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ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

A.C.T. BRANCH

ANNUAL REPORT 1966/67

The past year, the third since the inauguration of the A.C.T. Branch in July 1964, has shown a continued interest by local members in our activities which have been confined mainly to the holding of monthly meetings, as previously, in the C.S.I.R.C. Lecture Theatre, Black Mountain. Eleven meetings were held at which ten lectures were given, the remaining meeting being devoted to our Annual Film Evening. Attendances varied from a minimum of 16 to a maximum of 43, but the normal average of about 25 was maintained.

Publication of our monthly newsletter was continued and circulated on the same basis as before, free to R.A.O.U. members and to non-members for a small fee. Donations have not been so freely received from members as in past years and the future of the monthly newsletter may be in doubt. A second impression of "A Field-List of the Birds of Canberra and District" was printed as it is still welling well, mainly through local booksellers. Since this list was first printed, a wealth of additional information has been gathered, largely through the recording of observations at monthly meetings and thanks are due to those who regularly record their observations. Thanks are also due to Mr. S.J. Wilson who is keeping the List up to date on a card index system. The third Annual Bird Report was also published and summarises the local activity in the field for the past year.

The financial position of the Branch is holding at a steady level, the slight increase in the assets being mainly due to profits on the "Handlist". It is the policy of the Committee to try to build the assets gradually to a position where we can undertake small publications from our own funds.

The local committee has continued its regular meetings and as well as considering local activities, has interested itself in the broader functions of the Union as a whole. As a result, a Review Committee was formed at the 1966 Congress to make recommendations to Council on possible improvements in the organisation of the R.A.O.U. It is hoped that their recommendations will eventually benefit not only the R.A.O.U., but the whole state of ornithology in Australia generally.

Graeme Chapman,
BRANCH SECRETARY.

A.C.T. BRANCH, ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS UNION

THIRD ANNUAL BIRD REPORT - 1966/67

INTRODUCTION

In spite of every good intention, this report covering the period from 1 July 1966 to 30 June 1967 is more than usually delayed. I must accept all the blame and can only apologise for being dilatory.

This year the contents of the annual report are similar to those of previous years with systematic notes by S.J. Wilson, compiled from observations by many members, and a report by R. Gibson on the birds at the east end of Lake Burley Griffin, continuing the observations by Brown and Gibson started a year earlier. Ian Grant has contributed notes made over three years on Mt. Pleasant and thus extends the scope of this report somewhat. Finally there is a brief summary of the birds noted on three visits to the Gudgenby Valley during the year.

The critical reader will not find much of profound interest in these records and may indeed be disappointed with their incompleteness. However, they form a fairly comprehensive record of the A.C.T. birds during the year and may in the future be found to be of more than passing interest. Moreover, a comparison can be made between the more systematic recording carried out by Messrs. Grant and Gibson (or even the records from the Black Mt. area in the Systematic Notes) and the generally more scattered and casual records which form a large part of the Systematic Notes. There is no doubt that the former provides a much better idea of the status of local birds and emphasizes the value of regular systematic observations of all species in one area, as opposed to the casual records of the less usual birds gathered by visiting many different places. Admittedly, the local distribution of many species poses a special problem, but we know so little about the occurrence and fluctuation of even the commonest birds that there is no substitute yet for regular detailed recording in the same area throughout the year.

I would therefore urge those who are seriously interested in contributing to the knowledge of our local avifauna to do just that - choose an area of about 200 acres and walk round it as regularly as possible and not less than twice a month, recording in detail all the species seen on each visit with some indication of numbers and behaviour. Not only will this method provide a much clearer idea of the changes in the birds of the area, but the results will be much easier to analyse than the casual records put in the Observations Book at our monthly meetings.

31st January, 1968.

S. Marchant,
EDITOR

SYSTEMATIC NOTES

1st July, 1966 to 30th June, 1967

by

S. J. Wilson

The following notes have been compiled from observations recorded by many people. It is impossible to acknowledge all contributions, but B. Baker, M. Clayton, J. McNaughton and A. Stokes have certainly provided the bulk of the notes. Regular observations were also made by S. Marchant in an area on the west side of Black Mt. outside the woodland. Where appropriate, these have been included after the prefix BM in order to conserve space.

The list only includes those notes on waterbirds which supplement R. Gibson's records elsewhere in this report.

Records which at present must be regarded as doubtful by reason of either incompleteness or unusualness are bracketted. Brackets are also put around the records for those species which probably escaped from captivity.

As these records refer solely to the twelve months quoted above, the year has been omitted throughout in order to save space. For the same reason, common resident species for which there were no significant or unusual notes, are merely listed at the end. It may be assumed that there were no records at all during the year for other species on the A.C.T. list which are not included in the systematic notes or in the list.

SYSTEMATIC LIST

- Brown Quail One Wells Station, 23rd April.
- Painted Quail BM - fairly regular in small numbers.
- (Peaveful Dove Single birds O'Connor, 2nd Nov., 24th March).
- (Diamond Dove One, O'Connor, 2nd to 5th Dec., attracted by aviary birds).
- Common Bronzewing Regular in small numbers in the Ranges and round Black Mt. One Telopea Park, 16th March.
- Brush Bronzewing Single birds four times New Chum's Road between 8th Oct. and 29th April.
- Crested Pigeon Six Ginninderra in March.
- Banded Landrail One, Molonglo River Flats, 21st December.
- Great Crested Grebe One, Yarralumla Bay, 15th April.

Systematic List (Contd.)

