



birds

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FIELD NOTES

WATER-BIRD OBSERVATIONS

Homebush Bay (23.12.'67).

Red-kneed Dotterel:

Three seen among mangroves.

Greenshank:

Two seen on mud flat among samphire.

Black-fronted Dotterel:

Four on mud flats.

Red-capped Dotterel:

Four running along water edge.

White-headed Stilt:

Fourteen, feeding in water.

Pink-eared Duck:

Four adults, three young.

Little Egret:

One found near small swamp.

Narranbulla Creek (4 miles South of Marulan) (28.12.'67).

Red-kneed Dotterel:

Thirteen on edge of waterhole.

Black-fronted Dotterel:

Eight observed at water's edge.

Maned Goose:

Forty observed in middle of waterhole.

Blue-winged Shoveller:

Eight seen swimming.

Hoary-headed Grebe:

Two observed.

Musk Duck:

Three seen, one displaying.

Lake Bathurst (28.12.'67)

- Maggie Goose: (Rare) Nine observed flying over Lake.
- Sharp-tailed Sandpiper: Sixty observed in marshy area.
- Curlew Sandpiper: One feeding on edge of water.
- Red-necked Stint: Approximately fifty on muddy areas.
- Black Swan: Four to Five hundred in middle of Lake.

Bateman's Bay (28.12.'67)

- Pied Oystercatcher: Three seen on sand-bar.
- Eastern Curlew: Fourteen standing in water.
- Bar-tailed Godwit: Four seen on edge of Beach.

Warwick Farm (26.12.'67)

- Nankeen Night-Heron: Large Colony in Casuarinas along George's River.

A.W. COLEMANE,
Northmead, N.S.W.

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TURNSTONE WITH GREEN PLASTIC LEG BAND

On 31st December, 1967 at Long Reef, N.S.W., I observed a number of Turnstones and among them was a dull-coloured bird with a bright green plastic band on its left leg. A normal metal band could be faintly seen beneath the plastic wrapper-type band.

I.C. HAINES,
Bayview, N.S.W.

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CRESTED TERN LONGEVITY RECORD

Crested Tern 070-25651 was banded as a chick on Moon Island near Swansea, N.S.W. on 22nd November, 1959.

After a period of 7 years 10 months and 24 days it was caught on a fishing line at Bribie Island, Queensland on 15th October, 1967.

The bird was slightly injured but was released with the band still on its leg.

J. GRAY,
Blackalls Park, N.S.W.

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SPARROWS AS HONEYEATERS!

Although Sparrows will eat most things, until recently I had never seen one drinking nectar.

During the winter months I put out in the garden for the Silver-eyes, dishes of bread soaked in sugar, honey and water. If the mixture is not too sweet the House Sparrows eat it.

Recently, however, I noticed a Sparrow moving about in my GREVILLEA BANKSII bush and apparently sipping the nectar from the flowers. The Sparrow used the same method of extracting nectar as that applied by the Honeyeaters.

Perching on a flowering branchlet, the bird would finish up head downwards as the end of the branch gradually drooped under its weight.

Are House Sparrows known to be nectar eaters?

J.H. BENHAM,
Lismore. N.S.W.

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NOTES AND NEWS

Mrs. Chittick of Moss Vale, N.S.W., writes that Eastern Whipbirds visit her garden, while in the surrounding countryside, Goldfinches are nearly as common as are the House Sparrows in the town. Other interesting species are White and Straw-necked Ibis; Red Wattle Bird; Nankeen Night-Heron; Pallid and Horsfield Bronze Cuckoos.

During winter months, large flocks of noisy Gang-Gang Cookatoos visit the district to feed upon various berries.

Mrs. Chittick was fortunate in being able to attend the New England University's Spring School, held at Murwillumbah, where Dr. Kikawa, a Lecturer in Zoology at the Queensland University, conducted a course on Birds of the Tweed.

- EDITOR -

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FIELD-DAY REPORTS

ROOTY HILL FIELD-DAY, 19th November, 1967

Due to an error in "BIRDS" excursions took place on two consecutive days, there being 15 members gathered near Rooty Hill Road on Sunday, 19th November.

