



canberra bird notes

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No. 8

October 1973 50c

GARDEN BIRDS AT CAMPBELL A.C.T.

My husband and I kept a daily record of birds observed in and near our garden at Holmes Crescent, Campbell, A.C.T. from 1 July 1972 to 30 June 1973. The garden has some exotic trees and there are several large Eucalypts in the vicinity. We have two bird baths and a lily pool which are used continually by blackbirds, starlings, rosellas, honeyeaters, currawongs, sparrows, silvereyes finches etc, Honeyeaters including Eastern Spine-bills frequently dive into the pool to bathe.

Annotated list

White-faced Heron, One seen 21 March,

Little Bittern, One seen 1 November sitting on privet hedge during morning and afternoon.

Black-shouldered Kite, One seen 3 November.

Brown Goshawk, One seen 4 and 26 April.

Wedge-tailed Eagle, One seen 10 February.

Little Falcon, one seen 24 October.

Brown Hawk, one seen 28 October,

CANBERRA BIRD

NOTES 2 (8) - 2 - October, 1973.

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Kestrel, one seen 22 July, 1972, 6
November. and 12 and 13 October.

A bronzewing one seen 27 January and 24 March.

Gang-Gang Cockatoo, From 21 May to 29
June frequently seen feeding on
Cypress cones.

Galah from two to thirty seen
flying over almost

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo, small flocks
of up to ten fly over fairly often
at all seasons.

Crimson Rosella, From August to October
four to six were seen frequently and
from November- to June for to eight
were seen daily including two adults.

Eastern Rosella, two to four were seen
every month but very infrequently.

Boobook Owl, heard infrequently throughout
the year. A couple were heard fifteen
times in September.

Pallid Cuckoo, one or two noted very
frequently from 17 September and almost
daily from October to 4 January.

Fantail Cuckoo, Noted two or three times in
November.

Kookaburra, Seen regularly from July to
November. A pair was seen daily in January
and from 12 January to 12 February they
fed one chick. Six were seen 18 February.
After that one pair was seen frequently.
From April to June they were rarely seen.

Cont'd.

Dollarbird, One was seen infrequently November and December and daily in January. After 8 January one or two juveniles were being fed by their parents. During February up to four were seen frequently.

Welcome Swallow, Small numbers were seen in March.

Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike, Two or three seen almost daily during August and September. One or two seen infrequently during the other months of the year.

Blackbird, Two resident pairs.

White-throated Warbler, Heard but not often seen from mid September to March very frequently, and almost daily in November.

Striated and Brown Thornbill, From mid November to end of March small flocks of up to eight seen frequently.

Yellow-tailed Thornbill, Occasionally small flocks pass through during January, February and March.

Brown Weebill, from three to eight seen all year round.

Scarlet Robin, one or two seen very rarely.

Grey Fantail, October to December two to four seen infrequently, January and February a pair seen daily. Eight were seen 15 February. A pair was seen frequently during March and April, and they were rarely seen during May and June.

Leaden Flycatcher, One pair seen 11 July, and nine times during January. Two pairs seen 8 January.

Rufous Whistler, One or two females or immatures were seen daily from October to December and infrequently from January to March. Occasionally a male was sighted.

- 4 -

Grey Shrike-Thrush Usually one and rarely two were seen frequently from March to June and very rarely from July to February.

Orange-winged Sittella, One or two were seen four times in July and one was seen once in February.

Spotted Pardalote, and other pardalotes seen almost daily in small numbers. Spotted Pardalote more numerous and vocal. A flock of 15 seen 17 August. Up to ten or more seen from January to May. Small numbers during June.

Grey-breasted Silvereye, Seen almost daily all year round, Numbers vary from six to thirty. From July to October they are more numerous than in other months, During November a pair nested in a Tamarisk tree, but did not appear to rear any young.

Fuscous Honeyeater, From the end of May to mid July up to four were seen almost daily. A small flock of eight was seen twice in May.

Yellow-faced Honeyeater, From July to December one or two were seen infrequently; and from January to May frequently. In April and May there were also flocks of about ten. In June one or two were seen infrequently.

White-eared Honeyeater, July, August, May and June one was seen frequently. Two were seen several times in late May.

Yellow-tufted Honeyeater, Up to four were seen sixteen times in May and up to five were seen nine times in June.

White-plumed Honeyeater, In July one was seen three times. In April one or two juveniles were seen.

