

Canberra bird notes

No.6 January 1970

EDITORIAL

Now that papers for publication in Canberra Bird Notes are being received at a fairly steady rate, it is time to put forward some hints for contributors. If followed they should make the Editor's task much easier.

Manuscripts may be either handwritten or typed - legibility is the keynote. At the first mention, both vernacular and scientific names of the species must be given; thereafter either name may be used. The importance of scientific names is shown in this issue where *Zoothera dauma* appears as Ground Thrush on page 7 and Mountain Thrush on page 25. Systematic lists must follow the order laid down in *A Pocket List of Australian Birds* by P.J. Fullagar, obtainable from the Branch Secretary. Scientific names must be those given in reputable publications such as the revised RAOU Checklist, *Birds in the Australian High Country*, *The Birds of Western Australia* and others. References to literature cited should be listed at the end in the style appearing in CBN No. 5 and succeeding numbers.

In conclusion - these hints are meant to assist, not to hinder. If in doubt on any point, go ahead and write your piece, anyway. Further advice, including requirements for illustrations, will appear in due course.

THE BIRDS OF BURRINJUCK

Michael T. Rowe

Burrinjuck Waters Park, 72 miles from Canberra, is little more than 100 acres in area, but it is bordered on three sides by some 20,000 acres of faunal reserve, being the catchment area of Burrinjuck Dam. The lake borders the fourth side.

There are steep rises in altitude from 1245' to 3173' this highest point being Barren Jack. Several environments exist within the area - the lake itself, the grassy foreshores with scattered trees, giving way to apple/yellow box and stringybark with wattle and tea-tree undergrowth. There are moist east-facing gullies, open woodland and forest country.

Exotic trees (Prunus and Pinus spp.) occur within the park, being remnants from the township of Burrinjuck which existed while the Dam was being constructed. These fruit-trees together with the native trees provide an ample food supply for a large bird population. Many birds are migratory relative to the food supply, particularly honeyeaters and lorikeets.

Grey kangaroos, swamp wallabies, possums and gliders, tiger-cats and platypus are among the native mammals recorded in the park and the surrounding faunal reserve.

To date, 109 species of birds have been identified. Brief details of their occurrence and behaviour are given in the following annotated list.

STUBBLE QUAIL *Coturnix pectoralis* Seen once, in October 1968.

DIAMOND DOVE *Geopelia cuneata* Twice observed feeding on the ground, in May 1968. Monotonous "whoo-who-who" call.

COMMON BRONZEWING *Phaps chalcoptera* Several pairs resident in open woodland.

WONGA PIGEON *Leucosarcia melanoleuca* Several pairs resident in open woodland.

CRESTED GREBE *Podiceps cristatus* A single "bird on the lake on 16/9/69.

LITTLE GREBE *Podiceps ruficollis* A visitor to the lake, commoner in winters

BLACK CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax carbo* A very common visitor to the Lake.

LITTLE PIED CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax melanoleucus* A very common visitor.

PELICAN *Pelecanus conspicillatus* A flock of about 30 frequents the lake.

SILVER GULL *Larus novae-hollandiae* A visitor in small numbers.

SPURWINGED PLOVER *Vanellus miles* Common. Nests on the lake foreshore.

WHITE-HEADED STILT *Himantopus himantopus* Three birds seen on 29/9/69.

STONE CURLEW *Burhinus magnirostris* Rare. Heard at night calling up in the bush.

WHITE IBIS *Threskiornis molucca* Many flocks in 1968 when the lake level was low.

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STRAW-NECKED IBIS *Threskiornis spinicollis* Many flocks in 1968 when the lake level was low.

WHITE EGRET *Egretta alba* Many in 1968 when the lake was low.

WHITE-FACED HERON *Ardea novae-hollandiae* A common breeding resident. Seen around the lake foreshores and along the streams.

MANED GOOSE *Chenonetta jubata* A common breeding resident.

BLACK SWAN *Cygnus atratus* An uncommon visitor to the lake.

MOUNTAIN DUCK *Tadorna tadornoides* A pair seen in August.

BLACK DUCK *Anas superciliosa* A common breeding resident.

GREY TEAL *Anas gibberifrons* A common resident.

WHITE-EYED DUCK *Aythya australis* A group seen on the lake in June, 1968.

WEDGE-TAILED EAGLE *Aquila audax* Several pairs nest in the area.

LITTLE EAGLE *Hieraetus morphnoides* Not common.

SEA EAGLE *Haliaetus leucogaster* Observed from time to time over the lake

WHISTLING KITE *Haliastur sphenurus* Not common.

PEREGRINE *Falco peregrinus* Seen on two occasions. Possibly nests on Wade Island.

BROWN FALCON *Falco berigora* Only a few seen.

