

B I R D S

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This bulletin BIRDS marks the inauguration of the Gould League Bird Watchers' Club. For more than half a century the New South Wales Gould League of Bird Lovers has been known for its activities in the Primary Schools of this State, but till now it has not been able to offer anything to the many older people who are interested in birds. This has been a matter for some concern to the League's Council especially since many inquiries are received from people who wish to be guided in the practical aspects of bird study.

Contributions for the September issue of "BIRDS" are invited; observations and short articles of local and current interest are especially welcome. It is hoped that future issues will be larger - that depends upon our subscribers and contributors. We would like to hear from anyone who is prepared to help with the work of editing this bulletin.

The aim of the Gould League is to foster the love and knowledge of our native birds. The Senior Division proposes to do this first of all by organizing regular field excursions, guided by experts, to places of special interest. In order to advise members of the arrangements for the forthcoming excursions, Birds is to be sent out every second month; this bulletin will also publish a report of each excursion held, as well as observations from our members and short articles by recognised ornithologists. Members will be entitled to a copy of the Gould League's annual magazine "Gould League Notes." And, on the third Thursday of each month, members are invited by the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales to attend meetings of its Ornithological Section to hear illustrated lectures by Australia's leading ornithologists.

We invite prospective members to fill in the accompanying application form, and forward it to the Hon. Secretary with a subscription of \$1.50 which will entitle a member to all of the above benefits; for full-time students the subscription is \$1.00 and High School students are especially welcome. Family membership at \$2.00 entitles all those in the family (i.e. those living at the same address, whether related to or not) to these benefits except that only one copy of each issue of BIRDS will be sent.

Mr. Arnold McGill of Arncliffe has been awarded a Fellowship of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union for his outstanding services to the Union over many years. He joins a small and select band - Messrs. Chisholm and Hindwood are the only other N.S.W. residents entitled to write F.R.A.O.U. after their names.

A Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike, often called Blue Jay, approaching its nest in the fork of a dead branch.

Photo: Michael Sharland.



BIRDS

Nectar- feeding Birds near Sydney.

By K.A. Hindwood.

The profuse flowering of certain native shrubs and trees during the Autumn and Winter months in many areas in coastal New South Wales attracts large numbers of nectar-feeding birds.

Since late April and up to the present time (July 1966) congregations of Honeyeaters have been noted at Bungaroo, a part, of Davidson Park, Middle Harbour, near the junction of Middle Harbour Creek and French's Creek, Close to St. Ives. The numerous birds present have been attracted by flowering Banksias of some four species - Ericifolia, Marginata, Robur-var laterifolia and Spinulosa - growing on the hillsides and along the margins of the creeks.

Another locality where Honeyeaters of several kinds are at present numerous, noisy and active - the constant movement and calls of the birds are a birdwatcher's delight - is in an area of Banksia scrub and open forest near Gundamaian, Royal National Park. Here Red Wattle-birds and Brush Wattle-birds are much in evidence and colorful Crimson Rosellas are to be seen seeking nectar from the Banksia cones.

Near the coast, on the road that bisects the Bayview Golf Course (Cabbage Tree Rd.) the Swamp Mahogany trees are in blossom and have attracted several kinds of Honeyeaters. Doubtless there are other places near Sydney where nectar-feeding birds have gathered in numbers at the present time.

It is known that Yellow-faced and White-naped Honeyeaters undertake seasonal migrations, and it is suspected that other species of Honeyeaters make regular movements away from their normal breeding localities, perhaps to "traditional" feeding spots: either that, or they move until they find their food trees flowering abundantly.

A list of the species noted in the spots discussed includes the following birds:-

Crimson Rosella, Rainbow Lorikeet, Scaly-breasted Lorikeet
White-naped Honeyeater, Brown-headed Honeyeater, Scarlet Honeyeater,
Musk Lorikeet, Little Lorikeet, Grey-backed Silver-eye, Eastern Spinebill
Regent Honeyeater, Fuscous Honeyeater, Yellow-faced Honeyeater, White-
cheeked Honeyeater, Noisy Miner, Little Wattle-bird, Red Wattle-bird,
and the Noisy Friarbird or Leatherhead.

FIELD NOTES

On April 30th last, a Spangled Drongo, killed the day previously by a cat was brought to me by Mrs. Eecen of Bayview N.S.W. Except for the loss of several tail feathers, the specimen was in quite good condition, and I've no doubt will make up into a good study skin.

