

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

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NEWS-SHEET No. 83 - NOVEMBER 1982

Exactly twelve months ago I sat down to type my first editorial for the news-sheet. Reading it now brings back all the memories of my first year with the club. The friends I have made, the outings I've been on, the new birds I have seen and mostly the increased knowledge I have of birds and their behaviour. I have really enjoyed myself.

Last year, the attendance was not very good at the Annual General Meeting, but I'm pleased to say that some 16 members were at this year's meeting. This made the whole evening very worthwhile.

Thanks to Del and Laurie Atzeni who hosted our meeting in their home and therefore made it more of a social evening. Thanks, too, to Ray Viljoen for his marvellous slides on South Africa and its wildlife.

I guess you just skimmed over the headings of our news-sheet, but if you bother to re-read them you will notice some changes.

1. Our new president is Marilyn Jacobs who was elected at the A.G.M. More details in the report later in the news-sheet.
2. Michael Atzeni's phone no. has changed. It is now 35 9433.
3. The official address of the Toowoomba Bird Club has changed. We have now rented a post office box, giving us a permanent address. This was according to a motion passed at the A.G.M. and acted upon immediately.

I hope you all saw the article in "The Chronicle" about the bird census. Following up that item, 4GR got in touch with Ron Hopkinson who gave a short interview on the local news. After the count Michael Atzeni went on the air with a brief summary of the numbers of birds and species.

To our relief the weekend of the bird census dawned fine and clear without any of the harsh winds of the week before. Preliminary figures show that more species were seen this year and much of our study area was covered. Thanks to all those people who helped.

Lastly, it is always good to end on a cheerful note, Hood's Lagoon has come up with its 8th new bird of the year. That must be a record!

Lesley Ball, Editor

NEW TOOWOOMBA BIRD

232. Curlew Sandpiper (Calidris ferruginea). 20.10.82. Hood's Lagoon. Identified by Michael Atzeni in the morning and confirmed in the afternoon by Pat McConnell and Terry Reis.

A single bird amongst Sharp-tailed Sandpipers and of about the same size.

Black down-curved bill; black legs; greyish crown and nape; grey-brown back and wings; white rump and pale wingstripe noted in flight; white eyebrow and underparts.

ERRATA Please note that the Little Grassbird (news-sheet no. 77) and Wandering Whistling-Duck (news-sheet no. 80) have the same club identification number. The Little Grassbird has the correct number. The Wandering Whistling-Duck should read as no. 230 and, therefore, Baillon's Crake as no. 231. This brings us up to date with the Curlew Sandpiper as no. 232.

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BIRD WATCHING DOWN SOUTH

This birdwatching trip involved a quick eleven day trek to Adelaide in early October. This was my first trip down south, however Terry Reis had made several before. The major stops were Kinchega National Park, Port Augusta, Adelaide, Wiperfeld National Park and Dubbo. The trip unfortunately was plagued with bad weather.

Kinchega National Park which is situated near Broken Hill has an impressive bird list (188 species) considering the aridness of the region. Birds of interest seen here were Mountain Duck, Freckled Duck, Black-breasted Buzzard, Pink Cockatoo and Chestnut-crowned Babbler. Freckled Ducks are resident at Lake Cawndilla and Black-breasted Buzzards were nesting in the park. Chestnut-crowned Bblers along with Chirruping Wedgebills were common in the Broken Hill region. Other birds recorded on the park list included Spotless Crake, Inland Dotterel, Letter-winged Kite and Grey Falcon.

Port Augusta added a new species in Banded Stilt. The stilt along with Red-necked Avocets was common here.

The drive to Adelaide produced new species in Black-faced Cormorants, Pectoral Sandpipers and Pacific Gull. At Wallaroo which is where the Black-faced Cormorants were seen, all five species of Australian cormorant were seen together. Earlier that day Knots were seen at Port Germein.

Wiperfeld National Park is also a very good birding area. But unfortunately the bad weather which had been accompanying us also turned up here. Six new species were seen. They were Mallee Fowl, Regent Parrot, Chestnut Quail-thrush, Broad-tailed Thornbill, Yellow-rumped Pardalote and the black-winged race of the Grey Currawong. These species are fairly common in the park. The Striated Grasswren is also resident here.