KESTREL *Falco cenohroides* An uncommon nester. It frequents the lake foreshore.

BOOBOOK OWL Ninox novae-seelandiae Common. Nests throughout the park.

BARN OWL Tyto alba. Not common.

MUSK LORIKEET Glossopsitta concinna Not common.

LITTLE LORIKEET Glossopsitta pusilla Seen on a few occasions, so could be commoner than suspected.

YELLOW-TAILED BLACK COCKATOO Calyptorhynchus funereus Three birds passed over the park on 10/9/68.

GANG-GANG COCKATOO Callocephalon fimbriatum A common breeding resident.

WHITE COCKATOO Cacatua galerita A common nester in the bush about Barren Jack.

GALAH Cacatua roseicapilla A common visitor to the park area. No suitable habitat elsewhere.

KING PARROT Aprosmictus scapularis Uncommon, Observed occasionally.

CRIMSON ROSELLA Platycercus elegans A common breeding resident.

EASTERN ROSELLA Platycercus eximius Uncommon. No suitable habitat.

RED-BACKED PARROT Psephotus haematonotus Common in winter

TAWNY FROGMOUTH Podargus strigoides A common breeding resident.

DOLLAR BIRD Eurystomus orientalis A breeding summer migrant. Arrival date - 11/10/68.

KOOKABURRA Dacelo gigas A common breeding resident.

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SACRED KINGFISHER *Halcyon sancta* A nesting summer migrant. Arrival date - 17/10/68.

RAINBOW BIRD *Merops ornatus* A nesting summer migrant, sometimes in large numbers. Arrival date - 11/10/68.

FAN-TAILED CUCKOO *Cacomantis pyrrhophanus* An uncommon summer migrant. Arrival date - 12/10/68.

HORSFIELD BRONZE CUCKOO *Chrysococcyx basalis* A common summer migrant. Heard calling at night. Arrival date - 3/8/69.

LYREBIRD *Menura superba* A common breeding resident. Quite an attraction for visitors when singing.

WELCOME SWALLOW *Hirundo neoxena* Common. Nests on the park buildings.

FAIRY MARTIN *Petrochelidon ariel* Common in summer.

GREY FANTAIL *Rhipidura fuliginosa* Very common. Nests throughout the park.

RUFOUS FANTAIL *Rhipidura rufifrons* Uncommon. Seen on 13/4/69.

WILLIE WAGTAIL *Rhipidura leucaphrys* A common breeding resident.

LEADEN FLYCATCHER *Myiagra rubecula* A nesting summer migrants. Arrival date - 10/11/68.

RESTLESS FLYCATCHER *Seisura inquieta* A common breeding resident.

SCARLET ROBIN *Petroica multicolor* A common breeding resident.

FLAME ROBIN *Petroica phoenicea* Common. Flocks in winter.

ROSE ROBIN *Petroica rosea* Seen once, on 13/4/69.

SOUTHERN YELLOW ROBIN *Eopsaltria australis* Common. Nests throughout the park area.

GOLDEN WHISTLER *Pachycephala pectoralis* Common. Nests in woodland.

RUFIOUS WHISTLER *Pachycephala rufiventris* A nesting summer migrant. Arrival date - 20/9/68.

OLIVE WHISTLER *Pachycephala olivacea* A pair seen on 27/7/69.

GREY SHRIKE-THRUSH *Colluricincla phaea* A common breeding resident. Often mimicked by lyrebirds.

MAGPIE LARK *Grallina cyanoleuca* A common breeding resident.

BLACK-FACED CUCKOO-SHRIKE *Coracina novae-hollandiae* A nesting summer migrant. Arrival dates - 13/9/68, 2/9/69.

WHITE-WINGED TRILLER *Lalage sueurii* Summer migrant. Arrival date - 9/12/68.

GROUND THRUSH *Zoothera dauma* Status unknown. One bird seen in a remote area of the reserve on 10/7/69 and 14/7/69

WHITE-FRONTED CHAT *Epthianura albifrons* Seen only once, on 8/5/68

BROWN WEEBILL *Smicrornis brevirostris* A common breeding resident.

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STRIATED THORNBILL Acanthiza lineata A common breeding resident.

LITTLE THORNBILL Acanthiza nana A common resident.

BROWN THORNBILL Acanthiza pusilla A very common breeding resident.

BUFF-TAILED THORNBILL Acanthiza reguloides A very common breeding resident.

YELLOW-TAILED THORNBILL Acanthiza chrysorrhoa A very common breeding resident, observed mainly on the ground and lower branches.

WHITE-BROWED SCRUB WREN Sericornis frontalis A common breeding resident.

SUPERB BLUE WREN Malurus cyaneus A common breeding resident.

