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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article is to collate and publish bird records from the future Lake Tuggeranong area in order to, at a later date, compare these with further records once the lake and its associated built environment are established.

Readers may be aware of the proposed plans for a town centre and artificial lake on Tuggeranong and Village Creeks to the west of Drakeford Drive and approaching as close as 1 km to the Murrumbidgee River.

This area is presently mainly open grassland with the only developments being a telephone exchange and mail sorting centre, as well as a Mini Bike Track.

As shown in Figure 1, Village Creek flows in a southerly direction and joins the north flowing Tuggeranong Creek. Near the confluence, the latter turns westerly and finally southerly before entering the Murrumbidgee, south of Red Rocks Gorge.

There are presently two areas of interest on these creeks. Near the telephone exchange on Tuggeranong Creek is a relatively new (less than 10 years old) 'silt trap', consisting of a concrete wall and spillway over 5m high. The several hectares of water impounded is generally deep, with steepish sides and only limited areas of aquatic or fringing vegetation. There is also a small pool below the spillway. By contrast, on Village Creek there is a very much older 'farm dam' of about 1 hectare. This is situated just south of the current Kambah Post Office/Health Centre. This shallow dam has abundant aquatic and fringing vegetation. There is also a small area of sand/mud flats upstream of where the creek enters the dam. This feature is sometimes referred to as the Urambi wetlands.

The habitat surrounding each feature is grassland which is often long and dry with some exotic or planted native trees.

BACKGROUND

I first visited the Village Creek dam in the hope of observing crakes. In 5 years of atlassing in the local area and beyond, I had only recorded one crake and then views were insufficient for identification down to the species level. A colleague had recorded them there during the Atlas period.

On my first visit I was immediately rewarded by one hurrying across the sandbank into cover, the white under-tail clearly identifying it as the Australian Crake *Porzana fluminea*.