<u>Pied Cormorant</u>	One, 2nd July, Two 16th Oct., One, 9th April, Molonglo River Flats.
<u>Marsh Tern</u>	One, Lake George, 17th June.
<u>Banded Plover</u>	Eight, Molonglo River Flats, 20th November. Two, Gungahlin, 6th June. One, Lake George, 12th May. 22 and 21, Bungendore, 25th April and 17th June respectively.
<u>Double-banded Dotterel</u>	Four, Lake George, 9th April.
<u>Red-capped Dotterel</u>	One, Lake George, 25th April.
<u>Black-fronted Dotterel</u>	Four and ten, Lake George, 22nd and 25th April.
<u>White-headed Stilt</u>	Pair with flying young, Lake George, 11th March. One young taken by Whistling Kite when flying low over water.
<u>Curlew Sandpiper</u>	Six, Lake Bathurst, early December.
<u>Red-necked Stint</u>	Six, Lake Bathurst, early December. Four, Lake George, 9th April.
<u>Sharp-tailed Sandpiper</u>	About 50, Lake Bathurst, early Dec. Two, Lake George, 9th April.
<u>Japanese Snipe</u>	One Wells Station, 28th September. One, University area, 3rd December. Two, Molonglo River Flats, 4th February.
<u>Glossy Ibis</u>	One, Yowani Golf Club, 3rd August.
<u>Nankeen Night Heron</u>	One, O'Connor, 29th July.
<u>Chestnut Teal</u>	Lake George - Two, 2nd January; Five, 22nd April; at least ten, 25th May.
<u>Pink-eared Duck</u>	Two, Uriarra, 20th August. Many, Lake George, 9th September. More than forty, 25th April.
<u>Freckled Duck</u>	Six, Lake George, 8th September.
<u>(Blue-billed Duck</u>	Two, Molonglo River Flats, 2nd July. First ACT record.)
<u>Australian Goshawk</u>	Nested, BM, Gungahlin, Geary's Gap.
<u>Collared Sparrowhawk</u>	One, O'Connor, 16th Sept., One, Belconnen, 17th Sept., probably bred Forrest area as pair seen 1st Nov. and adult with prey 3rd Dec. Female chasing Pied Currawongs and behaving as if with nest, Lees Creek, 11th Feb.

Systematic List (Contd.)

- Little Eagle BM - Bred, regularly seen 17th Sept. to 18th Feb. but not later.
- White-breasted Sea-Eagle Single birds or pair, Lake George, 24th Sept., 4th Nov., 22nd April, 17th June.
- Black Kite One, Lyneham, 23rd January.
- Little Falcon BM - bred, pair regularly seen from 22nd Oct. to 3rd March. Birds especially prominent after three young fledged.
- (Grey Falcon One, Belconnen, 16th January.)
- Peregrine Falcon Singly, Lyneham - O'Connor, 16th, 19th Sept. Bred Lake George Sept. - Oct. Singly, Russell Hill, 20th April, 10th May.
- Black Falcon One, O'Connor, 11th Jan. One, Russell Hill, 8th Feb.
- Boobook Owl Two, O'Connor, 26th August. Regular in Deakin 22nd Feb. to 17th March, again 19th April. Regular New Chum's Road and Lee's Creek from 24th March.
- (Rainbow Lorikeet One, Lyneham, 29th June).
- Little Lorikeet Twice in July, Hackett and Griffith, Once in Sept. Wells Station. Fairly regular, Belconnen - O'Connor, 5th December to 16th Feb, and Narrabundah, 11th Dec., 15th January.
- Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo Regular in Ranges from 28th January to 29th April.
- Gang-Gang Cockatoo Common about Canberra till 27th November when flock of 13 still in University area. Few records then till 25th February, after which increasingly common in flocks. Common in Ranges in summer.
- White Cockatoo BM - usual in small numbers (two to eight) 25th Sept. to 15th Dec., flocks (25) first noted 14th January and then in larger numbers with parties up to 45 for rest of year.
- (Major Mitchell Cockatoo Single birds, Red Hill, and in suburbs, 8th August and 18th February.)
- (Cockatiel One or two, Lyneham, fairly regularly from 6th July to 11th August. Four, O'Connor, 21st Oct., One, Weetangera, 5th June.)
- Superb Parrot One, Bungendore, 24th Sept., Single birds, Hall, 5th Nov., 10th, 11th December.

Systematic List (Cont'd.)

- King Parrot Recorded in Canberra (Manuka, Griffith, Braddon) only on 23rd to 31st July, 11th September.; In Ranges on 20th August, 19th November, 11th February. More than 30, Cotter Reserve, 15th May.
- (Ring-Necked Parrot One, Campbell, 27th June.)
- Red-Backed Parrot Regular. e.g. Acton and Black Mt. Peninsula, but never BM.
- (Blue-Bonnet One, Campbell, 11th November, 6th December. Probably northern form on photographic evidence.)
- Budgerygah Four green birds on outskirts of Canberra, 21st, 22nd October.
- Tawny Frogmouth Roosted corner Weetangera Road - Dryandra Street, O'Connor, until 14th July. Few records, 12th October to 25th December, BM and Belconnen, including one nest. One, Federal Golf Course, 27th May.
- Owlet-Nightjar One, lower Lee's Creek, 8th Dec. & 23rd January. One, Uriarra, 6th May.
- Dollar-Bird Regular and fairly common breeder from 18th October. Last report, Curtin, 1st May.
- Sacred Kingfisher First record, 1st October; last, 1st April.
- Rainbow-Bird BM - regular, 19th November to 18th February, breeding.
- Spine-tailed Swift Five occurrences between 5th Jan. and 19th April, over Canberra and once at New Chum's Road.
- Pallid Cuckoo BM - Regular 10th Sept. to 15th Dec. Elsewhere three later records, 30th Dec., 17th, 21st Jan. and last record, Red Hill, 9th February. Parasitism of Yellow-faced Honeyeater and young seen being fed by Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike, Leaden Flycatcher, Rufous Whistler.
- Fan-tailed Cuckoo First record in Ranges, 15th Oct. and then regular till 1st April. Juvenile, Botanical Gardens, 16th April.
- Brush Cuckoo BM - noted, usually by call, 12th Nov. to 18th March.
- Horsfield Bronze-Cuckoo First record, 28th August; last, 4th March.
- Golden Bronze-Cuckoo First record, 28th September. (Pair Rufous Whistlers recorded feeding a young Bronze Cuckoo (sp. indet.) 25th January, which seems extraordinary.)