From Wiperfeld we moved to Dubbo. The main interest here was the Dubbo Plains Zoo. The zoo grounds provided some good birdwatching, with White-browed Bblers seen at close quarters.

Other interesting sightings during the trip included a White-faced Heron pecking at a Grey Kangaroo carcass, possibly eating scarabs. Collared Sparrowhawks and Spotted Harriers were seen nesting and Little Eagles were seen displaying.

In all 187 species of bird were seen of which 19 were new for me.

Pat McConnell

BIRD IDENTIFICATION BY TEXT VERSUS ILLUSTRATION

Having just spent a year in Tasmania where the four seasons seem to be more pronounced than in the other states, is perhaps a debatable reason why I seemed to have some difficulties in identification. Admittedly my bird watching activities in that year had become more intense or concentrated, in fact I think I can claim that birdwatching in some degree went on every day.

We arrived in Tasmania in mid-Spring and one was very aware of the squabbles and acrobatics that take place in 'pairing off', and the to-ing and fro-ing with nest building materials and a little later on the emergence of the fledglings, and the sightings of these, with the adults. It was in this period one of my more memorable identification problems arose. It lasted for several days before I was able to pin it down, and the solution came from the text in the Readers Digest Book of Australian Birds where I find certain traits of birds are described in some detail and has proved most useful on several occasions.

In this instance I was aware that it fed in rather vociferous flocks, they were ground feeders, constantly mobile and difficult to get a good still sighting. Its colouring seemed a dull greyish brown all over with a small yellow flash in the wing and a head I could only describe as sparrow-like. I got very frustrated in not finding pictorial identification, so I concentrated on those birds of the approximate size and with yellow wing flashes. This led me eventually to the Goldfinch, and here was the answer, in part, in the text under the immature bird.

Perhaps I had not been observant enough during my sightings due to concentrating on size, colour, shape, etc, to observe the other features which are applicable to this bird. I emphasize the sightings were difficult in that they were feeding in long grass and if disturbed immediately took refuge in nearby tree foliage. I also overlooked the trait that whilst feeding those that are at the back of the flock are continuously leapfrogging over those in front and one gets the impression of a cylinder of birds rolling through the grass. Both the traits of seeking refuge in nearby trees, power lines, etc, on being disturbed and returning to feed when the danger has passed, together with the leapfrogging is well described in the text for this bird in the Readers Digest Book of Australian Birds.

Our sojourn in Tasmania for a whole year proved most exciting and pleasurable from a birdwatching point of view. My wife joined me in my activities as a fully fledged 'birdo' with 'her own' binoculars. It made life so much easier than trying to share an optic apiece at the same time with one pair. However, it has complicated the issue of wanting to look at opposite ends of our reference books at the same time. But she did a marvellous job of tracking down those birds which are native to Tasmania only, and putting slips of paper in the relevant pages of our reference books. Only two slips remained by the time we left.

Roy Beaton

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NEW LOGO

It was discussed at the Annual General Meeting that a new logo be designed for the Club letterhead and news-sheet. The emblem of the Black-shouldered Kite is to remain but the majority of members at the meeting were unhappy with the present design. It was eventually

NEW LOGO CONT'D

decided that designs should be called from members and friends of the club.

Specifications

1. The design has as the emblem a Black-shouldered Kite.
2. It has the words 'Toowoomba Bird Club'.
3. It is to be a black and white drawing.
4. It is no smaller than 10cm x 15cm.

As we should like to start using the logo in the new year, please, could all designs that are to be submitted reach the executive by 20th December, 1982.

The designs that are submitted plus our present logo will be circulated to members with a voting form so that the letterhead will be the majority choice.

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Please note that unless any objections are received by the Secretary, these minutes will be taken as read and will not be re-read at the 1983 Annual General Meeting.

Minutes of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held at 2 Memory St., Toowoomba on Tuesday 19th October, 1982.

The meeting was opened by the President, Ron Hopkinson at 7.45 p.m.