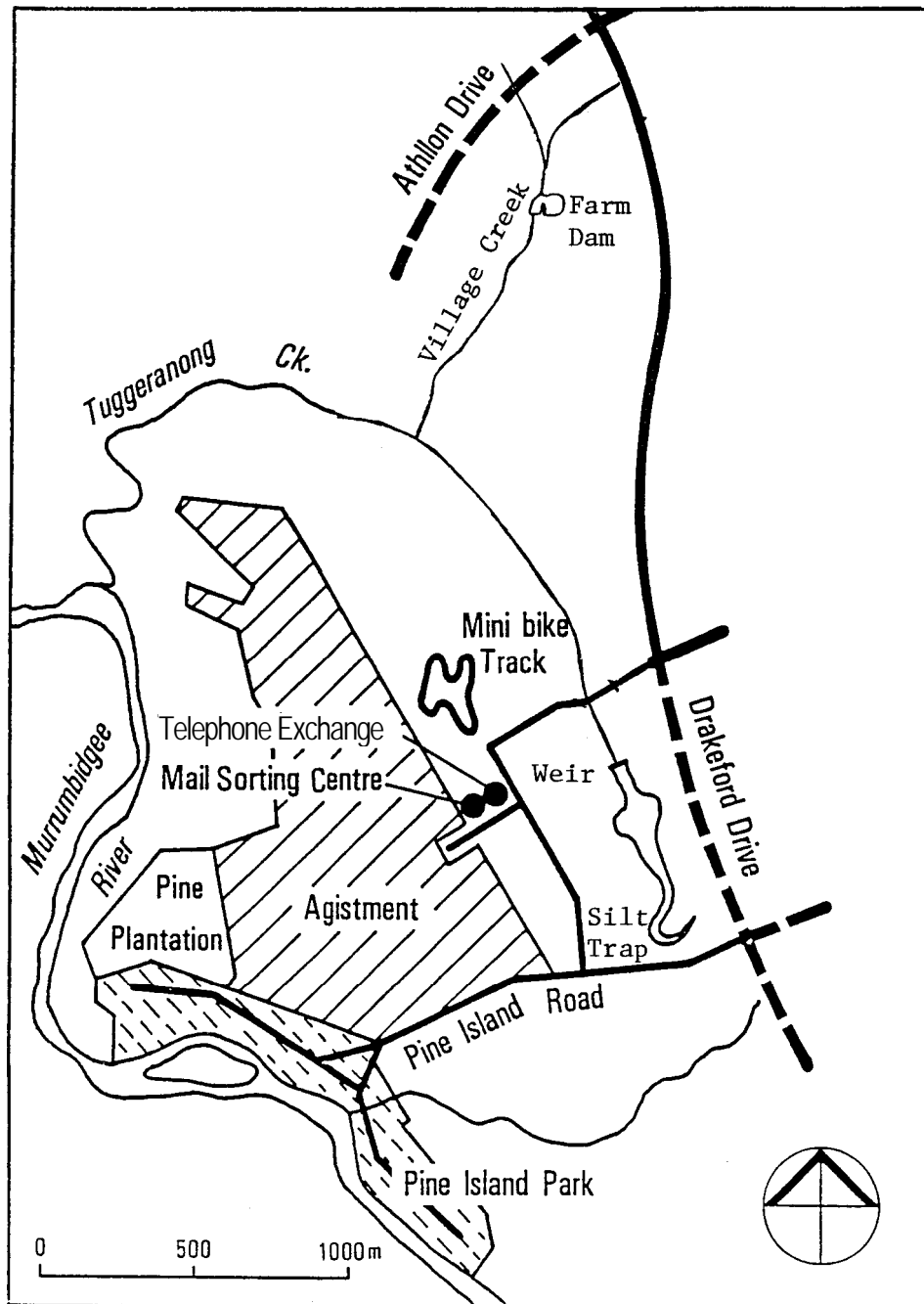


FIGURE 1

Location of Farm Dam, Village Creek and Silt Trap, Tuggeranong Creek.

Later I had clear, close views of a Baillon's Crake *P. pusilla*, as it clambered about in the emergent vegetation. Several others were suspected but not positively identified.

This was towards the end of the drought and the impression was that the species was there in some numbers. However, I have not seen it there since, in well over 2 years, although I have had, on a number of occasions, very good views of the Australian Crake, the highlight being five in May 1985.

Except for one bird, they were all observed on the sand/ mud flats area, often well in the open and appeared quite tame.

The potential of the area, particularly the number of Golden-headed Cisticolas *Cisticola exilis* seen, encouraged me to make several further visits.

These confirmed my initial impressions and left me wondering what plans, if any, there were for this area, which is so close to the established suburbs of Kambah and Wanniasa.

An answer was soon forthcoming as on 3 April 1983 *The Canberra Times* carried a front page article stating that the NCDC was seeking funds for the first stage of what was proposed to be Canberra's third artificial lake to be called Lake Tuggeranong.

A shallow weir was to be built in the current Village Creek 'dam' site, in which aquatic weeds would be allowed to grow and it would be expected to attract waterbirds 'in large numbers'. An important role of this weir would be to 'chemically and physically cleanse incoming water of fertilizers and nutrients'. It was also stated that once built, the water quality in the weir would be closely monitored before a decision was made on the further development of a lake or water feature.

Two options were said to be under consideration: one a lake covering about 70 hectares, and the second a series of ponds and weirs, each covering about seven hectares. These would be 'developed and extensively landscaped'.

DISCUSSIONS WITH, AND SUBMISSIONS TO, AUTHORITIES

At this stage COG contacted the NCDC and discussions were held concerning the construction of the weir and the future lake in order that these might provide the most attractive bird habitat possible. It was made clear that the second option for the lake was preferred by COG.

Soon afterwards it became clear, through a series of press reports that commercial pressures to build the Tuggeranong Town Centre (to be situated on the edge of the lake) would overtake the planned orderly progression of the weir, with its water

quality protection properties, followed by lake construction. This culminated in the NCDC's release for public comment of the 'Tuggeranong Town Centre - Policy Plan, Development Plan - Draft for Discussion' in late December 1984.

From this it was clear the concept of smaller ponds was rejected in favour of the 70 hectare lake (see Figure 2). This was to be divided into three water quality zones including 'weedy catchment areas' where the two creeks enter the lake. These are considered necessary for water quality control.

Of particular concern to COG was the proposal to locate medium density housing to within 25 m of the Village Creek 'weedy catchment area'. Chris Davey put in a submission to the NCDC on behalf of COG, pointing out the incompatibility of bird habitat so close to residential development and stating that for this reason the latter should not occur.

This led to further discussions with the NCDC during which it became clear that they did intend to make the 'weedy catchment areas' attractive waterbird habitat by, for example, providing a variety of islands which would be inaccessible to the public and having the water sufficiently deep to prevent excessive macrophyte growth.

However, they were determined to press ahead with their intention to provide medium density housing on the banks, though the minimum set-back was modified from 25 to 30 m in response to our submission.

It should also be noted that these houses (and the Town Centre) are intended to be built before the creeks are dammed and the lake allowed to fill, presumably to circumvent opposition similar to that encountered with Lake Ginninderra proposals.