The Pheasant Coucal occurs sparingly here at Bayview, and is one of our more interesting birds. During the Winter months two birds, apparently a male and female live in the thickets and hedges of the school grounds adjoining my property. I frequently watch the two birds sunning themselves. The Coucals move to the nearby wooded hillsides for the nesting season, and from these shaded areas their quaint call-notes may be heard throughout the Summer days and nights.

L. Haines.

- MAY 10: One Gang-Gang Cockatoo at Pymble G.R.Gannon.
MAY 16: A pair of Black-shouldered Kites nesting
at Wilberforce.....N. Chaffer.
MAY 7: One Cattle Egret at Homebush Bay.
MAY 14: Four Pale-headed Rosella at Warwick Farm.
MAY 28: One Plumed Tree Duck with four male Chestnut
Teal, at Little Saltpan Creek, Georges River .. A.R.McGill.
MAY 28: Three Regent Honeyeaters, trapped in mist-nets at
Lady Davidson Park, Middle Harbour.....S. G. Lane.



Visitors and prospective members are invited to attend field excursions, and Ornithologists' meetings in the Lower Auditorium, Anzac House, College Street, Sydney (joint meetings of the Ornithological Section of the N.S.W. Royal Zoological Society and the N.S.W. Branch of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union). Reports of both excursions and meetings will be published in these bulletins.

JUNE MEETING: The retiring Chairman, Mr. L. Courtney Haines addressed members on "The Birds of Wolli Creek" and illustrated his lecture with a fine collection of colour slides. In this small area, surrounded by densely populated suburbs, 130 species of birds were recorded in a period of two years, and the audience of 68 persons thoroughly enjoyed Mr. Haines' anecdotes of his rambles in the area.

Mr. P.E. Roberts and Mr. A.R. McGill were elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year, and Mr. Harry Battam was re-elected Secretary.

The next meeting on July 21 will be addressed by Mr. S.G. Lane on the subject of "Bird Identification" and new members will be welcome.

PHOTO COMPETITION: \$50 PRIZE

The Gould League is offering a prize of \$50 for a colour slide of any species of Australian waterbird. The aim is to select a picture for the 1967 Membership Card - the competition is open to photographers of any age, and there is no entry fee.

Contact the Secretary, Mr E.A. Short (31-3427), for details
Closing date: September 5.

A female Lyrebird, one of a species that flourishes in many of the hillsides and deep gullies around Sydney. Lyrebirds breed in the middle of winter, and 1966 looks like being a good year for them; already we have heard of nests being found, one in Royal National Park and two near Mona Vale.

Photo: K.A. Hindwood.

FIELD EXCURSIONS

Sunday, July 17 : Malabar Leader: K. A. Hindwood

The main attraction at Malabar is the large number of Antarctic sea-birds that gather in the winter - notably Wandering Albatrosses and Giant Petrels.

Meet 2 p.m. in Cromwell Park, off Dacre Street, Malabar (Gregory's Map 22 B 14), with field glasses. N.B. The cliffs are dangerous! No children, unless closely supervised. For those wishing to make a day of it, nearby Centennial Park is a delightful place to have lunch, with waterfowl in plenty.

Saturday, August 13: Royal National Park. Leaders: Marie and
George Dibley.

Meet 10 a.m. at the Upper Causeway Picnic ground (where McKell Drive meets Stevens Drive) which will be the base for some short trips to see Satin Bower birds' playgrounds before having lunch; at 2 p.m. the party will move $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to Bola Creek (the first bridge on Lady Carrington Drive), where some fine rainforest can be seen and the Lyrebirds should still be singing. Bring lunch and boil the billy.

Latecomers will have no trouble joining the party if they wait at the picnic ground.

If travelling by train, catch the 8.50 a.m. from Central, to arrive at the Waterfall at 9.52, where arrangements will be made for pick-up. (Please notify Mr. Dibley beforehand at 57 6298).

September : Kuring-gai Chase. Leader: J. D. Waterhouse.

The wildflowers should be blooming, and the honeyeaters nesting on the heathlands.

October 14: Botany Bay Mudflats. Leader: A.R.McGill.

The Waders will have returned from their asiatic breeding grounds, and the tide will be low in the mid-afternoon.

Details for both of these outings, next issue.