Rooty Hill is a shale area and is used for grazing. The district is covered with gums of various species; ironbarks predominating.

In spite of the overcast sky, birds were active and many species observed.

The main purpose of the field-day was to inspect nests previously located by Mr. Wood. Although the season was well advanced, nests containing both eggs and young were plentiful.

On arrival, Mr. Wood showed us nests of Willy Wagtail; White-faced Heron with parent bird peeping over edge of nest; Raven and Magpie Lark. A Fuscous Honeyeater was recorded building a nest and using materials from an old Fuscous Honeyeater's nest. The harmonious song of the Eastern Shriketit was heard and soon afterwards the bird and its nest were discovered. Nests of the Buff-tailed Thornbill, Yellow Robin and the bulky grass nest of the Double-barred Finch were next to be found. One Double-barred Finch's nest built at eye-level contained an egg of the Horsfield Bronze Cuckoo!

Several newly made nests of the Speckled Warbler were shown to us, while an abandoned nest contained amongst the dark red eggs of the rightful owner, the dainty pale egg of the Fantail Cuckoo.

Other nests observed were those of the Eastern Spinebill; Superb Blue Wren; Diamond Firetail; Rufous Whistler; Grey Thrush and Silvereye. The Little Thornbill; White-throated Warbler; Yellow-tailed Thornbill and the inconspicuous nest of the White-winged Triller were also observed.

Among the many species of birds Mr. Wood was able to show us, were Brown Weebill; Orange-winged Sitella; Fantailed Cuckoo; Pallid Cuckoo and Sacred Kingfisher.

We were most fortunate in seeing a number of Scarlet Honeyeaters, a new bird in the field for many of us; a small group of Little Lorikeets and the Dusky Woodswallow.

Forty-five nests were logged for the day and I would like to thank Mr. Wood on behalf of all members for making the excursion such a success.

GRETE RICE,
Bronte. N.S.W.

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REPORT OF FIELD-DAY TO DHARUG NATIONAL PARK, N.S.W. 9th December, 1967

The expedition was led by Mr. & Mrs. Dibley. We met at Oyster Shell Bridge which crosses Mangrove Creek on the Wiseman's Ferry to Mangrove Mountain road.

Twenty-four Members were present at the meeting place and 23 species of birds were observed in the surrounding area. Among these, were Scarlet Honeyeater; Speckled Warbler; Little Lorikeet and the Emu Wren.

At 10.30 a.m. the party moved on up the west bank of Mangrove Creek, crossing Screech Owl Creek and Bird's Eye Creek to Sugee Bag Creek, where the cars were parked, the remainder of the trip to the reserve being made on foot.

The country was densely wooded and the following birds were observed. The Rock Warbler; Wonga Pigeon; Leaden Flycatcher; King Parrot and Sulphur-crested Cockatoo. One observation which caused some interesting discussion amongst the more knowledgeable members was the sighting of a bird which answered to the description of the Glossy Black Cockatoo. This species according to "Birds of Sydney", K.A. Hindwood and A.R. McGill, is extremely rare with no recent records. The question was -- whether the bird observed was indeed a Glossy Black or merely a Red-tailed Black Cockatoo. It was finally determined as being the former.

The following is a list of the species recorded for the day, other than those already mentioned :-

Superb Blue Wren	Brown Flycatcher
Variegated Wren	Yellow Robin
Brown Thornbill	Willie Wagtail
Striated Thornbill	Grey Fantail
Little Thornbill	Rufous Fantail
Brown Weebill	Golden Whistler
White-throated Warbler	Rufous Whistler
Little Grassbird	Eastern Whip Bird
White-browed Scrub-Wren	Grey Thrush
Cicada Bird	Pied Currawong
Olive-backed Oriole	Magpie Lark
Spotted Pardalote	Lyre Bird
Satin Bower-Bird (female)	Orange-winged Sittella
Dusky Wood Swallow	Banded Finch
White-throated Tree-creeper	Red-browed Finch
Dollar Bird	Grey-backed Silvereye
Kookaburra	Eastern Spinebill
Azure Kingfisher	Lewin Honeyeater