Systematic List (Cont'd.)

- Channel-billed Cuckoo One, Lake George, 26th November.
- Tree Martin First report, 10th August. BM - flocks during August and September, then few birds (4-6), probably breeding, till last 4th February.
- Fairy Martin First record, 6th September, not recorded after 25th January.
- Grey Fantail BM - first record, 10th September, quickly increasing to common by 24th September; bred abundantly; last record, 13th May.
- Rufous Fantail First record, 18th September; last, 5th May. All in Ranges except once (15th April) in Botanical Gardens.
- Leaden Flycatcher First record, 18th September; last (BM), 12th March.
- Satin Flycatcher Four records in Ranges from 26th November to 11th February.
- Restless Flycatcher Bred Belconnen, January. Single birds, Lyons, Pine Island, Wells Station, Lake George, Federal Golf Course in October, April, May.
- Black-faced Flycatcher One accidentally killed, Curtin, 28th March. Now in CSIRO collection.
- Jacky Winter One, Belconnen, 19th December. Also at Lake George, 17th June.
- Scarlet Robin BM - at least two pairs bred, present, 24th Sept. to 3rd December, then no records to 18th February, after which regular in small numbers (2-6).
- Flame Robin Bred BM, Mt. Pleasant. BM - regular (1-2 pairs) 24th September to 19th November; no later records. At Lake George, 17th June.
- Pink Robin One, New Chum's Road, 20th August. Male, Uriarra, 25th September. (Female, Mt. Franklin, 11th Dec., unusually late).
- Rose Robin Single birds, Belconnen, Botanical Gardens, 17th, 19th September, 1st October. Rather plentiful in Ranges, 15th, 19th October and until 8th April.
- Hooded Robin BM - resident, 3-4 breeding pairs. Also recorded Botanical Gardens, Belconnen, Pine Island, Tharwa.
- Southern Yellow Robin Perhaps less common in the Ranges. Some on Black Mt. throughout year, but rarely outside dry sclerophyll.

Systematic List (Cont'd.)

- Golden Whistler Recorded, Belconnen, Botanical Gardens, Wells Station up to 25th September. BM - first appeared 18th March, then regular in small numbers (1-3 all female or juvenile).
- Rufous Whistler Male, Griffith, 2nd August. BM - first record, 17th September, increased to 12 plus singing males by 8th October; bred throughout area; last record, 22nd April. Recorded regularly in small numbers in Canberra till end of June.
- Eastern Shrike-Tit Recorded (1-3) in Ranges in all months except July, September, May and June. BM - not recorded after 6th November. Also Belconnen - O'Connor from November to February, and in June. Lake George, 9th April.
- Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike Some present throughout year. BM - obvious influx of parties of 6, 7, 8, on 24th, 25th September, 30th October; 2-3 pairs bred; parties of 6 again 12th March, 8th April, probably moving north. No records after 29th April.
- Cicada-bird Noted 28th, 30th Jan., 11th Feb., 6th May on dry ridges on slopes of the Ranges.
- White-winged Triller First record 13th October, last, 23rd April. BM - first male, 12th November, about four breeding pairs. Last plumaged male, 22nd Jan. Last record, 18th February.
- Spotted Quail-Thrush Two, Swamp Creek, 1st May.
- Grey-crowned Babbler Four (plus one dead in nest) Ginninderra, 4th Feb.
- White-fronted Chat Bred Nerang Pool, Sept-Oct. A few later sightings in young pines along Parkes Way till December.
- White-throated Warbler First report, 6th September. BM - 6/7 breeding pairs, last bird in area, 13th May.
- Western Warbler First report 17th September. BM - fewer breeding pairs than 1965/66. Last record 25th February. One, Russell Hill, 7th April.
- Brown Weebill BM - two pairs breeding. First appearance in area in last three years.
- Eastern Whiteface Belconnen in flocks up to 20, 17th September to 5th December. BM - 1-2 pairs regular.
- Little Thornbill A few birds (1-6) occasionally seen in August, September, March in Lyneham, Belconnen, Mt. Mugga. Quite regular, June, Monara Crescent, Griffith. Lake George, 17th April.

Systematic List (Cont'd.)

- White-browed Scrub-Wren Two, Botanical Gardens, 15th April.
- Speckled Warbler BM - up to 8 regular throughout year. Also recorded August to February, Belconnen, O'Connor, Deakin.
- Brown Songlark Single birds, Gundaroo, 16th December; Lake Burley Griffin 21st December; Uriarra 31st December.
- Rufous Songlark (One, 22nd August). Local summer resident, e.g. along Cotter Road.
- Reed Warbler One, Forrest, 30th September.
- Dusky Wood-Swallow First report, 10th September; last, 13th June, but only three records (1-4) after 23rd April. BM - flocks (20-40) from 10th to 25th September, 2-3 pairs settled and bred, adults and young flocked (10-20) from 4th to 18th February; last record, 4th March.
- Orange-winged Sitella BM - at least two groups bred, building first, 24th September. Flocks up to 20 formed from 12th March onwards. Also regular, Belconnen, 27th August to 4th March.
- Brown Tree-creeper. Locally resident in some numbers, e.g. BM, Rifle Range.
- Red-browed Tree-creeper Single birds, Lee's Creek and New Chum's Road between 25th Jan. and 6th May.
- Mistletoe-Bird Records, O'Connor, Casuarina Sands, Lee's Creek and New Chum's Road from 19th Nov. to 10th May. BM - 23rd Oct. to 22nd January.
- Pardolotes There were no significant notes for different species, but it is worth recording that very large active flocks of pardalotes were in the Black Mt. area from 25th Feb. to 27th May, but not at other times of the year in flocks. Both spotted and "Striated" species occurred in the flocks but detailed identification was not attempted.
- White-naped Honeyeater Common in the Ranges to the end of June. BM - obvious passage often in large numbers 10th Sept. to 20th Nov., mainly E, W, or S. Passage again in flocks from 29th April, N & NW.
- Brown-headed Honeyeater BM - regular in small numbers till 29th April, then as larger parties up to 20. Also recorded New Chum's Road, 4th February, Lake George, 22nd to 25th April.