1. Apologies for absence: Received from Maggie Drabsch, Vera Simon, Lydia Lyndon, John Ball, Roy & Peggie Beaton, Audrey Viljoen, Mike & Elizabeth Russell, Jim Corbin, Ron Wilson and Ron Colpus.
2. Minutes of the last A.G.M.: These were read by the Secretary; moved that they be adopted by Lesley Ball, seconded by Jane Corbin and approved.
3. President's Report: This was read by Ron Hopkinson as follows:-
"For the Toowoomba Bird Club the month of October is in many ways the highlight of the year. It is the month when the nomads of our bird world, who have wintered further north, are returning. It is the month when we mount our annual bird census and gather what information we can about population numbers and varieties. It is also the month when, we hope, the nomads among our members will return to us for the Annual General Meeting, and join in a review of the year.
The Club is now entering in its eighth year and its seventh census, which, I believe, shows us as well and truly established. Though our membership count could be considered small for a city of the size of Toowoomba, nevertheless we maintain our level and in this past twelve months have added a number of new members to our list.
I can recall, in the early days of our checklist, some speculation as to whether we would find 200 species in this area. In fact the list stands at 230 species, having had eight new additions since the last A.G.M. While we are not out to achieve numbers for their own sake, but simply to record those present, it is interesting to compare our list with the Australian total.

RESIDENT'S REPORT CONT'D

A matter which is of great interest to this Club, at present, is the proposal made to the City Council by the Toowoomba Field Naturalists Club, seeking to establish a water bird park in the city. This idea must surely excite all club members. Hopefully it will excite them sufficiently for them to lend their weight to the Club Executive in its support of the scheme. Two letters have been written, one each to the City Council and The Chronicle, supporting the proposal but I would hope that individual members would also write to the Council, or their Alderman, and add to the numbers. Certainly the park scheme gives the Club a conservation project to press on with in the coming year. I close this brief report by extending my thanks to my fellow members of the Executive.

To Ann, for her untiring efforts as Secretary/Treasurer and for her kind understanding of my need for a rest.

To Lesley, who came to the Club's, and my, rescue when we needed an Editor. Lesley did not just 'help out', but has brought to the job her own brand of efficacious energy.

To Michael, who ably and energetically fills the position of Records Officer and whose 'get about ability' has kept our checklist alive and increasing.

To all three I apologize for not giving them the help which they had a right to expect. To the incoming Executive I extend my best wishes and the hope that they receive the support of every member of the Toowoomba Bird Club."

He then moved that it be adopted, seconded by Ann Shore and carried unanimously.

4. Editor's Report: Lesley Ball read her report as follows:-

"My term as Editor of the news-sheet has been a very pleasurable one. I knew when I accepted this office that it could be

- a) an exasperating and,
- b) a labourious job.

Firstly it hasn't turned out to be as exasperating as expected. Sixteen of our members have contributed thirty-eight articles and reports over the last twelve months. This has meant that I have managed three or more members' items a month, allowing for an interesting and regularly sizeable news-sheet.

Secondly, it has been laborious as I'm what is known as a 'two-finger' typist. However, this has been offset by the pleasure I have in editing the news-sheet. I've made new friends and acquaintances and read some fine articles.

My sincere thanks must go to those contributors who keep the news-sheet so successful. I also appreciate the friendship throughout the year of my fellow Executive members whose advice has been most welcome. A special thanks to Michael Atzeni who has diligently proof-read and corrected nomenclature which I always manage to mess up.

My final remarks are about the value of the news-sheet. As you can see by the attendance tonight, most of our members, for varied reasons, are not actively involved in the Club. This does not mean that they don't enjoy a passive role. The news-sheet gives them the capacity for this. It is their only link with the Club and, for this reason I try to make the editorial as enjoyable, readable and personal as I can.

The other valuable aspect, and one I believe will be the more long-lasting, is the birding information that it collects from our members for future reference. Our humble observations are not for Club consumption alone, but are sent to other ornithological societies, naturalist clubs and libraries. It means,

EDITOR'S REPORT CONT'D

that in some small way, we have added to the store of Australian avian knowledge."

She moved that it be accepted, seconded by Michael Atzeni and carried.