WHITE-BROWED WOOD SWALLOW Artamus superciliosus A large flock seen on 6/12/68.

DUSKY WOOD SWALLOW Artamus cyanopterus A nesting summer migrant. Arrival date - 25/10/69.

BROWN TREECREEPER Climacteris picumnus Common in the higher altitudes.

WHITE-THROATED TREECREEPER Climacteris leucophaea Common. Nests throughout the park.

SPOTTED PARDALOTE Pardalotus punctatus A common breeding resident. Large flocks were seen in April 1969.

EASTERN STRIATED PARDALOTE Pardalotus ornatus A common breeding resident.

GREY-BACKED SILVEREYE A common breeding resident.

WHITE-NAPED HONEYEATER *Melithreptus lunatus* Common at times.

EASTERN SPINEBILL *Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris* A common breeding resident.

YELLOW-FACED HONEYEATER *Meliphaga chrysops* A common breeding resident.

WHITE-EARED HONEYEATER *Meliphaga leucotis* Not common.

YELLOW-TUFTED HONEYEATER *Meliphaga melanops* Common at times.

WHITE-PLUMED HONEYEATER *Meliphaga penicillata* Common. CRESCENT HONEYEATER *Phylidonyris pyrrhoptera* Common, possibly nests. A very noisy bird.

YELLOW-WINGED HONEYEATER *Phylidonyris novae-hollandiae* Common at times.

NOISY MINER *Manorhina melanocephala* Seen twice.

RED WATTLEBIRD *Antochaera carunculata* Common at times.

NOISY FRIARBIRD *Philemon corniculatus* Common summer migrant, nests. Arrival dates - 25/8/68, 1/9/69.

LITTLE FRIARBIRD *Philemon citreogularis* Seen once on 23/10/69.

PIPIT *Anthus australis* Uncommon. No suitable habitat.

RED-BROWED FINCH *Estrilda temporalis* Very common in 1968. None seen in 1969.

SATIN BOWERBIRD *Ptilonorhynchus violaceus* Noted on two occasions feeding with currawongs on bread in front of the Park office.

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NOW is the time for all good men to....renew their annual subscriptions.

RAVEN Corvus coronoides Several pairs nest in the area.

WHITE-WINGED CHOUGH Corcorax melanorhamphus Several separate groups nest in the area.

PIED CURRAWONG Strepera graculina A very common breeding resident. Assembles in large flocks in winter to be fed by visitors.

GREY CURRAWONG Strepera versicolor Uncommon. Seen and heard with Pied Currawongs.

GREY BUTCHERBIRD Cracticus torquatus Observed on a few occasions.

BLACK-BACKED MAGPIE Gymnorhina tibicen A common breeding resident. Many tame individuals.

HOUSE SPARROW Passer domesticus About 70 birds nest in the park.

GOLDFINCH Carduelis carduelis Uncommon. No suitable habitat.

STARLING Sturnus vulgaris Only four birds observed in 18 months.

I took over management of the Park some 20 months ago, and with the hundreds of jobs that needed doing have not had time to do a systematic study of the birds. I hope to be able to carry out more detailed observations in the future.

Burrinjuck Waters Park, Burrinjuck. N.S.W.

FISHING BEHAVIOUR OF OSPREY AT LAKE GEORGE, NSW

Wim J. M. Vestjens

On September 16, 1968, an Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* was sighted at Silver Wattle Point, on the south-west shore of Lake George. With the use of a pair of 15 x 50 binoculars the bird was observed for 48 minutes. These observations are given

1107 hrs Bird feeding on a fish which was held to the ground under its right foot. The fish was later identified Perch *Perca fluviatilis* 133 mm in length.

1115 hrs The bird left fish remains and flew up to a height of about 75 feet. The flight was very much like that of a large gull. It circled in wide spirals over the lake. The wind was very slight from the north and no correlation could be found between wind and flight direction.

1117 to 1140 hrs Hovering occurred nine times and diving for food three times. The diving was similar to that of terns with the estimated angle about 60 degrees. The wings were partly closed and the legs pushed forwards before the bird shook itself after each dive. Twice the bird just touched the water and failed to catch prey. The third time it half submerged and caught a fish. The fish was carried in the right foot, headfirst, while the Osprey returned to the shore. It flew low and landed about ten feet from the that of the

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Water's edge and about 400 yards from the place where it was first sighted.

1140 to 1150 hrs The Osprey stood on the beach, looking around with its right foot on the fish. Only one piece of fish had been eaten at 1148 hrs.