About the same time the Department of Territories called for comment on two variations to the city plan which would allow the building of access roads to enable the development of this medium density housing. Any comments or objections would be referred to the Parliamentary Joint Committee (PJC) on the ACT which would conduct a public hearing into the proposals and report to Parliament before the variations can take effect.

COG responded by a submission opposing the variations, pointing out that it is not feasible to provide bird habitat so close to residential development. The outcome of our objection is not known.

While the PJC's report was tabled in Parliament after the 1985 Budget Session, it merely noted COG's objections and hoped further discussions between COG and the NCDC would resolve the waterbird issues. The NCDC proposals were generally accepted.

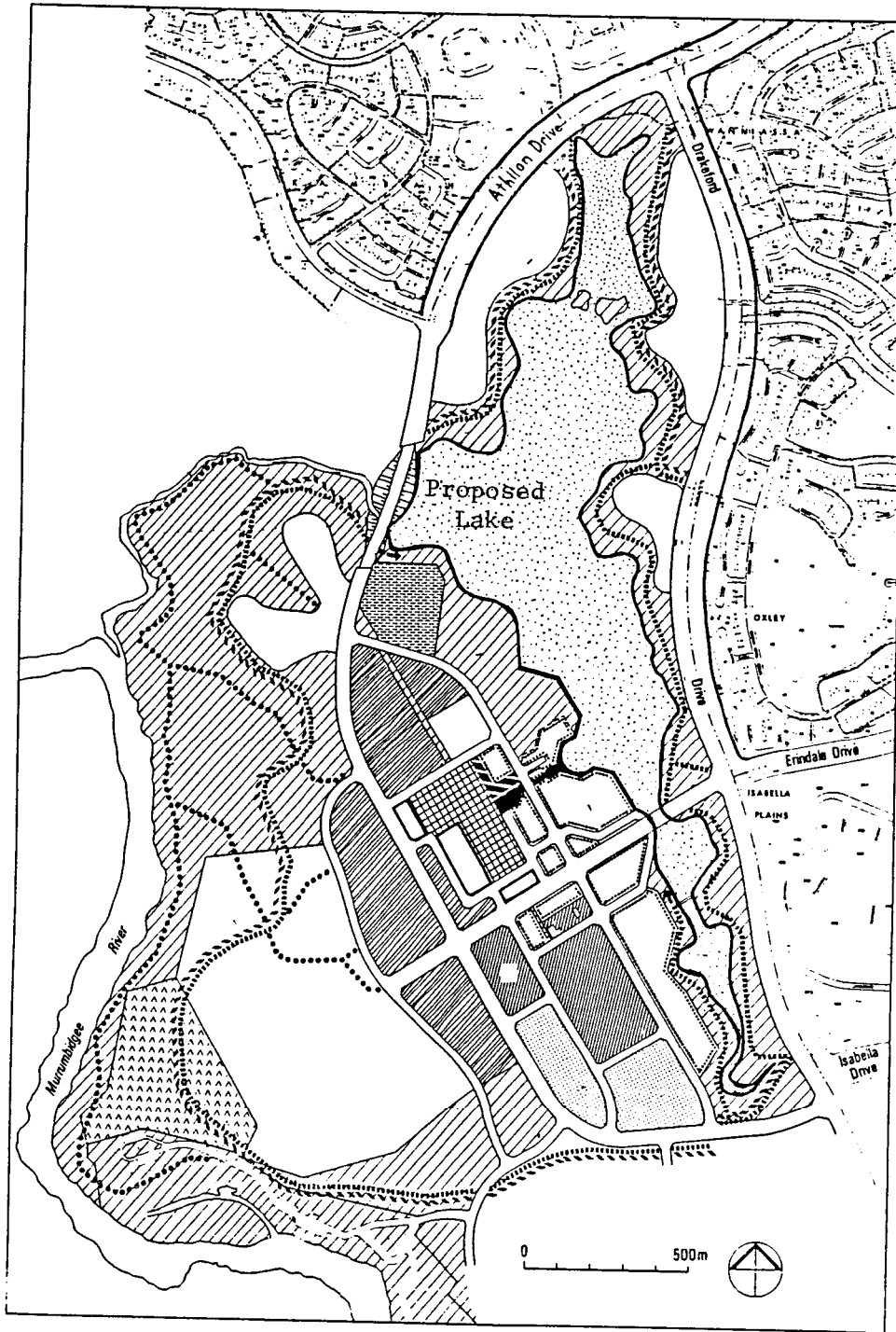


FIGURE 2: PROPOSED TUGGERANONG LAKE AND TOWN CENTRE

BIRD RECORDS FOR THE AREA

Once the plans for the area became clear, and following discussions with Chris Davey and Michael Lenz, I undertook to include both existing water features in at least the COG bimonthly water-bird surveys, with more frequent visits at key times.