5. Treasurer's Report: Read by Ann Shore as follows:-

"I am pleased to report that after acting on suggestions made at the last A.G.M., the Treasurer's job has definitely been made easier and more accurate. To be precise, we have changed from a savings bank to a cheque account. Even so I regret that the auditor has found that the books still did not balance completely; the bank statement showing \$6.00 more credit to our name than appears in the cash book! The reason why seems an unfathomable mystery. The auditor has suggested one further step to help inexpert treasurers, i.e. that the bank should return our cheques periodically.

Our bank balance now stands at \$70.21 which is approximately half of what it was last October. As we have lost a few members and gained some new ones, our membership total remains the same. As your Executive has not been indulging itself at your expense, this loss of revenue has to be put down solely to the increase in charges for postage, printing, paper and subscriptions. I had hoped to be able to avoid asking for an increase in membership subscriptions but feel that in view of the above I should ask you to discuss this matter.

Finally may I say thank you to our retiring President, Ron Hopkinson, for putting up with my poor stewardship of the Club's monetary affairs and for always being available for help and advice and wish him well in the future."

Ron Hopkinson moved that it be accepted, seconded by Sandy Pottinger and carried unanimously.

6. Business arising: Matters arising were covered by items elsewhere in the Agenda.

Michael Atzeni then rose to express the Club's thanks and appreciation to the retiring President, Ron Hopkinson, for all he had done for the Club over the past years and presented him with a book on behalf of all the members.

7. Election of officers: Ron Hopkinson stepped down and the Chair was taken temporarily by Pat McConnell who called for nominations. Nominations had been received by the secretary for all the positions on the Executive, as follows:-

a) President. Marilyn Jacobs, proposed by Sandy Pottinger. There being no other nominations and all present being in favour she was declared elected and took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

b) Secretary/Treasurer. Ann Shore, proposed by John Ball. The President enquired if the job warranted two separate people. Perhaps, but after discussion, and as no one else came forward to act as Treasurer, Ann Shore said she was willing to carry on and was duly elected.

c) Records Officer/Librarian. Michael Atzeni, proposed by Ann Shore. All present were in favour so he was elected unopposed.

d) Editor. Lesley Ball proposed by Roy and Peggie Beaton. There were no other nominations so she was elected unanimously.

8. General Business:

a) Lesley Ball suggested that the club should have a mail box as its permanent address. She had made enquiries. The cost would

GENERAL BUSINESS CONT'D

be \$18.00 per annum and the Darling Heights P.O. had a box available. There was a waiting list at Margaret St. and City Hall P.O.s. Discussion followed. Members decided that it was an excellent idea. Lesley Ball put a motion to the effect that we rent the box at Darling Heights, seconded by Ron Hopkinson. All in favour; carried.*

b) Ron Hopkinson reported that he had heard from Neil McKilligan of the Toowoomba Field Naturalists that the Queensland Water Resources Commission had had a submission to take water from Lake Clarendon. As the matter was urgent he had written on behalf of the Club to object to the proposed scheme. He had received an acknowledgement and would be further advised later. (See correspondence in Club's files.) Members were in agreement and he was thanked on their behalf by the President.

c) The Secretary proposed that an attendance sheet for records be kept at Club meetings. Agreed. It could also be used to note Field Day attendances, etc. Ann shore was directed to buy a suitable book and an attendance sheet was only signed by all present.

d) Marilyn Jacobs raised the subject of the Club's logo for its news-sheet, etc., at present a stylised representation of the Club's emblem, the Black-shouldered Kite. Was it time for a new logo? Lesley Ball's father, Roy Beaton, is an artist and might be able to design another version for us. It was suggested that ideas for designs might be called through the news-sheet.

e) Membership subscriptions: Members discussed raising the annual subscription as queried by Ann Shore in her Treasurer's report. Michael Atzeni proposed that families pay \$8.00 and single members and students remain at \$6.00 & \$3.00 respectively. The President suggested that students could afford \$4.00 and individuals should pay \$7.00. A visitor suggested leaving the matter to people's consciences. However the Treasurer proposed keeping single and family memberships the same at \$8.00 and students at \$4.00. This was seconded by Ron Hopkinson and carried.

f) November Field Day: Lesley Ball proposed holding a short one followed by a barbeque as a wind-up to the year's activities. The matter was discussed. Suggestions were varied: trips to the Bunyas (Marilyn Jacobs); Hood's Lagoon and barbeque at Helidon (Shane Brady); Preston Rd., etc. and barbeque at Lion's Park (Sandy Pottinger). It was pointed out that both Helidon picnic area and that at Lion's Park were apt to be crowded. Final decision was left to the Executive.

