



canberra bird notes

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EDITORIAL

During August 1974 we had two important meetings in Canberra—the 16th International Ornithological Congress and the 6th World Congress of the I.C.B.P. The first meeting dealt with the study and the second with the conservation of birds.

Of particular value to C.O.G. members was the opportunity to discuss a wide range of topics with ornithologists from all over the world.

Because of concurrent sessions it was possible to attend only a small fraction of what was offered at the I.O.C. Highlights were the many papers on the implication to the origin and evolution of the Australian avifauna through recent advances in our understanding of the timing and magnitude of sea floor spreading, plate tectonics and continental drift.

The proceedings of the I.O.C. will publish the texts of the Presidential address and the text of the papers presented in the symposia.

The abstracts of the papers presented in the general sessions will be published in a supplement to the Emu. Authors of ecological papers will be invited to contribute to a special issue of the Proceedings of the Ecological Society of Australia. Most of the remaining papers will appear in due course in the world literature.

EDITORIAL(cont'd)

The I.C.B.P. considered a wide variety of general and local 'threats to bird life. Special attention was paid to the international trade in pet birds. The export and import of birds is prohibited in Australia but overseas the trade is reaching alarming proportions with the concomitant danger of some species of birds threatened with extinction by overharvesting and the introduction of avian competitors and diseases.

One worldwide concern is the loss of biological diversity due to habitat clearing for crops grown as monocultures (e.g. wheat and pine trees), and the spread of species (e.g. pigeons and starlings) that thrive in manmade habitats.

The biosphere of the World is also being rapidly degraded in productivity and diversity by many kinds of biocides; oil spills; mine, factory and domestic wastes, bi-products of internal combustion engines and atomic fallout.

Of local concern were the survival of the rain forests and their unique avifaunas) of Queensland, N.S.W., New Caledonia Christmas Island, Cocos-Keeling Island, Lord Howe Island and Norfolk Island. In particular the apparent lack of concern and action by the authorities responsible for conservation on Norfolk Island and New Caledonia was deplored.

The next I.O.C. and I.C.B.P. will be held in 1978 in West Germany, probably in West Berlin. After having hosted the 2 congresses we should continue to study, appreciate and help conserve our native avifauna and their environments.

BIRD OBSERVATIONS AT CAMPBELL, A.C.T.

The list that follows covers the period July 1973 to June 1974, and is a sequel to the list published in C.B.N. 2, No.8 in October, 1973.

In mid-December 1973 my husband and I added to the area under observation the strip of Savannah woodland between Holmes Crescent and the new Campbell Park Road. Before mid-December the list includes only birds observed in the garden area. After that date it also includes birds observed in the savannah woodland. Most of the birds observed in the garden area were observed, in greater numbers and more regularly when the area was extended. Species observed only in the

BIRD OBSERVATION AT CAMPBELL, A.C.T.(cont'd)

savannah woodland are identified in the list by the letters S.W., placed before their names.

1. Brown Goshawk

Observed frequently in November. Several times in February and once in June.

2. Wedge-tailed Eagle

One being attacked by twelve magpies. 12 October
One observed 11 November.

3. Little Falcon

One observed on 4, 5 and 6 Feb. One on 20 March.

4. Brown Hawk

Two observed on 14 Jan., one on 21 Jan, one on 22 March.

5. Kestrel

One observed 15 Oct., 9 Nov., 1, 4 Dec., 5 Jan., 2 Feb.,
20 March.

6. Boobook Owl

Heard infrequently from August to May.

7. S.W. Brown quail

Three observed on 17 Jan and 11 Feb.

8. Peaceful Dove

One observed once on 13 Feb.

9. Gang-Gang Cockatoo

Observed in small flocks in July, Oct., Nov., Jan.,
Feb., March, April infrequently. Frequently in May
and June up to 12 Birds.

BIRD OBSERVATIONS AT CAMPBELL A.C.T. (con't)10. Galah

Daily throughout the year from pairs to flocks of 30 or more.

11. Sulphur-crested Cockatoo

Observed daily in July, Aug, Sept Oct. single birds to flocks of 30 or more. Less frequently in Nov Dec., From Jan. to end of June frequently, sometimes in very large flocks.

12. King Parrot

Small flock, observed from 5 May to 14 June.

13 S.W. Superb Parrot

A pair (M. and F.) seen on 15 Feb.

14. Crimson Rosella

Observed daily. Numbers varied from four to eight or more.

15. Eastern Rosella

Observed frequently in all seasons varying from two to twelve birds.