The purpose was to obtain a comparative record of birds using the area before, during and after construction of the lake. Except for the occasional survey being missed, this has been maintained since June 1983.

At the same time a request was made through 'Gang-gang' for any COG member who may have records and/or census data from

the area to come forward. This elicited several responses, most notably from Ross Bennett who had carried out extensive census work at both sites for 3 months during 1980. All data have been included in the tables and discussion below.

Ian Taylor also uncovered an interesting article by Charles Barrett (1922) about birds in the immediate vicinity in the early 1920's. These observations were mainly made at the Tuggeranong Homestead, several kilometres south-east and upstream from the 'silt trap'.

Barrett did, however, take a walk which brought him close to the Murrumbidgee. His records are not included below as the exact locality is unknown (said to be open forest country which

contrasts with the open grasslands of both sites). I have noted, however, that Barrett's records in the area included the Red-capped Robin *Petroica goodenovii*, Brown Treecreeper *Climacteris picumnus*, Whitebrowed Babbler *Pomatostomus superciliosus* and Jacky Winter *Microeca leucophaea* all of which are rare, if not absent from Canberra urban areas today.

METHODS AND RESULTS

The site was surveyed on the following dates:

1982	30 November	1984	5 February
1983	26 January		18 March
	3 March		29 April
	1 April		24 June
	26 June		21 October
	21 August		16 December
	25 September	1985	10 February
	23 October		24 March
	20 November		25 April

After April 1983 sampling consisted of covering the same predetermined route lasting approximately 1.5 hours each. These basically covered the whole area at each site and attempted to determine the total number of birds present.

The difference in the number of birds and species at each site is immediately obvious, waterbird life being much more prolific on the shallower Village Creek 'dam'.

All results for waterbirds from my regular surveys are included in Tables 1 and 2 for the Village Creek 'dam' and the Tuggeranong 'silt trap' respectively.

These results should be compared with Ross Bennett's more frequent surveys over a 3 month period in early 1980. These are presented in Table 3 as the average number of birds seen per month. The survey method is not known.

The contrast between the 'dam' and 'silt trap' is less obvious. It should be noted that these records were obtained in mid-drought as opposed to mine which are generally post-drought. The importance of local wetlands during periods of drought is underlined. Tables 4 and 5 include my systematic landbird records for the areas surrounding the Village Creek 'dam' and the Tuggeranong 'silt trap' respectively. Note that Bennett restricted his records to waterbirds.

Less extensive records were provided by George Guy (from the Village Creek 'dam' during visits between 29 July and 20 October 1979), John Hardwick (from 5 visits to the 'silt trap' between 15 December 1979 and 13 September 1980 - these largely overlap with Ross Bennetts survey period) and Matthew Larkin.

These have been incorporated, where appropriate, in the comments on the individual species below, which also include some records gleaned from the Annual Bird Reports from 1978-79 to 1980-81.

ANNOTATED SPECIES LIST - WATERBIRDS

Species are commented on only where this is considered significant or when additional records are available to those in Tables 1-3.

Hoary-headed Grebe *Poliiocephalus poliocephalus* Higher numbers on silt trap during drought conditions (Table 3). The majority of records, as expected, are on these deeper waters though the species is not confined to it. Hardwick also observed this species on the silt trap, the maximum being 17 on 13 May 1980. Other records are 2 on both 23 September and 2 October 1979 on the Village Creek dam (Grey).