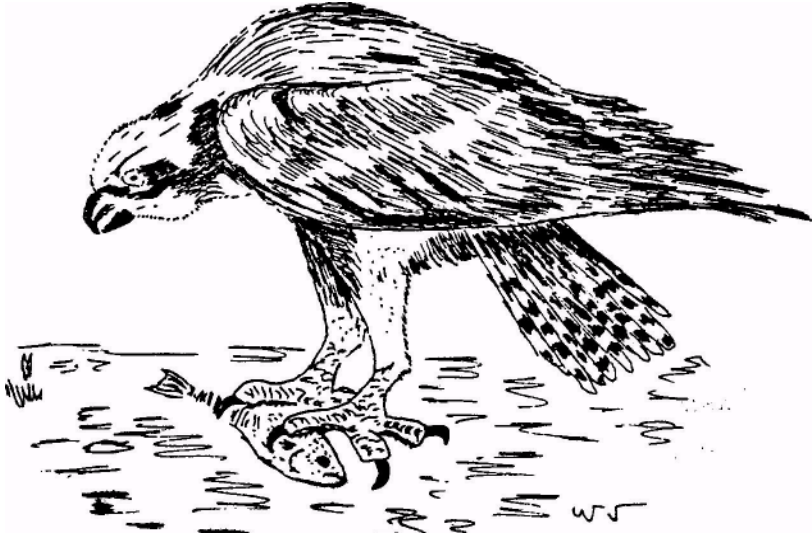
1150 to 1153 hrs Two territorial Black-backed Magpies *Gymnorhina tibicen* attacked the Osprey. At each attack the Osprey opened its bill towards the magpies and erected its crest. It moved towards the water, dragging the fish with it.

1134 to 1133 hrs A third magpie joined the attack. The Osprey left the fish and flew spirally up to about 300 feet, followed by the attacking magpies. The latter stopped attacking when about 1500 feet above the lake. The Osprey flew south-eastwards in a straight line until out of sight. The fish was identified as a Carp *Cyprinus carpio*, 204 mm. in length.