6. Red-Rumped Parrot,

Observed frequently from Sept. to June. Numbers varied from two to small flocks of eight birds.

17. Budgerigar

One pale blue bird observed on 3 June, being chased by three Currawongs.

18, Pallid Cuckoo

One or two observed infrequently from 9 Sep,. to 6 Jan. Once in Feb.(juvenile) twice in March, once in April

BIRD OBSERVATIONS AT CAMPBELL, A.C.T. (cont'd)

19. Fantail Cuckoo Observed five times 5 Feb.,
24 & 28 March, 19 May 21 June.

20. S.W. Horsfield Bronze cuckoo

One observed on 5 and 6 February,

21. Tawny Frogmouth

Heard at night infrequently in Sept. and Oct.

22. Spine-Tailed Swift

Small flocks observed from 5 and 16 Feb. to end
of March.

23. Fork Tailed Swift

Several birds observed 16 and 7 February.

24. Kookaburra

One to three pairs observed daily throughout
the year

25. Sacred Kingfisher

Observed infrequently mid Jan. to end of Feb., one
or two birds.

26. Dollar Bird

First observed 75 Oct. then daily until 27 Feb.
Numbers varied from one to eight birds. Juveniles
observed in Jan.

27. Welcome Swallow

Three observed 14 Oct.

BIRD OBSERVATIONS AT CAMPBELL. A.C.T. (cont'd)28. Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike

From July to Dec. one or two birds observed daily. Numbers increased in Jan. when juveniles seen frequently. Numbers decreased in March. In April, May, June one or two birds observed frequently.

29. S.W. White-winged Triller

Small numbers observed from Dec. to 22 Jan.

30. Black Bird.

Two resident pairs.

31. S.W. Rufous Songlark

One or two birds observed infrequently in Jan. and Feb.

32. Superb Blue Wren

Resident in small numbers. Not common.

33. White Throated Warbler

Observed frequently from Oct. to April. One to three birds. On 3 March one young being fed,

34. Striated and Brown Thornbills

Occasionally observed with other thornbills throughout the year.

35. Little Thornbill

Small flocks observed frequently from Aug, to May in Acacia and eucalypt.

BIRD OBSERVATIONS AT CAMPBELL A.C.T. (cont'd)36. Buff Tailed Thornbill

Small numbers observed infrequently in winter,

37. Yellow Tailed Thornbill

From Jan. - June observed almost daily in small flocks.

38. Brown Weebill

Always present. Numbers vary from small to large flocks. One albino? (pale lemon yellow with white wing coverts) observed several times with flock of Brown Weebills in June.

39. S.W. Speckled. Warbler

Two or three birds observed infrequently in May and June usually with Yellow-tailed Thornbills.

40. Jacky Winter

A pair observed very irregularly from 23 Feb. to 31 May.

41. Scarlet Robin

A pair observed occasionally from March to end of June. Two pairs on 14 April.

42. S.W. Hooded. Robin

A pair observed on 20 & 23 Feb.

43. Grey Fantail

Observed frequently from 5 Dec. to end of June. Numbers varied from a single bird to small flocks of six or eight.

BIRD OBSERVATIONS AT CAMPBELL, A.C.T. (cont'd)44. Willy Wagtail

One or two birds observed infrequently from Aug. to Mar.

45. Leaden Flycatcher

A single bird or a pair observed six times in January
g ten times in February. Five times in March.

46. SAW. Golden Whistler

One observed infrequently from Nov. to June. Usually female or immature.

47. Rufous Whistler

One observed fairly frequently from Oct. to June. Usually female or immature.

48. Grey Shrike-Thrush

One' or two birds observed frequently from June to Sept., then infrequently until May.

49. S.W. Brown Tree-Creeper

One observed six times between Jan. and June.

50. S.W. White-Throated Tree-Creeper

One observed infrequently from Feb, to May. Frequently in June.

51. Orange-Winged Sitella

Small numbers observed twice in Jan, then occasionally in May and June.

52. Mistletoe Bird.

One or two observed. Infrequently in Oct, Nov, Jan., Feb., one female killed by flying into a window in Oct.

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BIRD OBSERVATIONS AT CAMPBELL, A.C.T. (cont'd)53. Spotted and Eastern Striated Pardalotes

Striated Pardalotes observed in small or large flocks at all seasons. Spotted Pardalotes observed from Oct. and were more numerous in May and June.

54. Grey Breasted Silvereeye

Flocks observed at all seasons sometimes large. Tasmanian birds Observed in winter with local flocks.

55. Regent Honeyeater

One observed twice 20 Nov. and 27 June.