TABLE 1
WATER BIRDS - VILLAGE CREEK

	1982				1983				1984				1985								
Hoary-headed Grebe									1	1							1				
Australasian Grebe	P	P	P	P					1	1	3*				3	1	1				
Great Cormorant			2	P	1	2	3		9	1							1				
Little Black Cormorant					1										7						
Little Pied Cormorant				P	2						14	36			4	5	21	19			
Pacific Heron															1		1				
White-faced Heron				P	1	2	2		9		1	1	1	1	1						
Great Egret														2							
Intermediate Egret															2						
Rufous Night Heron																	1	1			
Sacred Ibis									1												
Straw-necked Ibis				2																	
Yellow-billed Spoonbill						1			1	1			1	1		1	1	1			
Feral Duck																					
Pacific Black Duck	P	P	P	P	10	4	4	5	35#	35#	15	18	11	28	19	60	32	24	10	12	11
Grey Teal	P	P	P	2	2		4		11	8			6	32	2	12	45	30	21	21	36
Australasian Shoveler			5	6(2)									1	1							
Maned Duck			P	2			2		1		2	1	4	12	6						
Baillon's Crake	1+																				
Australian Crake	1			1											1			5		1	
Dusky Moorhen	P	P	P	P	10	16	4	4	6	3	8#	9#	10	4	10	3	10	8	11	10	7
Purple Swamphen		P	P	P	7	3	4	2	4	3	4	1	5	3	3	9	9	12	11	16	12
Eurasian Coot	P	P	P	P	18	15	4		4	5	6	4#	1	6	4	3	12	14	10	6	16
Masked Lapwing				1			2						4		2		3	4	4	17	4
Black-fronted Plover	P	P	P	1			2	2	5	3	2	3	3	3	2	2	4	3	2	3	
Latham's Snipe	1						1		3	5					1						
Silver Gull					1																
TOTAL	9	10	11	10	8	5	9	11	11	12	8	8	9	10	11	12	15	10	14	12	10

*Incomplete count (P = Present)

Including young

TABLE 2
WATER BIRDS - TUGGERANONG SILT TRAP

	1983								1984				OCT	DEC	1985					
	APR	JUN	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	FEB	MAR	APR	JUN			FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN		
Hoary-headed Grebe																				
Great Cormorant				1	1								2							
Little Pied Cormorant																			1	
Pacific Heron	2																			
White-faced Heron													1		1					
Feral Duck	1									3	3									
Pacific Black Duck	1			1			2						4	17#	4	1	1	1		
Grey Teal																			1	
Australasian Shoveler											12(63)									
Maned Duck				2	2			6#	12	19			4	9	11	12	2	2		
Dusky Moorhen		1												1	1	1		1		
Purple Swamphen	1														1					
Eurasian Coot	15	26	13			2	4	1	1	7	7		11	17	20	22	20	19		
Masked Lapwing		2				2	2	2	3	1					4		2	3		
Black-fronted Plover				1	2	1		2	2	2	22	2	2	2				2		
Cannon Sandpiper					1															
Latham's Snipe												1								
TOTAL	5	3	3	4	3	3	4	4	5	53	4	4	5	6	7	4	5	7		

Including young

TABLE 3 - WATERBIRD OBSERVATIONS BY ROSS BENNETT

	VILLAGE CREEK				TUGGERANONG WEIR			
	FEB	1980		MAY	1980			
Australasian Grebe	5.3	4.6	9					
Hoary-headed Grebe					10.5	13	13.2	
Little Pied Cormorant			3+	1				
White-faced Heron	1.2	1	1.2		1	2	1.5	
Cattle Egret		12+						
Straw-necked Ibis			12+					
Sacred Ibis		1+					4+	
Australasian Shelduck							1+	
Feral Duck							1+	
Black Duck	30.5	22	31.4	29	28.3	24.8	26.5	25
Grey Teal	27.6	24	31.7	28	36.3	20.6	25.7	18
Chestnut Teal	2+							
Shoveller	2.8	2.8	5.2		0.8	1	1.5	
Hardhead	2	1.1	1		3.1	3.6	4	
Maned Duck	1.3	10	23	10	5.3	13.1	22.7	12
Australian Crake			3+					
Dusky Moorhen	4.3	4.1#	6	8				
Purple Swamphen	5.8	5.1	8.5	8				
Eurasian Coot	5.8	6.1	10	12	1	1.4	0.2	
Double-banded Plover						3+		
Black-fronted Plover	1.6	1.8	3.2		2	2.1	3.5	
Red-kneed Dotterel		3+						
Silver Gull	2+	1+			2+	1+		
Number of Species	13	15	14	7	10	11	12	3
Number of visits per month	6	7	4	1	6	7	4	1

Average number of birds seen at Village Dam and Tuggeranong Weir during a 'drought' year, February to May 1980.