Systematic List (Cont'd.)

- Eastern Spinebill BM - single birds occasionally to 5th Nov. and after 13th May.
- Regent Honeyeater Regular, O'Connor-Belconnen, 12th Dec. to 10th Jan., unsuccessful breeding attempt by one pair.
- Fuscous Honeyeater BM - abundant passage, 28th August to 4th Oct., one, 9th Oct., one, 15th April.
- Yellow-faced Honeyeater BM - strong passage in all directions from 10th Sept. to 9th Oct., eastward movement also 6th Nov. 3-4 pairs bred. Good passage, E, W, and N, from 8th to 29th April. A few birds remained for rest of year. Numbers in Ranges appeared low.
- White-eared Honeyeater BM - common till 17th Sept., then dwindling to last bird, 16th Oct. Reappeared 18th April and remained common.
- Yellow-tufted Honeyeater One Gungahlin, 15th July, one Botanical Gardens, 13th August.
- White-plumed Honeyeater Locally common, e.g. Black Mt. Peninsula.
BM - One, 11th February.
- Crescent Honeyeater Regularly recorded in Ranges throughout year. Only Canberra records, 2-10 birds, Botanical Gardens, 13th, 21st August, 18th Sept.
- New Holland Honeyeater BM - One, 15th Jan. One, Botanical Gardens, 13th August.
- Noisy Miner BM - One, 15th Jan., but resident colonies Mt. Mugga, Hackett and elsewhere.
- Little Wattle-Bird Singly, O'Connor, 28th Sept., 13th Oct. Three, Lake George, 17th June.
- Red Wattle-Bird Common in Canberra parks, breeding, but no records, BM.
- Noisy Friar-Bird One, O'Connor, 10th July, regular from 12th Sept. to 21st May with a few birds in Forrest area till end of June. BM - NW passage (7 birds) 9th Oct., then regular, 2-3 breeding pairs, last in area 29th April.
- Pipit BM - 1-2 regular, much less common than two previous years. Regular elsewhere, e.g. around Lake Burley Griffin.
- Diamond Firetail Regular from 24th Aug. to 24th May at Rifle Range, Belconnen, Federal Golf Course and Deakin.
BM - two 17th Sept., 8th Oct. Up to 10 regular from 14th January, breeding.

Systematic List (Cont'd.)

<u>Zebra Finch</u>	Small breeding population, Regatta Pt. Also recorded Lyneham, Belconnen, Molonglo River Flats.
<u>Double-bar Finch</u>	BM - First noted 12th Nov., becoming regular, breeding, then flocking (25th Feb.) and dwindling to 8 end of June.
<u>Red-browed Finch</u>	BM - scarce (1-4) 29th Oct. to 11th Feb. Bred Blundell's Creek, Feb., and recorded Lee's Creek, 24th March. Also one Botanical Gardens, 1st Oct., Two, Yarralumla Bay, 15th May, Six, Federal Golf Course, 27th May.
<u>Olive-backed Oriole</u>	One, Mt. Pleasant, 11th Sept., Two, Wells Station, 25th Sept., One, 7th April.
<u>Pied Currawong</u>	Bred, Melbourne Avenue.
<u>Grey Currawong</u>	BM - One pair regular. Also recorded Wells Station, Weetangera Road, Aranda, O'Connor. Larger numbers (3-6) Lee's Creek in March. New Chum's Road - 1-3 regular.
<u>Grey Butcher-bird</u>	One, Gudgenby, 25th March. Two, Lee's Creek, 6th May.
<u>Pied Butcher-bird</u>	One, Yowami Golf Course. First ACT record.
<u>Indian Turtle Dove</u>	One, Gungahlin, 30th Oct. One, Braddon, 15th June.
<u>Greenfinch</u>	Two, Griffith, 15th Aug., two adults and four juveniles Northbourne Oval late August. Two adults and three juveniles, Ainslie Oval, 14th March.
<u>Pheasant</u>	One killed O'Connor, 12th June. Not recently escaped as judged from stomach contents.

List of resident birds for which there were no significant notes:

Wonga Pigeon	Brown Thornbill
White-faced Heron	Buff-tailed Thornbill
Brown Falcon	Yellow-tailed Thornbill
Nankeen Kestrel	Pilot-bird
Galah	Superb Blue Wren
Crimson Rosella	White-throated Tree-creeper
Eastern Rosella	Silvereye
Laughing Kookaburra	Satin Bower-bird
Superb Lyrebird	Raven
Welcome Swallow	Little Raven
Willie Wagtail	White-winged Chough
Olive Whistler	Black-backed Magpie
Grey Shrike-Thrush	Blackbird
Magpie-Lark	House Sparrow
Eastern Whipbird	Goldfinch
Ground-Thrush	Skylark
Striated Thornbill	Starling

SURVEY OF MOLONGLO RIVER FLATS

(July, 1966 to June, 1967 inclusive)

by R. Gibson

This report is of the second annual survey of the area at the east end of Lake Burley Griffin. The area covered and the route followed were the same as those previously described (see Brown and Gibson, Second Annual Bird Report, 1965-66, ACT Branch, RACU). Nineteen visits to the area were made during the year as follows:

2, 16, 30 July	12, 26 February
8 September	4, 28 March
2, 16, 23 October	16, 30 April
6 November	9, 27 May
10 December	18 June
10 January	