56. Fuscous Honeyeater

One to four birds observed frequently in July and Aug. and first week in Sept. then none until May - June when they occurred frequently.

57. Yellow-Faced

Single birds to two pairs observed frequently from July to Oct. Twelve on 30 Oct. Less frequently Nov. to late Jan.; large flock on 23 Jan. and 10 Feb. - small numbers from 12 Feb. to end of March. In May and June from two to five observed almost daily.

58. White-eared Honeyeater,

Single birds observed infrequently July to Sept. Pairs seen occasionally in May and June.

59. Yellow-Tufted Honeyeater

Single birds observed eight times in Aug. & a pair once.

60. White-Plumed Honeyeater

Observed infrequently Dec. - Jan. then single birds or a pair in May and June frequently,

BIRD OBSERVATIONS AT CAMPBELL A.C.T.(cont'd)61. White-naped Honeyeater

Observed frequently July to Sept. up to eight birds with a larger flock on 14 Aug. Few in Oct. reappeared at end of April & were present daily in June , two birds to a flock.

62. Brown-headed Honeyeater

Observed twice only - 28 May and 23 June , a single bird.

63. Eastern Spinebill

TWO or three birds observed daily in July and. Aug. A pair twice in Jan. Frequently in April and daily in May and. June one to four birds.

64. Red Wattlebird

Almost daily from July to Dec. Less frequently Jan. and Feb. Then increasingly from March to June one to four birds. A flock observed 10 Feb.

65. Noisy Friarbird

A few first observed on 4 Oct. Then daily until March. A large flock on 15 March infrequently in April and. May. None after 30 May.

66. S.W. Red-Browed Finch

Small flock two or three times in June.

67. S.W. Diamond Firetail Finch.

Small numbers observed infrequently from 17 Jan. to: June. 8 Feb. one juvenile being fed.

68. Banded Finch

Large flocks observed frequently in July. Less frequently in Aug. Sept. to Jan. very few observed. March to June flocks seen regularly

69. House Sparrow

Resident flock.

BIRD OBSERVATIONS AT CAMPBELL, A.C.T. (cont'd)

70. Goldfinch

Small numbers seen irregularly every month.

71. Starling

Resident flock.

72. Magpie Lark

At least two pairs resident.

73. S.W. White-winged Chough

Flock of six to eight birds observed frequently in May and June.

74. S.W. Dusky Wood-Swallow

Small flocks observed frequently in Jan. and Feb. with several young being fed. A few observed up to April.

75. Pied Currawong

Large flocks observed daily from July to Sept. One bird remained over the summer. Numerous again from Mid-March.

76. Black-backed Magpie

Resident flock.

77. Australian Raven

Flocks up to eight birds appear to be resident.

78. Little Raven

Small numbers observed occasionally.

Mildred Basten 13 Holmes Crescent, Campbell A.C.T.

INTERESTING WINTER NOTES

Winter 1974 has been a good one for bird observing in the A.C.T. and nearby. The following appear worth reporting.

Darter. One in a tree on the lake edge at Yarralumla nursery on 17 July.

Cattle Egret. Three at sw cnr of the aerodrome, 6 Jul.

White-breasted Sea Eagle. One sighted at 4 p.m. on Sept. flying north-west towards the Murrumbidgee River at a point just west of the Belconnen suburbs.

Brown Hawk. Very common this winter. At least two every each week.

Black-fronted Dotterel. Floods in all rivers must have disturbed the habitat of this species over much of the winter. It was therefore interesting to note flocks of seven and five in the Fyshwick Sewerage ponds on 16 and 17 July.

Gang-Gang Cockatoo. Noted all winter in Narrabundah where the writer had not recorded the species previously. Mr. A.D. Ross reported a flock of 9 in the area on 18 Sept.

Horsfield Bronze Cuckoo. Observations over 15 years here appear to indicate that passage migrants of this species pass through or on their way south during August breeding birds arrive a few weeks later. Four were noted at Lake George on 7 Aug. One bird of this species was noted hopping on wet mud with only a partial cover of grass. It travelled more than 50 metres in this manner and caught and ate one caterpillar before flying to a nearby wire fence and resting.

Tree Martin and Fairy Martin. The Tree Martin is often observed in flocks of up to 20-30 over the east basin of the Lake during August. On 14. Aug. in windy conditions there were at least 300 of this species in widely spread flocks over Lake George. The birds were flying low over the Lake, obviously feeding and a few Fairy Martins were also present together with about 40 Welcome Swallows.