+ = species seen once only during the month
 # = including young

TABLE 4 - LAND BIRDS OF VILLAGE CREEK

	1982			1983							1984					1985				
															FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	
Black-shouldered Kite			1												1	2		1		
Brown Goshawk																				
Marsh Harrier															1					
Australian Hobby										2										
Brown Falcon			1		1											1			1	
Australian Kestrel															1	1				
Quail sp			2																	
Galah						3	2	5	2	2	2	6	1	2	9	1	2	1	3	10
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo						2		2				2	5	4	1	3	25	5	2	
Eastern Rosella								2												
Red-rumped Parrot																	2			
Horsefield's Bronze-Cuckoo												1								
Skylark	P				3	4	2	3	6	2		4	2		4					
Welcome Swallow			P		12	2	2			1		4	6	5	1			1		
Tree Martin															2	4			1	
Fairy Martin	P	9						8	2	1		1			4					
Richard's Pipit				P	10	3	2	2	5	1	1	1	8		3	6	4	2	3	
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike																	1			
Flame Robin					1()														1()	
Rufous Whistler					1												1()			
Rufous Fantail																				
Grey Fantail										1										
Willie Wagtail						1					1	1				1	1	1		
Clamorous Reed-Warbler	P	P	P		1		8	8	8	12	15	4			6	12	8	2		
Little Grassbird	1	3	4		1		1	2	3	2	4	1			2	3		1	3	
Golden-headed Cisticola	10	3	1	1	1		1	2	2	1	2	6	2		6	4	2	2	1	
Silveri) Fairy Wren											6	3	4							
Weebill																		3	1	
Yellow-rumped Thornbill																		1	1	
Noisy Friarbird											1		1					2	4	
White-plumed Honeyeater																		2	1	
White-fronted Chat			1()												6				5(3)	
Silveye																			12	
Striated Pardalote																			1	
European Goldfinch						4					3		2						1	
House Sparrow						3	7	4	6	4	4	7	10	6	6			10	9	
Common Starling						13	7	20	14	50	12	7	10	6	7	51		10	11	
Australian Magpie-lark						3	2		2		3	1	13	2	1		3	2	3	
Australian Magpie				P	10	8	15	3	4		10	5	6	2	2	2		10	4	
Australian Raven						5	1				1			3	2	6	1	1	2	
Little Raven																			14	
TOTAL	6*	7*	4*	7*	4	14	9	12	13	11	15	13	15	11	15	16	18	21	15	
* = Incomplete count	P = present																			

TABLE 5

LAND BIRDS - TUGGERANONG SILT TRAP

	1983							1984						1985						
	APR*	JUN	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	FEB	MAR	APR	JUN	OCT	DEC	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN		
Black-shouldered Kite																				
Brown Goshawk												2		5	4	2				
Australian Hobby								1												
Brown Falcon															1			1		
Australian Kestrel				1																
Whistling Kite					1															
Stubble Quail																	2			
Quail sp							1		1	5		1	2							
Galah	25			16	4	2	2	4	2			8	6	4	20	4	8	14	10	
Budgerigar												1								
Red-rumped Parrot								2	2		2			2						
Laughing Kookburra																	1			
Rainbow Bee-eater							4													
Singing Bushlark							1													
Syklark	3		15	10	12	12	8	10		2	4							1	4	8
Welcome Swallow				1	3		2		3	4	4			2	2				3	
Tree Martin							5	4						4	3					
Fairy Martin							8	5						4						
Richard's Pipit	P		5	8	5	2	6	2	2	6	5	2	4	4	6	8	4	12	3	
Flame Robin																			1	
Willie Wagtail											5									
Clamorous Reed-Warbler	3					5	10	6	6	3	1		3	14	4					
Little Grassbird							1	1			2			1						
Golden-headed Cisticola	1							2	2	16	1	2	6	3	8	5	2	5	7	
Brown Songlark						2	1													
Yellow-rumped Thornbill																			6	
Noisy Friarbird						1														
White-fronted Chat				3								2								
European Goldfinch											3						4	1		
House Sparrow				2	3	4		8	4	25	50	24	5	24	3		2	30	11	
Common Starling	40			90	18	3		3	2	3	30	20	1				4	4		
Australian Magpie-lark				1				6	3		3	2		2				1	2	
Australian Magpie	12			3	1	3	2	2	2	1	2		1		1	2		1	2	
Australian Raven	1			2	2	1	1	1		2	4	2	2		1	2	2	3	2	
Little Raven				5							20									
TOTAL	4		7	12	8	12	12	14	12	10	16	10	11	15	10	9	11	11	11	

* = Incomplete count

P = present

Australasian Grebe *Tachybaptus novaehollandiae*

By contrast (and also as expected) all records are from Village Creek dam (Tables 1-3). Higher numbers during drought.

Little Pied Cormorant *Phalacrocorax melanoleucos*

Large numbers on Village Creek dam in April-June 1984 and May-June 1985.

Pacific Heron *Ardea pacifica*

Additional records are my observations of 1 at the silt trap on 3 April 1983 and 2 at the Village Creek dam on 15 May 1983.

Rufous Night Heron *Nycticorax caledonicus*

It was a surprise to flush one of this species, in juvenile plumage, from the reeds at the Village Creek dam in May and June 1985. On both occasions the bird settled again after a circuit or two, either on top of the reeds or on the bank.