43 Sherbrooke Street, Ainslie, A.C.T.

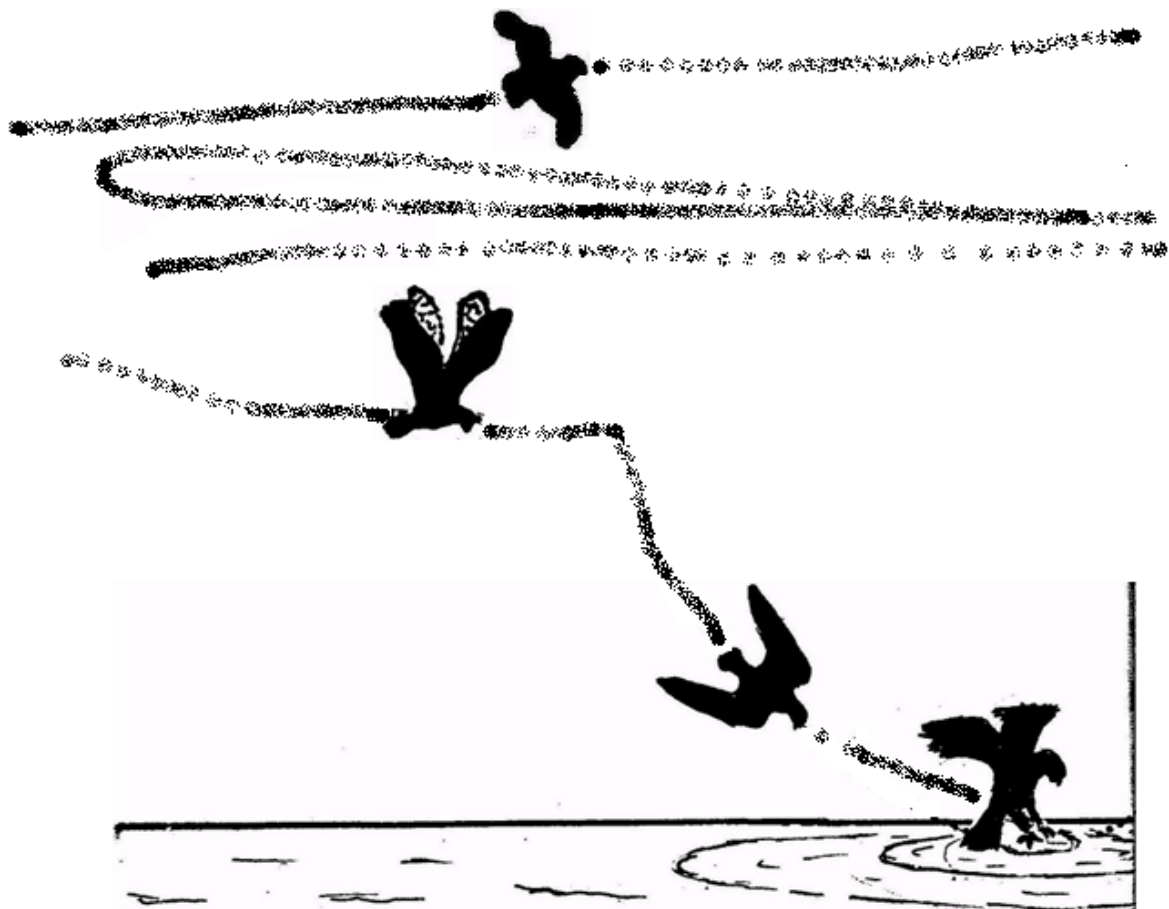
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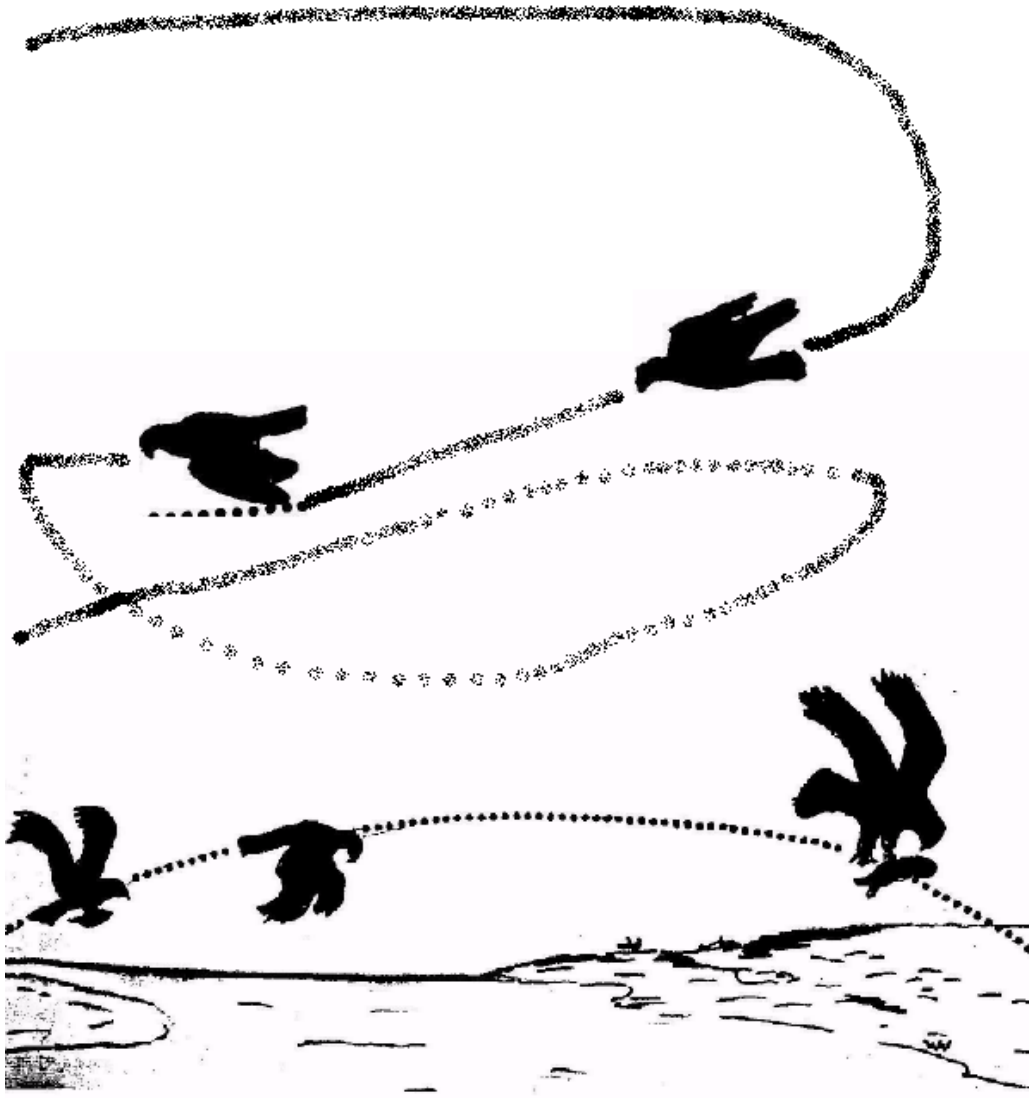
Back numbers of Canberra Bird Notes may be obtained by application to the Branch Secretary, Mr Grahame Clark, 24 Adair Street, Scullin, A.C.T., 2614. The price is 25 cents, including postage. Extra copies may be ordered in the same way.



Above Osprey feeding on perch at Lake George.