SYSTEMATIC NOTES

- Stubble Quail 1-10 regularly, July to Jan. Less regularly March to May. None, Feb. and June.
- Brown Quail Three, 16th October.
- Spotted Crake One, 2nd October.
- Dusky Moorhen 5-23 regularly throughout the year. Numbers lowest Nov. to Jan. Increase from 4 in March to 23 in May, but dropped to 9 in June. Downy young in January.
- Eastern Swamphen 3-8 from July to September. None, 2nd Oct. 1-20 from 23rd Oct. to end of June, with max. 28 March. Bred.
- Coot 10-39 from July to Oct., decreasing to 8 on 23rd Oct. and 1-4 from Dec. to Feb. Increase from 28th March (6) to 28 on 18th June.
- Little Grebe 26 on 2nd July, decreasing to nil in October. 2 on 26th February, 5 on 28th March, increasing to 21 in June.
- Hoary-headed Grebe Numbers fluctuated considerably. Maximum 118 on 30th July and generally more numerous (20-40) from August to December. Less Common (2-23) afterwards.
- Little Black Cormorant Increased from 18 in July to 228 on 2nd Oct. Then decreased to one in Jan., none in Feb. 5-9 afterwards with sharp increase to 40 in 18th June.
- Little Pied Cormorant Irregular (7-50) from July to October. None in November, but then increased to 33 in March. 26-37 present till 27th May, only 13 on 18th June.

Systematic Notes (Contd.)

- Darter Singly in July and Sept. None till March, afterwards 1-5.
- Pelican One in July increasing to 60 on 10th Dec., 10 in Jan., 23 in Feb. and March, decreased to 8 on 9th March and increased to 18 on 18th June.
- Marsh Tern Ten in breeding plumage, 10th January.
- Silver Gull Common (39-77) from Sept. to Nov. 1-7 regularly afterwards.
- Spur-winged Plover Regular but variable (5-70), with 60-70 constant from Dec. to February.
- Black-fronted Dotterel 1-6 from July to Dec., Two 26th Feb., Five 9th April, Two, 27th May.
- White-headed Stilt Two, 23rd October, 10th December, 12th February.
- Wood Sandpiper. One, 23rd Oct., Two, 6th November.
- Sharp-tailed Sandpiper 3-45 between 8th Sept. and 10th Dec., maximum 16th October.
- Japanese Snipe 2-3 between 8th Sept. and 6th November.
- Glossy Ibis One, 12th February.
- White Ibis Fairly regular in fluctuating numbers (1-17), but more common (9-17) from Oct. to December.
- Straw-necked Ibis 5-22 regularly July to Sept. Less regular but more variable (1-55) after November, maximum on 10th Dec.
- Royal Spoonbill Regular (1-5) from 10th Dec. to 9th April.
- Yellow-billed Spoonbill A few (1-7) irregularly throughout year.
- White Egret 1-4 usually present from July to Dec. 1-6 regularly present from 30th March to 27th May.
- White-faced Heron Regularly noted except on 2nd Oct. 5-9 from Dec. to March. 2-4 for rest of year.
- White-necked Heron One, 12th and 26th February.
- Nankeen Night Heron 1-20 (max. 16th Oct.) during October.
- Wood Duck 28 on 2nd July. Regular from Nov., increasing to 174 by Feb., generally large numbers afterwards (90-300) with maximum of 319 on 27th May.
- Black Swan About 40 in July, decreasing to 2 on 23rd Oct. None in Nov., but 1-10 regular afterwards increasing to 24 on 18th June.

Systematic Notes (Contd.)

- Mountain Duck 1-9 usually present after September.
- Black Duck Always present: 400 in July, decreasing to 140-200 in Oct. and Nov. 100-300 generally after January. Bred.
- Chestnut Teal 2-10 from 12th Feb. to 6th May (maximum 12th Feb.)
- Grey Teal Always present in fluctuating numbers. Generally more common (70-180) in July to Sept. and after April. Summer Numbers 4-52.
- Blue-winged Shoveler 2-7 regularly from 16th July to Nov., and 5-19 regularly after April. Fewer (2-4) from Dec. to March.
- Pink-eared Duck One, 2nd July.
- White-eyed Duck A few (1-2) on 30th July and 8th Sept. 2-7 regular from 10th Dec. to 4th March. 1-6 regularly after 30th April.
- Musk Duck Two, 16th July, one, 23rd October.

COMMENTS

In spite of rather irregular visits, fluctuations in numbers noted during 1965-66 seem to be confirmed. Moorhens, coots, the more common ducks, cormorants and grebes again increased after the breeding season. There was probably increased breeding of swamphens, moorhens, Black Duck, Grey Teal, and some passerines (see below) which suggests that the area is becoming a better breeding habitat. This tendency could easily increase if the area is not disturbed.

There was no substantial rainfall in the last half of the period and this undoubtedly affected the occurrence of waders, mostly migrants, which found no temporary pools to accommodate them. Probably as a consequence no migrant waders were seen after November. The newly opened sewage farm on the other side of the Fyshwick-Duntroon road may well provide a more stable habitat for such visitors and should be regularly investigated from now on, but during the period under review it was not visited.

The other notable occurrence this year has been the colonisation of the lake by pelicans which are now apparently a regular, if not permanent, component of the avifauna.

As this survey is primarily an investigation into the waterbirds of the lake, there is no need to go into details regarding other species observed. It is, however, worthwhile listing briefly the species of land birds encountered, in two categories, the common residents and the less common visitors.

COMMENTS. (Ctd.)

Resident Species of Land Birds

(★ denotes proved breeding)

Black-shouldered Kite (1-4 rather irregularly)
Galah (fairly regular in flocks)
Welcome Swallow (fairly regular)
★ Grey Fantail (along Molonglo River)
Willie Wagtail
★ Magpie-Lark
Little Grassbird
★ Reed Warbler (2nd Oct. to 16th April)
Cisticola (scarce, 1-3)
★ Superb Blue Wren (more numerous than in 1965/66)
Australian Pipit
Australian Raven
Black-backed Magpie (one White-backed 2nd Oct.)
★ Blackbird
House Sparrow
★ Goldfinch
Skylark
Starling