Welcome Swallow
Fairy Martin
Golden Bronze Cuckoo
Fantail Cuckoo
Pallid Cuckoo
Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike
Grey Butcher Bird
Black-backed Magpie
Raven

Little Wattle Bird
Yellow-faced Honeyeater
Noisy Friar Bird
Noisy Miner
Eastern Rosella
Crimson Rosella
Wedge-tailed Eagle
White-breasted Sea-Eagle
Spur-winged Plover
White-faced Heron

Our thanks to Mr. & Mrs. Dibley for a delightful day in a splendid area.

MRS. T.F. BONSER,
West Pennant Hills. N.S.W.

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BIRD BANDING DEMONSTRATION REPORT MT. KEIRA, N.S.W. 13th January, 1968.

On the morning of Saturday, 13th January, twenty bird watchers gathered in the dense rainforest at O'Briens Gap near Mt. Keira to watch Mr. Harry Battam's demonstration of mist-netting and banding.

The birds netted included Brown Thornbill; Striated Thornbill; White-browed Scrub-wren; Red-browed Finch; Silvereye; Lewin Honeyeater; Yellow Robin and Rufous Fantail.

All those present were able to closely observe and photograph birds which had been mist-netted.

Members later watched a pair of Yellow-throated Scrub-Wrens at their nest in the nearby gully. They fed in the vicinity of their nest while being viewed. Also observed were Black-faced Flycatcher; Log Runner; Brown Pigeon; Wonga Pigeon and Pilot Bird as well as Large-billed Scrub-wren; Whipbird and Grey Fantail.

Mr. Battam's dexterity in handling the birds was interesting to watch and we heartily thank him for a most instructive morning.

MRS. MOLLY THOMAS,
Albion Park, N.S.W.

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MURPHY'S GLEN, BLUE MOUNTAINS PARK, FIELD-DAY.

24th February, 1968.

Twenty six members and friends including Mr. Alcorn of Medlow Bath met at Bulls' Picnic Grounds and then proceeded to Murphy's Glen.

Honeyeaters, including White-eared, White-naped, Yellow-faced, White-bearded and Eastern Spinebill were observed. The Black-faced Flycatcher, Rose Robin, Rock Warbler and Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo were among some of the other species sighted.

Athol Colemane and Jeff Harrison noticed a bird take refuge from an attacking bird in a hollow of a tree. When all members had assembled nearby, Athol Colemane hit the tree with a stick and an Owlet Nightjar flew out and sat on a nearby tree long enough for all those present to view. This was an exciting experience for all.

During the afternoon a male Golden Whistler was observed sitting in the sunlight amidst dark green leaves; truly a lovely bird.

Thirty-one species were recorded for the day and our sincere thanks are extended to Mr. and Mrs. Dibley.

LOLA SMITH,
Longueville. N.S.W.

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FIELD EXCURSIONS

Saturday, March 16

Long Reef

Leader: Mr. L. C. Haines

Long Reef, between Dee Why and Collaroy, is a famous place for wading and sea birds. Tattlers, Turnstones, Sooty Oystercatchers, Little and White-fronted Terns, Reef Herons, Golden Plovers, stints and dotterels frequent the area, and with low tide expected at 3.30 p.m. there should be a lot of activity.

Meet at 1.30 p.m. at the eastern end of Anzac Avenue (Gregory's Map 80, 8D). Members wishing to make a whole day of it can visit nearby Dee Why Lagoon.

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Sunday, March 31

Botany Bay

Leader: Mr. A. R. McGill (59 1105)

Mr. McGill led a very successful excursion to this area last year, and the waders on the mudflats should be assembling prior to their departure for their breeding grounds in the Northern Hemisphere.

Meet at 1.45 p.m. on General Holmes Drive, Mascot, next to the mudflat about half a mile east of the runway tunnel (J11 on Gregory's Map 23). Low tide is at 3.40; bring sandshoes or gumboots for wading.

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Sunday, May 19

Albion Park

Saturday, June 15

Berowra Creek

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