There being no further business the President then closed the meeting at 9.00 p.m.

This was followed by final arrangements for the annual bird count to take place on Saturday and Sunday next, 23rd & 24th October, and by a most interesting slide show given by Ray Viljoen on the birds and other wildlife of his native South Africa, who accompanied his superb photographs with a most informative commentary. Members were most appreciative. The evening was rounded off in a pleasant fashion by the partaking of refreshments provided by the Atzeni family and Club members.

*After the meeting Sandy Pottinger kindly offered to donate the cost of the mail box. This was most gratefully accepted by the Treasurer on behalf of the Club.

Ann Shore

DETAILS OF TOOWOOMBA BIRD CLUB ACCOUNTS FROM OCT. 1981 - OCT. 1982

	<u>Debit</u>	<u>Credit</u>
Opening balance as at 17.10.81.		\$ 129.69
Membership subscriptions (36 @ \$6.00, 1 @ \$3.00)		219.00
Donations		8.00
Bank Interest		4.19

Expenditure

Printing & paper	\$ 150.50
Postage	98.25
Subscriptions to T.E.C. & "Birds" (2yrs)	47.32
Miscellaneous	.60

	<u>296.67</u>	
(Cash book) Balance	<u>64.21</u>	
	<u>\$ 360.88</u>	<u>\$ 360.88</u>

(Balance as per bank statement: \$ 70.21)

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MEMBERS' BIRD NOTES

Freckled Duck. 9.10.82. Karrasch's Lagoon. MA, SA, TR, BF.
Pacific Baza (2). 20.10.82. Helidon. MA.
Collared Sparrowhawk. 9.10.82. Prince Henry Drive. LB.
Square-tailed Kite. 16.10.82. Hood's Lagoon. TR.
Black-tailed Native-Hen. 9.10.82. Karrasch's Lagoon. TR, BF.
Painted Snipe. 9.10.82. Hood's Lagoon. MA, SA.
Curlew Sandpiper. 20/24.10.82. Hood's Lagoon. MA, SB, PM, TR, AT.
" " 30.10.82. Hood's Lagoon. JB, LB.
Pallid Cuckoo. mid Sept.82. "Shorelands", Withcott. AHS.
Masked Owl (dead). 30.10.82. Hampton. PM.
" " 8.11.82. Conondale. MA, PM, TR.
Marbled Frogmouth. 8.11.82. Conondale. MA, PM, TR.
White-winged Triller. 8.9.82. D.D.I.A.E. GC.
Red-capped Robin (female). 29.9.82. Ocean St., T'mba. GC.
Spotted Quail-thrush. 26.9.82. Upper Murphy's Creek. ER, MR, WR.

MA: Michael Atzeni, SA: Simon Atzeni, JB: John Ball, LB: Lesley Ball, SB: Shane Brady, GC: Graham Corbin, BF: Brian Foulis, PM: Pat McConnell, TR: Terry Reis, ER: Elizabeth Russell, MR: Mike Russell, WR: Wendy Russell, AHS: Ann Shore, AT: Andrew Tan.

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FIELD DAY FOR NOVEMBER

Date: Sunday, 28th November, 1982. Place: Upper Withcott and Hood's Lagoon.
Assembly Point: Pigott's Car Park.
Time: 7.15 a.m. for departure at 7.30 a.m. sharp.

As mentioned in the minutes of the A.G.M., this outing will be the break-up for the end of the year. We will lunch at Helidon Spa. Unfortunately there are no barbeque facilities. Bring along a packed lunch and some liquid refreshment. We have permission to enter the grounds and picnic in a shady spot overlooking the lagoon.

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