Occasional Visitors

Swamp Harrier. Singly July, 8th Sept., 23rd Oct., 21st Dec., 27th May.
Australian Goshawk. Singly in July and from 12th Feb. to 16th April.
(two, 28th March).
Whistling Kite. Two, 16th July, singly, Oct., irregular Feb. to June.
Little Falcon. Two in Feb. and March.
Peregrine Falcon. One, 5th March, two, 16th April.
Brown Falcon. Singly or in pairs from 30th April.
Nankeen Kestrel. One, 28th March, One, 18th June.
Barn Owl. One roosted in hollow tree during July.
Sacred Kingfisher. 1-3 from 2nd Oct. to 6th Nov., and from 26th Feb.
to 28th March.
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo. Three on 16th July.
Gang Gang Cockatoo. Three, 18th June.
Laughing Kookaburra. Occasional.
Tree Martin. September and October.
Fairy Martin. 2nd October.
Flame Robin. July and October.
Rufous Whistler. 6th Nov. and 10th December.
Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike. 23rd October.
White-fronted Chat. Two, 2nd July, Two, 30th April.
Yellow-tailed Thornbill. Present 16th April, 9th May.
White-browed Scrub-Wren. Occasional along Molonglo, perhaps overlooked.
Spotted Pardalote. Irregular along Molonglo April and May.
Yellow-faced Honeyeater. Flocks of 40 or less along Molonglo October
and November. A Few in March.
Noisy Friar-bird. 23rd October.

THE BIRDS OF MT. PLEASANT, CANBERRA

by

Ian Grant

INTRODUCTION

From February, 1964 to December, 1966 an attempt was made to determine the status of all birds occurring on Mt. Pleasant, Canberra, A.C.T. The area started behind Russell Offices and ran around the hill, being less than 200 yards wide on the southern and eastern slopes but broadening to 3-500 yards on the northern and western sides. The vegetation is eucalypt woodland, the trees tending to be more dense on the steeper eastern and southern slopes, but has been greatly modified. In places the trees have been thinned out, tracks are numerous, and some rubbish has been dumped. Introduced thorny bushes form a fairly dense undergrowth in places on the southern and eastern slopes, but most of the area has no shrubs except for isolated thickets of acacia.

Most observations were made in the lunch hour which limited the area which could be covered. The aim was to walk round the whole area, but this was achieved on only about half the visits. During the colder months it became clear that nearly all the birds in the area collected together and once this group was found, it was rare to find more than one or two birds elsewhere. When the breeding season began, birds were missed if the whole area was not covered. In the hot months the birds tended to be inactive at midday when most observations were made and the small numbers noted suggested that many were missed.

Visits were not regular throughout the three years, but were made as follows:-

6th Feb. 1964	to	26th July, 1964	15 visits, incomplete records.
27th July 1964	to	21st Oct., 1965	131 visits, complete records.
6th Dec. 1965	to	19th Dec., 1965	6 visits, by another observer, incomplete records.
20th Dec. 1965	to	5th June, 1966	No visits.
6th June 1966	to	9th Dec., 1966	35 visits, complete records.

SPECIES LIST

The arrangement of the following notes is in the order of "A Field-List of the Birds of Canberra and District".

Painted Quail Rare visitor. Five birds 1st May, 1964. A single bird almost certainly this species 12th Dec. 1965.

Common Bronzewing. Uncertain. Only noted at the end of the survey. One early Nov., two end Nov., and one early Dec. 1966.

Nankeen Night Heron. Rare visitor. One roosting in eucalypt overlooking Molonglo 12th Oct., 1965.

Australian Goshawk. Rare visitor. Female, 16th January, 1965.

Species List. (Contd.)

- Collared Sparrowhawk. Rare visitor. Single males Feb. 1965, Nov.'66.
- Little Eagle. Rare visitor. Single birds, April, July, 1965.
- Little Falcon. Rare visitor. Single birds, July, August, 1964.
- Peregrine Falcon. Rare visitor. Two birds, apparently immature, four times Dec. 1964, Jan. 1965. One, Aug. 1965.
- Nankeen Kestrel. Rare visitor. One or two birds four times Dec.'65.
- Gang-Gang Cockatoos. Uncertain. One, May 1964, five on two occasions July, 1964. No further records till two, June 1966 and in August 1966.
- Galah. Uncertain. Two, 16th July 1965, Two 12th Oct. 1965.
- Crimson Rosella. Uncertain. Once, Feb. 1964, then many records in flocks up to eight between July and Oct. 1964. Then only a few records in Feb., April, Oct. 1965, June, July 1966.
- Eastern Rosella. Uncertain. Recorded Oct. 1964 to Feb. 1965, Oct. 1965 June, Oct., Nov. 1966. There was only one record between March and Sept. during the three years and probably the species only appeared to breed. The Starlings and Rosellas disputed a breeding hole and the starlings won.
- Dollar-Bird. Seasonal visitor. Recorded between mid-Oct. and mid-March each year.
- Laughing Kookaburra. Resident. Up to four birds regular.
- Sacred Kingfisher. Seasonal visitor. A few records in early April, Oct. and Nov. 1964, Feb. 1965, Nov. and Dec. 1966.
- Rainbow-Bird. Uncertain. Three birds Feb. 1964. Up to eight, apparently trying to breed behind RMC, mid-Oct. to mid-Dec. 1964. Again six in same place from mid-Oct. to mid-Nov. 1965, but no further records in spite of many visits in Nov.-Dec. 1966.
- Pallid Cuckoo. Seasonal visitor. One or two recorded each year between late Sept. and mid-November.
- Horsfield Bronze-Cuckoo. Uncertain. Recorded Feb. 1964, and mid-Oct. 1964 to late Feb. 1965, juveniles noted after late Dec.
- Welcome Swallow. Uncertain. Flocks (up to 20) for most of June 1965, reducing through July to a few birds in late August.
- Tree Martin. Uncertain. A flock in the last half of August, 1965 and first week September.

Species List. (Contd.)

