp at 'Goonamurra', just west of Eulo, the property of the Cooney family to whom we are most grateful.

The trip turned out to be an outstanding success and we mutually agreed it was the most thorough bird-watching trip we have undertaken - thorough in the sense that we saw nearly every species we could reasonably expect to see in the area for that time of the year.

Having never been farther west than Dirranbandi, I had been starved of western species and expected to pick up about 15 new species. Jubilantly, I watched my list grow to 26 species - more than I ever expected. Terry was just as pleased with his 9 'newies' when he had not expected more than 3 or 4, having had several trips west before.

It was one of those trips where everything falls naturally into place. Several birds including Hall's Babblers, Bourke's Parrot and Chirruping Wedgebills were located in the same areas Terry had seen them on a previous trip. Many other species were picked up as a result of stopping the car to identify ordinary species. Examples of these opportune stops were for a Rufous Songlark and saw Crimson Chats; a Brown Falcon and saw White-winged Fairy-wrens; a Spotted Bowerbird and in flew a Black Honeyeater beside it.

Two separate sightings of the Black-breasted Buzzard were the highlights of the trip, the second sighting being an excellent view of one over our camp site.

I was most pleased to see the petite Bourke's Parrot land close by as we kept our eye on an occupied Chestnut-crowned Babbler's nest. It was also good to see Budgerigars several times. Don Cooney said they had not been evident for a number of years.

In such a stressed environment it is amazing what a diverse avian

EULOGY OF EULO cont'd

fauna it supports. Yet the 'Mulga Country' can boast a string of species comparable in colours, beauty, camouflage, song, etc. to that of any other habitat, even the complex rainforests of our State.

The Eulo area certainly proved a bird-watcher's Eden and if you can appreciate and accept the superficially uninteresting and uninviting habitats of the drought stricken west you can only be rewarded.

Michael Atzeni

Species list: Toowoomba to/from Eulo

Emu	Red-rumped Parrot
Hoary-headed Grebe	Mulga Parrot
Australian Pelican	Bourke's Parrot
Little Black Cormorant	Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo
Pied Cormorant	Pallid Cuckoo
Pacific Heron	Red-backed Kingfisher
White-faced Heron	Sacred Kingfisher
Sacred Ibis	Welcome Swallow
Straw-necked Ibis	Tree Martin
Yellow-billed Spoonbill	Richard's Pipit
Black Swan	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Pacific Black Duck	Ground Cuckoo-shrike
Grey Teal	White-winged Triller
Australasian Shoveller	Red-capped Robin
Pink-eared Duck	Hooded Robin
Hardhead	Jacky Winter
Maned Duck	Rufous Whistler
Musk Duck	Grey Shrike-thrush
Black-shouldered Kite	Crested Bellbird
Black Kite	Restless Flycatcher
Black-breasted Buzzard	Grey Fantail
Whistling Kite	Willie Wagtail
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Chirruping Wedgebill
Little Eagle	Cinnamon Quail-thrush
Spotted Harrier	Grey-crowned Babbler
Brown Falcon	Hall's Babbler
Kestrel	Chestnut-crowned Babbler
Stubble Quail	Rufous Songlark
Brown Quail	Superb Fairy-wren
Black-tailed Native Hen	Splendid Fairy-wren
Eurasian Coot	Variegated Fairy-wren
Australian Bustard	White-winged Fairy-wren
Masked Lapwing	Speckled Warbler
Banded Lapwing	Weebill
Red-capped Plover	Western Gerygone
Black-fronted Plover	Inland Thornbill
Red-necked Avocet	Chestnut-rumped Thornbill
Silver Gull	Buff-rumped Thornbill
Caspian Tern	Yellow-rumped Thornbill
Peaceful Dove	Southern Whiteface
Diamond Dove	White-browed Treecreeper
Bar-shouldered Dove	Brown Treecreeper
Common Bronzewing	Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater
Crested Pigeon	Striped Honeyeater
Galah	Noisy Friarbird
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Little Friarbird
Red-winged Cockatoo	Blue-faced Honeyeater
Cockateil	Noisy Miner
Budgerigar	Yellow-throated Miner
Pale-headed Rosella	Singing Honeyeater
Mallee Ringneck	Grey-headed Honeyeater