Overleaf Osprey's hunting flight.
(Drawings by W. Vestjens)





COURSE IN ECOLOGY AND BEHAVIOUR

The attention of readers is drawn to a course of illustrated lectures which, will be given by Dre G.P. van lets as part of the Australian National University's Continuing Education scheme. The course extends from June 1 to August 10, 1970, on Mondays from 8 to 10 p.m. The fee is four dollars.

The course will first consider methods of ornithology, including equipment for fieldwork and procedures for studying birds by observation, banding and so on. An introduction to systematics of birds will refer especially to families and species in the A.C.T.

Other sessions will consider feeding behaviour, habitat distribution, social communication and aspects of migration, including orientation and navigation mechanisms. If time permits, applied ornithology may also be discussed.

Intending students are advised to obtain access to a copy of Birds in the Australian High Country (Reed, 1969) which describes and illustrates every species known in the A.C.T. and will serve in effect as a reference book for the course.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

The Indian Myna, I feel, would not "be a welcome addition to Canberra's avifauna. Although initially they would probably start vying with sparrows and starlings for nesting sites in old buildings, sooner or later they would begin to challenge native species for the use of hollow limbs. Near Sydney I have observed Mynas evicting such large and formidable birds as Galahs from nesting hollows, and have even observed them taking over starling nests.

Mynas are not dirty or particularly noisy birds, indeed they are quite good-looking, but with the impact already made by starlings on our native species, particularly parrots and treecreepers, why add to it with another threat?

Yours, etc.

Mark Clayton

O'Connor

Editor's Note

Thanks to Mark Clayton for inaugurating our new Letters feature. Readers are invited to send in views and comments about topics of ornithological interest, for inclusion on this page. Please keep your letters short and to the point.

RAVENS ATTACKING GALAHS

Peter Odekerken

On November **11**, 1969, at Urana, N.S.W. (about 70 miles west of Wagga Wagga) I heard the distress calls of Galahs *Cacatua roseicapilla* in a tree. On looking up I saw a Galah just out of the nest being pecked, on the back by a Raven *Corvus coronoides*. The young bird was obviously tired and at another blow it fell to the ground while the parent birds landed in a nearby tree. The Raven flew down to it and kept pecking at its head and body, sometimes holding it down with its feet. When jabbing at the Galah the Raven concentrated on the head and neck.

Noisy Miners *Manorhina melanocephala* was darting at this attacker, but only once did one of the Galah's parents dive at the Raven. After five minutes the latter flew up and left the scene; the young Galah was still alive. It tried to fly but was dazed and could only walk about ten yards. Half an hour later the Raven came back and resumed its attacks, and after another five minutes it had killed the Galah and began to feed on it. All this occurred between 1815 and 1900 hrs.

Ravens have also been seen killing myxo- diseased rabbits in this way. The rabbits are very weak and the ravens grasp them in their claws and keep jabbing at the head and neck.

HURRY, hurry. A limited number of copies of A Pocket List of Australian Birds is available at the Discovery Bookshop, Alinga Street, City.

Ian Parer (pers. comm.) has seen ravens try to kill adult galahs. Two ravens picked out a Galah in a flock and kept harrying it until it landed in a tree. They then perched on either side of the Galah and pecked at it repeatedly. Eventually the Galah flew off with the ravens in hot pursuit.

From these observations it appears that ravens take a long time to finally kill their victims, and they seem to be very inefficient predators.

10 Schomburgk Street, Yarralumla, A.C.T.

BROWN GOSHAWK EATS KESTREL

Mark Clayton

On September 7, 1969 whilst looking for birds' nests at "Tralee" property off the Cooma Road, Messrs D. McKerrow, P. Dillon and myself flushed an adult Goshawk *Accipiter fasciatus* from the floor of a small eroded gully. Upon investigation we found the remains - the left tarsus, some bones, and numerous wing and tail feathers - of an adult Nankeen Kestrel *Falco cenchroides*. As there was fresh blood on the kill it is almost certain that the Goshawk had killed the Kestrel and not found it dead. Kestrels are plentiful in the area, and there are numerous dead hollow trees to serve as nesting sites.

23 Nardoo Crescent, O'Connor A.C.T.

VOCALISATIONS BY A YOUNG FROGMOUTH

Anthony H. D'Andria

A young Tawny Frogmouth *Podargus strigoides* was brought to the Division of Wildlife Research, CSIRO after having been kept in captivity for about a fortnight. It was fully fledged and appeared to be at the nest leaving stage i.e. about two months old.

The bird was placed on a special indoor perch and seemed to settle down quite contentedly. Its most frequently heard call was a softly uttered combination of purr and squawks lasting about 0.5 seconds. The bird called thus, at the rate of about 36 calls a minute, at all times of day. This seemed to me to be a greeting or contact call as it was given whenever the bird was approached. It increased in intensity as mealtimes drew near, at times resembling the mewling of a kitten.