- Grey Fantail. Uncertain. Recorded in nearly every month of the survey, but very few records from May to Sept. 1965, and from June to Oct. 1966. Juveniles in Jan. 1965, Nov. 1966. Nests in Dec. 1965, Oct.-Nov. 1966.
- Rufous Fantail. Uncertain. One early April, 1964, two late Oct. 1964, presumably both times on migration.
- Willie Wagtail. Uncertain. One, Feb. 1964, one again fairly regularly from Jan. to Oct. 1965.
- Leaden Flycatcher. Seasonal visitor. Each year regularly from mid-Oct. to mid-Dec. Once early April, 1964 and a few scattered records between Jan. and mid-March, 1965. Only females (or immatures) recorded in Feb., March and April.
- Scarlet Robin. Uncertain. Recorded each year between February and mid-Sept. Unsuccessful nests begun late August 1964 and 1965. Never recorded from mid-Sept. to Feb.
- Flame Robin. Uncertain. Single birds or pairs, Feb., Aug., Sept., 1964, Jan. 1965, all females or immatures. Up to five May-June 1965, including two males. Two "brown" birds Sept. 1965, pair, June, 1966. A pair nested unsuccessfully late Sept. 1966. One male Oct. 1966, one female, mid-Nov. 1966.
- Rose Robin. Seasonal visitor. Two females Oct. 1964, pair early Sept. 1965, two females late Aug. 1966, apparently on spring migration.
- Golden Whistler. Uncertain. Single birds, pairs or threes between mid-March and early Dec. each year. After mid-Oct. all records were for "female" birds. Some were banded and disappeared, soon to be replaced by other unbanded birds.
- Rufous Whistler. Seasonal visitor. Regular from Sept. to mid-April each year. Nested mid-Nov. 1964.
- Grey-Shrike-Thrush. Uncertain. Once Dec. 1964 and a few records between late March and mid-Sept. 1965.
- Magpie-Lark. Uncertain. One, 12th Oct. 1965.
- Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike. Uncertain. All records were between mid-Aug. and mid-March, except once mid-June, 1964. In 1964 and 1965 flocks of 5-6 were usual during Sept. and early October. Later only one or two birds. This pattern was less marked in 1966. Nests mid-Nov. 1964 and mid-Dec. 1965.
- White-throated Warbler. Seasonal visitor. Regular from late Sept. each year to mid-March. Nests late Oct. 1964, Nov. and Dec. 1965 and Oct.-Nov. 1966.

Species List. (Contd.)

- Western Warbler. Uncertain. Pair bred mid-Oct. to Dec. 1964. pair first half Oct. 1965. Single bird singing from late Sept. to late October, 1966.
- Brown Weebill. Uncertain. Noted late Feb. 1964. May to July, and Oct. 1966. June to Aug. and Nov. 1966. Flocks in May and June, singly or in pairs at other times.
- Eastern Whiteface. Rare visitor. One banded 24th July, 1965.
- Striated Thornbill. Resident. Flocks from Feb. to August, singly or in pairs from Sept. and October. Few records Nov. to Jan. Adults feeding young, 14th Feb. 1964.
- Brown Thornbill. Uncertain. Singly or in pairs regularly till Sept. 1965. Later only two records in Aug. and Oct. 1966. Flock once recorded July, 1964. Bred Sept. and October, 1964.
- Buff-tailed Thornbill. Resident. Regular in flocks April-August, singly or in pairs at other times. Bred Sept.-Oct. 1964 and 1966.
- White-browed Scrub-Wren. Uncertain. Only recorded July, Sept., Oct. and December (juveniles) 1964.
- Speckled Warbler. Uncertain. One or two pairs regular 1964 and 1965. No record after July, 1965.
- Superb Blue Wren. Uncertain. Recorded Feb, 1964 and then regularly from July 1964 to Feb. 1965. Later two June, one July and one October, 1965.
- White-browed Wood-Swallow. Rare visitor. A flock, 21st Nov. 1965.
- Orange-winged Sitella. Uncertain. Regular June to Nov., usually in flocks, but only two records between Dec. and May. Bred Nov. 1965.
- White-throated Tree-creeper. Seasonal visitor. Regular from Feb. to August, but never at other times.
- Mistletoe-Bird. Seasonal visitor. Regular from late Aug. to Feb.
- Spotted Pardalote. Uncertain. Regular from April to Nov. Two in February, 1965.
- Yellow-tipped Pardalote. Uncertain. Regular in flocks from Aug. to mid-Sept. 1965 & from mid-July to mid-Aug. 1966. No other records.
- Eastern Striated Pardalote. Uncertain. All striped-crowned birds with red or orange wing spots were assumed to be this species. Regular from June to October, common in late July and August. Otherwise only two Feb., one April, 1965; one Nov., one December, 1966.

Species List. (Contd.)

- Eastern Silvereye. Uncertain. Often recorded from Feb. 1964 to June, 1965, but less frequently towards end of period. Then only two Sept. 1965 and June, 1966.
- White-naped Honeyeater. Uncertain. Few records, all late August to mid-Nov., and May to mid-June, presumably on migration.
- Brown-headed Honeyeater. Rare visitor. Three times in flocks, August, 1964, June and August, 1965.
- Eastern Spinebill. Uncertain. Fairly regular from July, 1964 to mid-Sept. 1965. No later records.
- Regent Honeyeater. Rare visitor. Two flocks (about 20) 27th Feb. 1965 flying north.
- Fuscous Honeyeater. Rare visitor. Once, September, 1964.
- Yellow-faced Honeyeater. Seasonal visitor. All records between mid-Sept. and Dec., and April and June. Commonly in flocks and rarely staying in area.
- White-eared Honeyeater. Seasonal visitor. All records between early April and mid-Sept., always singly or in pairs.
- Red-Wattle-Bird. Uncertain. Twice, July, 1964. Twice each July, August, September, 1966.
- Noisy Friar-Bird. Seasonal visitor. Regular each year from late Sept. to early Jan. Bred late Nov.-Dec. '65. Nov. '66.
- Zebra Finch. Uncertain. Flocks or small parties in Feb., May, August, 1965, always in sth.-eastern sector in thick shrubberies.
- Double-bar Finch. Uncertain. Frequent, usually in flocks. Bred Feb. Nov-Dec. 1964, Feb. 1965. Except for Feb. breeding records, only recorded twice between Jan. and mid-June.
- Red-browed Finch. Uncertain. Regular late July & Aug. 1964. Also Jan. to June, 1965. No other records.
- Olive-backed Oriole. Rare visitor. One mid-Sept., 1966.
- Raven. Uncertain. Occasionally recorded throughout the three years. Bred late Oct. and Nov. 1966.
- White-winged Chough. Uncertain. Recorded June and Aug. 1964. Regular Oct. and early Nov. 1964, once with newly fledged young. Only other records March, Aug. 1965, Oct. 1966.
- Pied Currawong. Uncertain. One or two July, Aug., Oct., Dec. 1964; May, June, July, 1965, July, 1966.
- Grey Currawong. Uncertain. One or two Aug. Oct. 1964, juvenile Jan. June, 1965, June, 1966.