EULOGY OF EULO CONT'D

White-plumed Honeyeater  
Brown-headed Honeyeater  
Brown Honeyeater  
White-fronted Honeyeater  
Black Honeyeater  
Crimson Chat  
Orange Chat  
Mistletoebird  
Striated Pardalote  
Zebra Finch  
Double-barred Finch  
Common Starling  
Spotted Bowerbird  
Apostlebird

White-winged Chough  
Australian Magpie-lark  
White-breasted Woodswallow  
Masked Woodswallow  
White-browed Woodswallow  
Black-faced Woodswallow  
Little Woodswallow  
Grey Butcherbird  
Pied Butcherbird  
Australian Magpie  
Pied Currawong  
Australian Raven  
Torresian Crow

--ooOoo--

SCIENTIFIC SNIPPETS

A recent film on Channel 'O' about the river Thames mentioned that many swans were dying of lead poisoning brought on by the habit of picking up split shot from the river bed, the shot having been lost from anglers lines while fishing. Records show that 75% - 90% of swan deaths were due to lead poisoning. Now researchers have come up with a cure which - although it means three injections a day for five days - has a success rate of 82% that has been achieved to date in saving the unfortunate birds. Attempts are being made to encourage anglers to find an alternative, non-toxic, substitute for lead shot, apparently 'Blue Tack' is suitable.

Researchers in the U.S.A. have discovered a magnetic substance in the brains of certain types of fishes and birds which definitely has an effect on their ability to navigate over long distances as when migrating.

Ron Colpus

--ooOoo--

FIELD DAY REPORT - DYERS LAGOON. 27.6.82.

Quite an enjoyable day was had by all those who ventured forth for the June outing with several exciting birds seen. Our first stop was on the Murphy's Creek road which gave us a good view of a Pheasant Coucal's attempts to fly to the top of a large gum tree, a formidable task for a Coucal, well demonstrated by the crashing through the branches. A short walk away appeared a Rose Robin to captivate us all with its colours. Helidon Spa was another good stop. Here a Dusky Moorhen swam slowly away to leave us to the singing of numerous Brown Honeyeaters. A beautifully coloured Azure Kingfisher also perched low above the creek but, like the Moorhen, decided that it was better to leave us alone. It was then on to Grantham Swamp.

Here we were met with the usual hordes of ducks and wading about the edges were Red-kneed Dotterels, Pied Stilts and a pair of Royal Spoonbills, content to defy identification by burying their long bills in their feathers in the resting position. A lone strange duck soon took our attention however. It was about the same size as the Black or Maned Duck, very dark in colour, being almost completely black but with some lighter speckling, had a long slightly upturned bill and a slight crest to the top of its head. This was identified fairly easily as the rare Freckled Duck, clearly the

FIELD DAY REPORT cont'd

highlight of the outing. Objecting to our stares, it slipped into the water and paddled slowly off.

A stop at Dyer's Lagoon proved worthwhile even though power boats raced around the centre of the lagoon, impossible to ignore with the rumbling noises and a crowd of people gathered to watch their chosen sport. The ducks did not appear to worry about the noise as they were quite content to sit at either end of the lagoon, further evidence shown by three fluffy cygnets being guarded by their parents, quite ignorant of the hullabaloo about them. There was also the normal range of ducks with numerous Pink-eared Ducks. A stop at the back section of Apex Lake revealed about 30 Australasian Shovellers, mostly males, an unusually large number to see at one spot, but even this could not eclipse the Freckled Duck, a most exciting bird, and a most exciting outing for those who attended.

Those who attended were Michael Atzeni (and friend), Lesley Ball, Ron Colpus, Graham Corbin, Jane Corbin, Marilyn Jacobs, Sandy Pottinger, Ray and Audrey Vijoan and their daughter.