Australian Shelduck *Tadorna tadornoides*

Additional records (Table 3) are: 2 at Village Creek dam on 30 September 1983 (Guy) and 1 at the silt trap on 26 April 1980 (Hardwick).

Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa*

With Grey Teal the most common duck species, although numbers were variable during 1983-85. Contrast numbers particularly on silt trap in 1980 during drought (confirmed by Hardwick) with more recent data (Tables 2 and 3). Guy recorded '3 and 4 dozen' on Village Creek dam on 15 July and 7 September 1979 respectively.

Grey Teal *Anas gibberifrons*

Note in particular abundance on silt trap in 1980, compared with my records there only in March and June 1985. Again Guy recorded '3 or 4 dozen' on Village Creek dam between 29 July and 2 October 1979.

Australasian Shoveler *Anas rhynchotis*

Additional record of 1 (possibly 4) on silt trap 24 May 1980 (Hardwick)

Pinkeared Duck *Malacorhynchus membranaceus*

The sole record is 2 on silt trap 13 September 1980 (Hardwick),

Hardhead *Aythya australis*

In low numbers at each site during 1980 (Table 3). Hardwick confirmed this with observations of 2-3 on silt trap in April and May 1980. Note no records during 1983-85.

Maned Duck *Chenonetta jubata*

Additional records of between 15-48 at silt trap between 26 April -24 May 1980 (Hardwick).

Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla*

Additional records of 1 on 8 August and 3 on 22-23 September at Village Creek dam (Guy). The latter were seen feeding on green vegetation just after sunrise. I feel that records of this inconspicuous species could increase with systematic searching including trapping.

Australian Crake *Porzana fluminea*

Additional record of single bird at Village Creek dam on 30 December 1981 (Brooke - Annual Bird Report 1981-82). Again records, though higher than above, may not be a true indication of status of this species.

Dusky Moorhen *Gallinula tenebrosa*

Note significant numbers on Village Creek dam in both surveys, as opposed to very few records from silt trap (Tables 1-3). Guy recorded even higher numbers (between '3 and 4 dozen') on dam between 29 July and 2 October 1979.

Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio* Largely confined to Village Creek dam

Eurasian Coot *Fulica atra*

My records suggest this species was evenly divided between silt trap and Village Creek dam during 1983-85. Bennett, however, found it more common at Village Creek during early 1980. Guy supports his figures with records of between 1-2 dozen from 29 July-2 October 1979. Note breeding record on Village Creek dam in March 1984 (see also CBN 9(2)).

Black-fronted Plover *Charadrius melanops*

Common in small numbers at both sites in both surveys (Tables 1-3). Additional records of 2 at silt trap between 15 December 1979 and 13 September 1980 (4 on last date - Hardwick) and 4 at Village Creek on 23 September 1979 (Guy).

Common Sandpiper *Tringa hypoleucos*

Single record (Table 2) was from the pool below silt trap dam wall on 25 September 1983.

Latham's Snipe *Gallinago hardwickii*

Appears to be more common at Village Creek dam than silt trap. Also recorded (number not stated) at former site on 21 January 1983 (Larkin).

ANNOTATED LIST - LANDBIRDS

Again additional comments are made to data listed in Tables 4-5 only where deemed appropriate.

Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus notatus*

The influx of this species during the summer/autumn of 1984-85 was probably related to the house mouse plague being experienced at the time. Records included several juveniles. Ormay observed 5 birds at Village Creek on 28 July 1982 (Annual Bird Report - 1982-83).

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

My single record was of a bird between the two sites. The 1981-82 Annual Bird Report records a further observation of a single bird at Village Creek on 30 December 1981 (Brooke).

Quail *Coturnix sp.*

These have been flushed on a number of occasions particularly from the shores of the silt trap, but only on one occasion (April 1985) were views sufficient to allow confirmation as Stubble Quail *Coturnix novaezelandiae* (as normally suspected). Further records are 3+ Stubble Quail at Village Creek on 29 December 1981 by an undisclosed observer (possibly Brookes see Annual Bird Report - 1981-82) and a possible sighting on 21 January 1983 at the same location (Larkin).

Galah *Cacatua roseicapilla*/Sulphurcrested Cockatoo *C. galerita*
Nearly all records of these two species have been of birds flying over.

Budgerigar *Melopsittacus undulatus*

Single record of green bird with house sparrows in exotic bushes at upstream end of silt trap (a presumed aviary escapee - see Table 5).