Spotted Quail-Thrush. Five were seen at Tidbinbilla on 23 June and individuals were seen there on other occasions during winter. The species was also noted in the Brindabella Ranges on three occasions during July and Aug.

Little Thornbill. This is often a difficult species to locate near Canberra. During May, June, July and August it was located at least weekly near Canberra - in the Botanic Gardens, in Mugga Way Forrest, at Yarralumla Nursery and at Russell Hill. It was also noted at Lake George on 11 July, 18 July and 14 Aug.

INTERESTING WINTER NOTES (con't)

Yellow rumped Thornbill. During July an unusual nest was built in a eucalypt immediately outside the front door of a home in Curtin. It was 2m from the ground in the outer foliage. Normally a false cup nest is built on top of the structure but in this case a double dome was completed. The top dome was not lined and the entrance to it was not concealed though the lower one had an overlap of nesting material as usual. Three eggs were laid but breeding was unsuccessful due to the interference of the many children in the neighborhood.

Reed Warbler. The Canberra Field List indicates that the species is absent from May to Aug. In June this year the writer was shown this species at Sullivan's Creek within the A.N.U. area. Later it was realized that the birds would leave cover and approach in response to "squeaking". Birds were seen in reeds around the Lake during June and July, the last record being on 21 July. No calls were heard during June or July and this raises the point whether local populations are totally migratory. "Squeaking" near reed beds in coming winters will help solve this problem.

Pilot Bird Calls of this species were recorded and played back in the Brindabella Ranges on 2 Aug. at which time the birds were probably breeding. The pair came to the top of dead sticks and called repeatedly in response to the recorded song providing an unusually clear sighting of this secretive species.

Restless Flycatcher. Noted every few days throughout winter from May to 18 Sep in Narrabundah, where it had not been recorded previously.

S.J. Wilson

GOLDEN BRONZE CUCKOO IN AUGUST

On 11 Aug. 1974 on the eastern slopes of Mount Majura I observed a Golden Bronze Cuckoo

The bird was seen through binoculars at short range for about 15 mins. It was stationary for much of that time, apparently doing no more than sunning itself. It remained perched on the branch of a tree apart from two or three visits to the trunk of the tree where it obtained food from under loose bark.. I saw only one bird, which gave no call. It was

GOLDEN BRONZE CUCKOO IN AUGUST (cont'd)

Unconcerned at my presence, even when I made off.

Both "Birds in the Australian High Country" and "A Field List of the Birds of Canberra and District" suggest that this bird does not return to this district until about the beginning of October each year.

A sighting of this species at this time of the year appears to be unusual and is hereby placed on record.

D. Balfour, 24 Calvert Street, Ainslie, A.C.T.

A RECORD OF PORT LINCOLN PARROTS AT MT. MAJURA A.C.T.

On 1 Sept. 1974 I observed two Port Lincoln Parrots, Barnardius zonarius on the slopes of Mt. Majura, slightly to the right and about 200 m from the reservoir above the suburb of Hackett. The country there is open with scattered trees. The birds were first seen in a tall gum tree preening themselves, They then moved to a dead tree close by and, later on moved uphill into more heavily timbered country.

I observed them for about 20 mins. through binoculars firstly at about 50 yards and finally for about 7 mins. at 25 yards. A clear view was obtained enabling positive identification.

Having regard to the normal location of this parrot I was most interested to observe it in Canberra. I note it is not mentioned in "Birds in the Australian High Country" or "A Field List of the Birds of Canberra and District".

D. Balfour, 24 Calvert Street, Ainslie, A.C.T.

RAINBOW BIRD AND WHITE FACED HERON SURVEY

The Bird Observers' Club is currently conducting Australia-wide surveys on the Rainbow Bird and the White-faced Heron. It is hoped to build up a picture of migratory, seasonal, and nomadic movements, as relevant to each species.

The success of the surveys depends on the participation of a large number of people. The response by B.O.C. members during the first year of the surveys has been very good, but more contributors would be very welcome to help fill in the many gaps.

The basic information required is simply the number of birds seen, the location and the date of the observation. If a flock of birds is involved, the direction of flight is also required. Any past records or miscellaneous notes will also be accepted. The surveys will be running for another two years.

Progress reports on the movements of Rainbow Birds, as gathered from the first year's observations have appeared in The Bird Observer July and August 1974. As well as gaining information on the movements of the two species, maps can be prepared to show their distribution at various times throughout the year.

Information or enquiries should be sent to "Rainbow Bird/ Heron Surveys", The Bird Observers' Club, Box 2167T, G.P.O. Melbourne, 3001, Vic.

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