White-naped Honeyeater, From July to April one or two were seen infrequently. At least six were seen at the end of April. In May there were flocks of up to 14. During June about six were seen daily.

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- 5 -

Eastern Spinebill, July, August, May and June up to four were seen regularly. . None were seen from October to December. They were rarely seen during January and February.

New Holland Honeyeater, One was seen 9 December.

Red. Wattlebird, From July to March up to four were seen frequently, and daily from April to June. Eight were seen 28 December and ten were seen 13 and 26 April and 28 May.

Noisy Friarbird, From 29 August to 28 September one or two were seen frequently. From October to February up to four were seen almost daily, and during March eleven times. One bird was seen twice during April.

Banded Finch, From July to October up to three seen infrequently. March, May and June up to ten were seen frequently. None were seen during April.

House Sparrow, About thirty were present in resident flocks.

Goldfinch, A pair was seen infrequently in October and in a Cypress in November. There was an abandoned nest and no sign of young 17 December, two juveniles were seen 27 January. A pair was seen twice in April and June.

Starling, Flock move through daily.

Pied Currawong, In July and August up to eight were seen daily. September and November one was seen infrequently. None were seen in December. In January one was seen nine times. In March one or two were seen daily. In April up to eight were seen daily. Thirty were seen 26 April. During May and June up to ten were seen daily.

Grey Currawong, Two were seen 31 December and one 23 March.

Black-backed Magpie, The resident flock varied from two to six.

Magpie-Lark, In July two were seen on rare occasions. August and September two were seen more frequently. From October to June two or four were seen very frequently.

Raven, One or two flew over almost daily.

Mildred Basten.

BIRDS OF KHANCOBAN FROM MARCH

TO MAY 1973.

INTRODUCTION

Situation: Khancoban was established by the Snowy Mountains Authority as a construction township in the late 1950's with a peak period population

of 3,500 persons, the population has now declined to approx. 500 and is remaining fairly static.

The township is bordered on one side by the Khancoban Pondage, to the east by the Kosciusko National Park and to the west by areas of bush and cleared grazing country.

The area where the observations were carried out is situated in the foothills of the Great Dividing Range 36°15', 148°10' and covers an area of 70 km² part of which is within the K.N.P.

HABITATS

Township Area; Most trees occurring within the township area are exotic - Both fruit and ornamental - this in itself provides a habitat most attractive to fruit and berry-eating birds. Insect-eating birds are also attracted at varying times.

The Valley: This was cleared many years ago for grazing and the creek bank including the Swampy Plains River have been planted with Salix bablonica, Weeping Willow, and Salix viminalis, Basket Willow,

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Some of the original Eucalyptus were left - being in the main - E. macrorhyncha, E. mannifera and E. bridgesania with thickets of A. falciformis and A. decurrens, grasses are mainly perrinial Rye with native cover of Themeda australis, Kangaroo grass.

Khancoban Pondage; Area of the pondage is 514 hectares. The fluctuating levels of this pondage simulates natural flooding conditions ideal for aquatic birds - aquatic birds occur in large numbers with a diversity of species. It is anticipated that over a period many more species will be recorded.

Mixed Forest: A dense forest occurs adjacent in the valley area. The forest is within the K.N.P. it ranges from dry sclerophyll forest to wet sclerophyll forest. A varied flora occurs - E. macrorhyncha, E. bridgesania, E. mannifera, E. dalrympleana, E. fastigata, and E. dives, in the moist valleys where the sclerophyll forest occurs there is a understory of Dicsonia antarctica, Tree fern, A. falciformia Broadleaf Hickory, Bedfordia salicina, Blanket bush, and Hedycarya angustifolia, Native Mulberry. The ground is usually clear but covered with a deep litter, and with mosses and fungi.

CLIMATE

The area under discussion varies in altitude from 305 metres to 950 metres with an average rainfall from between 965 mm to 1,143 mm

Cont'd,

autumn temperatures vary from a daily mean max of 2000 to a mean min of 50C. Being adjacent to the Main Range which reaches an altitude of 2,326 metres Mt. Kosciusko (29 km in

a direct line), climate has a profound effect on the avifauna causing altitudinal migration of many species - these move out of the high country during autumn when the weather starts to get colder - this is reflected in the appearance of large numbers of Pied Currawongs, Satin Bowerbirds, Crimson Rosellas, King Parrots etc. A peculiarity of the valley area is the almost total lack of wind - this phenomena could perhaps be explained by the actual situation of the valley running NW to SE and surrounded by hills and also being adjacent to the main range. High winds are experienced further along the Alpine Way at Scammels Lookout.