Graham Corbin

Species list:

Hoary-headed Grebe, Australasian Grebe, Australian Pelican, Little Pied Cormorant, Pacific Heron, Cattle Egret, Great Egret, Intermediate Egret, Sacred Ibis, Straw-necked Ibis, Royal Spoonbill, Yellow-billed Spoonbill, Black Swan, Pacific Black Duck, Grey Teal, Australasian Shoveller, Pink-eared Duck, Hardhead, Maned Duck, Black-shouldered Kite, Whistling Kite, Australian Kestrel, Dusky Moorhen, Purple Swamphen, Eurasian Coot, Masked Lapwing, Red-kneed Dotterel, Black-winged Stilt, Feral Pigeon, Bar-shouldered Dove, Crested Pigeon, Galah, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet, Little Lorikeet, Cockateil, Pale-headed Rosella, Pheasant Coucal, Azure Kingfisher, Kookaburra, White-backed Swallow, Welcome Swallow, Tree Martin, Richard's Pipit, Rose Robin, Golden Whistler, Rufous Whistler, Restless Flycatcher, Grey Fantail, Willie Wagtail, Eastern Whipbird, Golden-headed Cisticola, Superb Fairy-wren, White-browed Fairy-wren, Noisy Friarbird, Noisy Miner, Brown Honeyeater, Striated Pardalote, Silvereye, Sparrow, Double-barred Finch, Starling, Mynah, Magpie-lark, White-breasted Woodswallow, Grey Butcherbird, Pied Butcherbird, Magpie, Pied Currawong, Crow, Freckled Duck.

72 species

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FRECKLED DUCK FOOTNOTE

For those members who have often wondered what the name of the 'Grantham Swamp' is, Michael Atzeni visited the owner of the property on the above outing. Its real name is Karrasch's Dam, and here is what a Q.O.S. report had to say about it on their Queen's Birthday Campout.

"Then on to Karrasch's dam on the old Toowoomba road at Gatton, unfortunately there were no Freckled Ducks like there were this time last year."

Sandy Pottinger and Lesley Ball.

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MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES

Black-breasted Buzzard. 6/7. 7.82. Eulo. MA, TR.  
Spotted Harrier. 26.4.82. Southbrook. LB, PC, GC.



MEMBER' BIRD NOTES cont'd

Marsh Harrier (2). 13.7.82. Hood's Lagoon. MA, TR.  
 Peregrine Falcon. 14.7.82. Rifle Range. MA, PM, TR.  
 Brown Falcon. 21.6.82. Wellcamp Rd. LB.  
 Painted Button-Quail (dead). 19.6.82. Table Top. GC.  
 Red-necked Avocet. 4.7.82. Dyer's Lagoon. MA, TR, TV.  
 Eastern Rosella. 4.6.82. T.V. antenna 10 Ocean St. JEC, JCC, GC.  
 Rose Robin. 27.6.82. Six Mile Creek, Old Toowoomba Rd. LB.  
 Cinnamon Quail-thrush. 2.6.82. South of Moonie. BF, TR, TV.  
 " " " 6/7.7.82. Eulo. MA,TR.  
 White-winged Fairy-wren. 2.6.82. South of Moonie. BF, TR, TV.  
 Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater. 1 - 12.7.82. Memory St. MA,SA.  
 Lewin's Honeyeater. 20.6.82. Campbell St. East. JD.  
 White-fronted Honeyeater. 7.7.82. Eulo. MA,TR.  
 Black Honeyeater. 7.7.82. Eulo. MA, TR.

MA: Michael Atzeni, SA: Simon Atzeni, LB: Lesley Ball, PC:  
 Str. Patricia Comerford, GC: Graham Corbin, JCC: Jane Corbin,  
 JEC: Jim Corbin, JD: Joe Deuble, BF: Brian Foulis, TR: Terry  
 Reis, TV: Tony Venaglia.

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FIELD DAY FOR JULY

Date: Sunday 25th July, 1982. Place: Lake Broadwater, Dalby  
 Assembly Point: Pigott's Car Park.  
 Time: 7.15 a.m. for departure at 7.30 a.m. sharp  
 Further afield this month than our usual outings, but should be a  
 rewarding day from all reports.

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T.B.C. PUBLICATION DEADLINE

Articles for the Toowoomba Bird Club news-sheet have a deadline of  
 the fourth Sunday of the month. This coincides with the Field Day,  
 and can be mailed to the Editor or handed to any of the Executive.

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 & REMEMBER THE FILM EVENING  
 &  
 & FRIDAY, 23rd JULY -7.30 p.m.  
 &  
 & TOOWOOMBA EDUCATION CENTRE  
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