Species List. (Contd.)

- Black-backed Magpie. Resident. Several groups bred early year.
- Blackbird. Uncertain. Regular in late July and Aug. 1964.
Occasional in Dec. 1964, Feb. (juveniles) June, 1965.
- Goldfinch. Resident. Regular once or twice a month throughout
the three years. Bred late Oct. 1964.
- Starling. Uncertain. A few from Oct. to Dec. 1964, two records
March, 1965. Bred October 1966.

DISCUSSION.

The 73 species recorded have been classified as follows:

- (a) Resident - regularly recorded, mostly known to breed. 6 Species.
- (b) Seasonal visitor - recorded regularly during one or two
periods each year, i.e. summer visitors, winter
visitors, passage migrants. 12 Species.
- (c) Rare visitor - very few, even only one, record. 14 species.
- (d) Uncertain. 41 species.

Inevitably, because of the usually short spells of observation at a poor time of day and the interruptions to the survey, the status of most species in the area, category (d) above, was not established, but it is surprising that these were well over half the total and that in some species what evidence there is goes against what was expected. Also in spite of the imperfections of the survey it is still surprising that some common Canberra birds, e.g. Gang-Gang Cockatoos, Willie Wagtail, Grey Shrike-Thrush, Magpie-Lark, and Red Wattle-Bird, were recorded so seldom; and that others (White-throated Tree-creeper, White-eared Honeyeater) only occurred in the non-breeding season. This seems to point to a severe degree of localization which is not easily explained.

Another point is that apparently several common species (Brown Thornbill, White-browed Scrub-Wren, Speckled Warbler, Superb Blue Wren, Silvereye, Eastern Spinebill, Blackbird) decreased significantly during the period or even disappeared entirely, whereas the Brown Weebill increased greatly and seemed to be the only species to do so. Then again the Buff and Yellow-tailed Thornbills (feeding on the ground or in low vegetation like the Speckled Warbler, Blue Wren, Brown Thornbill and Blackbird) seemed to remain constant in numbers. The Crimson Rosella decreased notably during the period and a similar decrease of the species was noted at Hackett.

No doubt these fluctuations which are outlined rather than firmly established by the survey are connected with climatic variations; and during the three years of observation, it was, generally speaking, unusually dry in ACT. But even if the study settled few questions, it may have been useful in showing not only how many problems of simple occurrence and distribution there are in ACT, but also the value of systematic, and if possible, quantitative, observations in one area as a means of defining the problems in the first place, and perhaps finally of solving some of them.

GUDGENBY SURVEY - 1966/67

by

S. Marchant

As a result of Murray Elliot's talk at the Branch meeting in July, 1966, an attempt was made to arrange regular visits during the year to the Gudgenby-Naas valleys about 50 miles south of Canberra. This effort essentially failed and in the end, only three excursions were made on 21st August, 29th October and 5th February.

The same route was followed each time; from Naas over into the Gudgenby valley, along the Shonnon's Flat - Adaminaby Road as far as the first turning to the right south of Naas Creek, and back by the rough track up Naas Creek rejoining the main road near Gudgenby itself or close to the junction of Middle and Hospital Creeks. This route was followed in either direction with stops at the lower crossing of Naas Creek and north of Boboyan Flats. Observations were recorded only on the loop from Gudgenby back to Gudgenby.

Although the observations made cannot be glorified into a survey, it may be worth briefly listing the species seen, as follows:

	<u>21st Aug.</u>	<u>29th Oct.</u>	<u>5th Feb.</u>
Spur-winged Plover	-	1	-
Japanese Snipe	-	-	1
Black Duck	1	-	-
Australian Goshawk	-	-	1
Wedge-tailed Eagle	1	-	1
Peregrine Falcon	1	-	-
Nankeen Kestrel	-	3	-
Gang-Gang Cockatoo	-	-	2
White Cockatoo	x	12	25
Galah	-	x	-
Crimson Rosella	x	2	x
Kookaburra	x	x	3
Brush Cuckoo	-	-	1*
Grey Fantail	-	-	2
Willie Wagtail	-	-	2
Scarlet Robin	2	-	-
Flame Robin	x	x	2
Grey Shrike-Thrush	x	-	2
Magpie-Lark	-	-	2
Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike	-	-	3
Striated Thornbill	x	x	4
Buff-tailed Thornbill	x	-	-
Brown Thornbill	x	-	2
White-browed Scrub-Wren	-	-	2
White-throated Tree-creeper	x	-	x
Spotted Pardalote	-	c	3
Eastern Striated Pardalote	-	c	4
White-naped Honeyeater	-	-	x
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	-	c	6
White-eared Honeyeater	x	x	x
Red Wattle-Bird	-	c	3

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Gudgenby Survey. (Contd.)

	<u>21st Aug.</u>	<u>29th Oct.</u>	<u>5th Feb.</u>
Pipit	-	-	6
Raven	-	1	c
Pied Currawong	x	1	3
Grey Currawong	x	-	-
White-backed Magpie	x	30	2
Goldfinch	-	-	3
Starling	-	x	-

x present, numbers not noted.

- not recorded.

* disputed identity, possibly Pallid Cuckoo.