At the sight of proffered food, the hungry Frogmouth uttered a long call not unlike the begging cry of young Magpie *Gymnorhina tibicen*. When excited, (at initial handling, for example) the call was a falcon-like "kekekek-ek-ek-ek-ek", but much softer in quality. These two calls seemed to be elaborations and contractions, respectively, of the purr/squawk call.

The bird's alarm note consisted of a short, but urgent "ugh, ugh". Its attitude while calling thus varied with the circumstances. If the stimulus involved people, birds, etc. seen afar, it lowered its head and ruffled its feathers while

staring at the disturbance. When surprised at short range, such as by a person walking suddenly past the window, the bird's head went straight up and it froze in the typical frogmouth stance with sleek plumage and slitted eyelids.

10 McCrae Street, Garran, A.C.T.

R.A.O.U. NEWS

Dr. A. Graham Brown, President of the Union, made the following announcement in the first issue of the RAOU Newsletter:-

"For most members the RAOU has meant only the receipt of the Emu, and paying the subscription. Some are willing and able to come to Congress or Field Outing, or both. Some, too, are members of branch societies of the Union. They have probably felt part of the Union. But more opportunity has to be provided by the Union. To this end Council has decided, following a recommendation from the Review Committee, to publish RAOU Newsletter to be posted to each member four times each year, alternating with the Emu.

"To mention the kind of items which may be included: Reports of the Union's current activities and any recent decisions of importance by the Council; notice of work intended being done by members, so that those interested in the same subject may make contact; notice of activities of field investigation committee and progress; comments - candid, kindly, caustic - on current controversies; short notes of ornithological interest; popular, even

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humorous, short articles! letters to Newsletter editor, articles on field investigation, equipment, methods of recording and so on. In other words, anything that is of common interest to members.

It is most important that members should know what is going on - what the Council and other Union workers are doing and saying. After all, the others, and yourself, are the Union."

RECENT MEETINGS

September 10

Mrs Betty Temple Watts gave a very interesting talk about illustrating the book Birds in the Australian High Country. One of the major problems in drawing the plates for the book was that nearly every time a plate was completed another bird was discovered for the Canberra area which had to be included in that plate. As a result, plates had to be altered to show these birds, and to illustrate this procedure several slides of plates "before and after" were shown. In many cases the plates had to be entirely re-drawn.

Also on display at the meeting were many of Mrs Temple Watts' field sketches and preliminary drawings which gave some indication of the tremendous amount of dedicated work that must have gone into the book. Slides shown at the meeting

included plates that will appear in the book and if their standard is anything to go by the final work promises to be a valuable addition to the literature of ornithology.

In conclusion may we wish Mrs Temple Watts every success with her book; it must be very satisfying for her to see so many years' work finally reach completion.

October 8

Some very radical changes to the east end of Lake Burley Griffin were foreshadowed when Branch members met to hear about proposals to develop this area. Messrs Richard Clough and Murray Elliott were the speakers. Plans and artists' impressions of what the area would eventually look like were on display.

The first in a long chain of works would be to improve the Molonglo River's flow by cutting a second channel into Jerrabomberra Creek. The creek itself is to be straightened and when completed would have a sediment trap near its mouth. The low floodplain between creek and river is to be developed for recreational use. Members were dismayed to hear that the series of small finger lakes bordering East Basin - the outstanding wildlife environment in the area - would probably be converted to a formal water-garden.

A large central expanse on the flats is to be modified as sports fields. Motor traffic would be restricted - there will be no through roads, and some parts will be served only by walking tracks. On the Molonglo there will be facilities for boat-hire.

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One corner of the development project has been set aside as a bird sanctuary. It would include the lagoon at Kelly's Farm and would be screened by hedgerows from the Fyshwick industrial site so Motor traffic would be barred from this sanctuary.

Speaking on the functions of Lake Burley Griffin, Mr Elliott stated that its biological aspects were subservient to its aesthetic and recreational functions and the main parts of the lake were in fact not intended for wildlife. It was hoped eventually to have about 200 acres of planned and managed wetlands on the lake.

November 12

One fact that emerged clearly from Wayne Braithwaite's talk on "Factors controlling breeding ducks" was the lack of any significant waterfowl conservation programmes in Australia particularly in the field of habitat management. At Barrenbox Swamp, near Griffith, a 200 yard wide littoral zone provides living and breeding space for dabbling ducks. This could be reproduced elsewhere merely by careful grading and the construction of earthworks.

Seven years' research on nine species of waterfowl at Barrenbox had yielded much information on their basic biology. Many ducks, such as Grey Teal and Pink-eared Ducks, have erratic breeding seasons dependent on flooding. The diving ducks, which prefer permanent waters, follow a more stable cycle.