Horsfield's BronzeCuckoo *Chrysococcyx basalis*

Surprise late record at Village Creek on 29 April 1984 was of a presumed juvenile bird due to its pale colour with little barring under.

Rainbow Bee-eater *Merops ornatus*

Only records are of birds passing over in October 1983. Species does not appear to be resident in area.

Singing Bushlark *Mirafra javanica*

This species may be more common than the records indicate but has proved difficult to positively identify in the presence of the Skylark and Richard's Pipit. Further record (Brooke) of 2+ at silt trap on 29 December 1981 (Annual Bird Report-1981-82).

Skylark *Alauda arvensis*

A common species in the area particularly around the silt trap. A curious feature is that over several seasons the species has appeared to be either inconspicuous or absent during late summer/early autumn. Certainly few, if any, are calling aloft which is a feature of the area at other times.

Martin *Cecropis spp.*

Spring/summer records only, often of mixed flocks which renders determination of accurate numbers of each difficult. Brooke and Larkin recorded a breeding colony of about 30 Fairy Martins *Cecropis ariel* on the silt trap dam wall from September to December 1981 (Annual Bird Report 1981-82) but my observations show these nests have not been used in recent years.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae*

Common throughout year at both sites.

Clamorous Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus*

Common at both sites during spring to early autumn. One or two birds also recorded at Village Creek during September/October 1979 (Guy).

Rufous Fantail *Rhipidura rufifrons*

Surprise record of single bird migrating through willows at Village Creek dam on 1 April 1983.

Little Grassbird *Megalurus gramineus*

Present at both sites but more common at Village Creek. While most are aural records, good views have been obtained on a number of occasions particularly after the vegetation has died off. Further records at Village Creek are 4 on 29 July, 5 on 22-23 September and 3 on 2 October 1979 (Guy).

Golden-headed Cisticola *Cisticola exilis*

This species is a feature of both sites, particularly with its conspicuous aerial displays during the breeding season. Appears to be present throughout year, although usually less conspicuous in non breeding season. Other records at Village Creek are 1 on 23 September and 2 on 17 October 1979 (Guy) and 'present' on 21 January 1983 (Larkin) who also recorded it as breeding at the silt trap in December 1981.

Brown Songlark *Cinclorhamphus cruralis*

Recorded on ridge east of silt trap during November/December 1983 (second on aural record only).

Whitefronted Chat *Ephthianura albifrons*

Several records from both sites but with no obvious pattern. Species is not resident.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Most records are of birds around Drakeford Drive Bridge over Village Creek or the silt trap dam wall. Occasionally largish numbers in exotic bushes at the upstream end of the silt trap. At present this species does not appear to frequent the Village Creek dam area.

Little Raven *Corvus mellori*

A further record is my observation of a flock of 100+ at the corner of Drakeford Drive and Taverner Street on 2 September 1983 in what is now the new suburb of Oxley.

Scattered records at Village Creek of what are generally considered 'bush birds' such as Rufous Whistler *Pachycephala rufiventris*, Weebill *Smicrornis brevirostris*, Whiteplumed Honeyeater *Lichenostomus penicillatus*, Striated Pardalote *Pardalotus striatus*, Silvereye *Zosterops lateralis*, etc, have generally been from native vegetation planted along Drakeford Drive, near the bridge over the creek. This is the start and end of my transect.

Numbers of these species could be expected to increase with further plantings around the proposed lake,

DISCUSSION

It seems clear that the current bird status will change as the Town Centre, lake and associated housing come into being.

The main casualties will probably be the grassland birds such as Skylarks, quail, Cisticolas, etc. As Figure 2 shows, the proximity of housing, roads and buildings so close to both arms of the lake will probably not leave enough viable habitat for these species to remain in any numbers if at all.

The likely fate of the more interesting waterbird species such as crake, snipe, etc, is also unknown and could be very dependent on the final treatment given to the area, including the further ponds envisaged by the NCDC to the south of the lake, such as on Stranger Creek.

Disturbance of the area will commence in the near future. Current NCDC projections (June 1985) are for infrastructure works (roads, sewerage etc, including for lakeside housing) to start by November 1985 and for the Town Centre to be completed by early 1987. Work on the lake including the dam and edges is being held over until the second stage and is not scheduled to begin till the 1986-87 financial year for completion by 1988.

The gathering of base-line records is thus nearly complete. It is intended to carry out further regular survey work both during the construction period and after completion and also to maintain contacts with the NCDC in order to press for the development of the most attractive bird habitat possible.

REFERENCE:

Barrett, C. 1922, *EMU* 21:251.

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