Fogs during the Autumn months are common and have increased since the pondage was constructed. These fogs often last until midday, the lack of wind to cause dissipation of the fog appears to be main factor in the fogs lasting well into the day.

NATIVE BIRDS

Little Grebe.

Present at all times on the Pondage in small groups to large rafts, also occurs on farm dams and still backwaters on the Swampy Plains River.

Hoary-headed Grebe

Uncommon, observed only on a few occasions in similar locations to the Little Grebe.

Black Cormorant.

Very common, occurring in large numbers both on the pondage and on streams and rivers within the area, very wary bird, being shot at by fisherman.

Little Pied Cormorant.

Very common on the pondage and in streams and rivers not as wary as the Black Cormorant, being less persecuted.

White-faced Heron.

Common, occurring in pairs or small groups in most areas of the valley and pondage - sometimes congregates in large numbers in dead willow trees at the top end of the pondage.

White Egret

Small groups observed in March and April.

White Ibis

Occurs in small groups of up to 20 birds feeds in shallow and on muddy foreshores of the pondage. Seen also in the more swampy paddocks of Khancoban Station.

Straw-necked Ibis.

Similar to White Ibis only in larger numbers.

Yellow-billed Spoonbill.

Uncommon, on few occasions one or two birds in the swampy shallows of the pond- age.

Black Swan.

Always present in small numbers on the pondage most seen on any one occasion about 50 birds usually in groups of 5 to 10 birds. Mostly swimming around the foreshores of the pondage.

Mountain Duck.

A pair observed on the mudflats of the pondage on 28 May - the birds were only observed on the one occasion could be more common than at first indicated.

Black Duck.

Very common, occurring in large numbers both on the pondage and throughout the district - a very noisy bird moving out into the middle of the pondage when approached along the foreshore. Numbers appear to fluctuate - possible movement between Lake Hume and the Khancoban. Pondage.

Grey Teal.

In small groups or pairs on the pondage - none observed since April; could possibly move away from the area for the duration of the winter.

Wood Duck.

Occurs in very large numbers both on the pondage and other areas in the Khancoban district. Heard calling overhead at night - observed foraging in lucerne paddocks on district properties.

Musk Duck.

One single bird observed only on the top end of the pondage 15 April - has not been observed since.

Black-shouldered Kite.

Common throughout the valley - observed hovering over open woodland areas, several pairs resident in the valley.

Whistling Eagle.

A number of birds are resident within the area - observed at times flying over the pondage, several favorite perching trees within the immediate area of Khancoban - fairly easily approached.

Brown Goshawk.

Occurs throughout the valley area - quite a wary bird.

Wedge-tailed Eagle.

Relatively common can be observed most days soaring above the valley and surrounding areas - largest group counted at any one time - 22 birds.

Peregrine falcon.

Rare, seen only on a few occasions.

Brown Hawk.

Common, throughout the area seen mainly on fence posts and telegraph poles.

Kestrel.

Observed hovering over open ground and grassed areas of the valley.

Dusky Moorhen.

Not as common as expected, numbers appear to fluctuate on the pondage.

Eastern Swamphen.

Relatively common on the pondage, observed feeding in shallows of the pondage.

Coot.

Quite common within the area.

Spur-winged Plover.

Very common over the whole district where cleared country occurs, many birds around the foreshore of the pondage.

Black fronted Dotterel.

Fairly common over the whole area and about the foreshores of the pondage, farm dams and sandy banks of streams.

Silver Gull.

Sighted only on a few occasions on the pondage.

Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo.

Relatively common groups pass through the area regularly.

Gang-Gang Cockatoo.

Common over the area - appears to be nomadic in habit.

Galah.

Common - large flocks in township and valley - appears to roost at the top end of the pondage.

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo,

Very common with flocks of up to 500 birds.

King Parrot

Common in flocks of up to 30 birds - feeds in cork oak and other berry trees common in township gardens.

Crimson Rosella.

Very common and most noticeable - feeds in groups of up to 20 birds - common in township gardens.

Eastern Rosella.

Uncommon in the area being a bird of the more open countryside.