COMING MEETINGSFebruary 11

Dr. R.E. Barwick, of the Zoology Department, A.N.U., will give an illustrated talk on telemetry in birds and other animals.

Dr. G.P. van Tets, of the Division of Wildlife Research, CSIRO, will speak about A.C.T. Cormorants as "Birds of the Month",

March 11

Film Night. A selection of German bird films will be shown, by courtesy of the German Embassy.

Note

The above meetings will be held at the CSIRO Lecture Theatre, Black Mountain, starting at 8 p.m. Tea and biscuits afterwards.

ECOLOGY AND AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

For details of this meeting see page 25.

RED GOSHAWKS IN CANBERRA?

Peter Slater

On December 13, 1969 at the Carotel Park, Canberra, I saw a pair of hawks which, from their large size, reddish coloration and behaviour I believe were Red Goshawks, Erythrotriorchis radiatus. At about 1345 hrs, I was alerted by the chattering of a Little Falcon Falco longipennis and saw it stooping at two large goshawks. The pair perched in a tree and were attacked by magpies, peewees and friarbirds. In comparison to these species and the Little Falcon I gained the impression they were about Little Eagle size. As I approached the birds flew and I followed one with 7 x 50 binoculars. It was reddish-brown on the back and heavily in moult. There were no large dark feathers below as one would expect in the immature Brown Goshawk Accipiter fasciatus which also has a reddish back in some individuals. The flight was similar to that of the Brown Goshawk but the wing beats were slower and shallower. This may have been due to the birds' state of moult as several primaries and tail-feathers

Field-marks

The Red Goshawk is a large hawk (♂ 20, ♀ 23 inches) with bright rufous plumage, streaked and mottled with black. The flight feathers are whitish, the thighs reddish and the legs yellow. The wings are longer and the tail shorter than in Accipiter hawks. Its flight is swift and direct in attack. It also soars, often to great heights.

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were missing or half-grown. The birds perched again and one called a typical, rapid "kek-kek-kek-kek-kek" which seemed to be slower and deeper than the Brown Goshawks' call. I was unable to get a good view of the birds before they took off.

The birds began to soar and I noted that they lacked the profuse barring on the underwing seen in the Brown Goshawk; that the tail was in moult and its length difficult to gauge; that the wingtips were noticeably dark; that the under-surface seemed reddish and that the wings appeared longer and squarer than is normal in the Brown Goshawk. As the birds climbed, a pale patch towards the end of the wings became obvious and as they turned, the yellow legs were visible. They reached a pitch of about 1500 feet then rapidly glided towards Black Mountain, where Tony D'Andria and I searched unsuccessfully next day.

The Red Goshawk is one of the rarest of raptors, and has never previously been recorded in this area. It has only seldom been recorded in New South Wales, mostly in the north-east, and not recently. I have had only one good sighting of the species previously - near Wyndham, W.A. - when the arrowhead pattern and massive legs were clearly seen. In Canberra I was not able to approach closely enough to see these two diagnostic features.

This can only be regarded as an extremely doubtful record, but has sufficient documentation to warrant a close watch by local ornithologists.

Box 32, G.P.O., Kenmore, QLD.

ECOLOGICAL SEMINAR The Ecological Society of Australia (Canberra Group) will be holding a Seminar on the Role of Aerial Photography in Ecology at 8 p.m. on Thursday, January 29, at the A.N.U. Forestry Building. Programme - 8 to 8.10: Introduction by the Chairman; 8.10 to 8.50: The applications of aerial photography in rangelands research; 8.50 to 9.25: Forest cover in Serengeti National Park; 9.25 to 10: Vegetation of Norfolk Island; 10: General discussion, followed by supper. Those wishing to attend are asked to inform Dr. R.H. Groves on 487722, ext, 328.

SHORT OBSERVATIONS

CRESTED GREBE Podiceps cristatus One at Fyshwick Ponds on September 12 (S.J. Wilson)

CATTLE EGRET Ardeola ibis Two at Jerrabomberra Creek on November 5 (A. D'Andria).

BARKING OWL Ninox Connivens One probable record seen in heavy dry sclerophyll woodland near the Kambah Road, September 7. Compared to a Boobook Owl it was much larger and darker (M. Clayton).

MOUNTAIN THRUSH Zoothera dauma One at Lee's Creek Road, September 7 (MC).

GREY BUTCHERBIRD Cracticus torquatus One at Hackett on August 18 (D.Peters).

INDIAN MYNA Acridotheres tristis Two at Causeway, August 27, three at Causeway, September 17 (AD); one at Federal Highway near Bendora kennels, December 13 (J. Forshaw),

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