Red-rumped Parrot.

Uncommon - similar status to Eastern Rosella passes through area in small groups.

Boobook Owl.

Appears to be fairly common - heard calling at night.

Tawny Frogmouth.

Quite common observed at night hawking near street lights where insects are attracted.

Spine-tailed Swift.

Observed only on one day April 3rd a great many birds passing over.

Kookaburra.

Common.

Rainbowbird

Common when migrating through area in April and early May.

Superb Lyrebird.

Common in forest surrounding the valley and township can be heard singing most mornings.

Australian Pipit.

Common in grassland areas of the district.

Welcome Swallow.

Very common occurs over most of the area except for the forest.

Fairy Martin.

Common during March, April birds departing from the local area early May.

Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike.

Common during March and April.

Superb Blue Wren.

Common - in family groups.

Striated Thornbill.

Frequently observed feeding in forest trees.

Brown Thornbill.

Common observed feeding in the understory and shrubs of the open forest country.

Yellow-tailed Thornbill

Very common throughout the whole area observed feeding on the ground or in low shrubs — a small fearless bird often flying from under one's feet.

White-browed Scrub Wren.

Common in shrubbery in open forest and gardens in the township.

Brown Weebill.

Common — observed feeding in the outer foliage of forest trees.

White-throated Treecreeper.

Moderately common in open forest and cleared country where trees are numerous.

Spotted Pardalote.

Observed only on a few occasions in the open forest.

Eastern Striated Pardalote.

Striated Pardalote

Uncommon, observed, only a few times.

Scarlet Robin.

Common appears to be an altitudinal migrant.

Flame Robin,

Common, status and habit as with Scarlet Robin.

Yellow Robin.

Quite common about township, valley and open forest areas, a fearless bird may be easily approached.

Grey Fantail.

Common throughout area.

Willie Wagtail.

Common.

Restless Flycatcher.

Uncommon, appears to be nomadic within the local area — in open forest and grassland.

Golden Whistler.

A common resident in the open forest surrounding the valley, can be heard singing most days.

Rufous Whistler.

Common during March and April birds departing early May.

Grey Shrike-Thrush.

Throughout area in singles or pairs, a trusting and fearless bird.

Shrike-Tit.

Uncommon, observed on a few occasions in the higher foliage of the forested areas.

Eastern Whipbird.

Common in forested areas and moist gullies - it is often imitated by the Lyrebird.

Grey-breasted Silvereye.

Common, appears to be nomadic, observed in all habitats.

Red-browed Finch.

Common, in large groups in grassland areas and by roadside.

Eastern Spinebill.

Common, not only in the open forest but also in gardens in the township.

Yellow-faced Honeyeater.

Very common during March and April, large numbers observed along the Swampy Plains River migrating.

Fuscous Honeyeater.

Fairly common, appears to be a partial migrant.

Yellow-tufted Honeyeater.

Small groups occur in gullies with streams, also in areas where the bush comes down to the waterline of the pondage - ti-tree scrub

Crescent Honeyeater.

Fairly, common, nomadic observed in township gardens and open forest

Red Wattlebird.

Common during March and April when large numbers were observed migrating.

Noisy Friarbird.

Status and habit similar to Red Wattlebird.

Magpie-Lark.

Common observed in flocks of up to 25 birds.

White-winged Chough.

Fairly common in small flocks in open forest country.

Dusky Woodswallow.

Common during March and April, migrated during May - in open forest and grassland areas.

Pied Currawong.

Most abundant birds moving down out of the higher country in April.

Grey Currawong.

Uncommon usually in singles or pairs.

Black-backed Magpie.

Common in all areas.

White-backed Magpie.

Common in all areas.

Australian Raven.

Common in all habitats.

Little Raven.

Observed on several occasions in flocks.

Satin Bowerbird.

Common - numbers moving into the valley during May at the onset of cold weather.

INTRODUCED BIRDSBlackbird.

Pairs in most gullies of the valley where undergrowth occurs.

Goldfinch.

Common in flocks feeding on thistles in open grassland.

House Sparrow.

Common resident - several large flocks about the township.

Skylark

Uncommon - heard only singing over grassland.

Starling

Resident common from single birds to large flocks.

Michael T. Rowe,

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DEFORMED BILLS

In a recent issue of C.B.N. instances of birds with malformed bills were noted. These injuries are not uncommon, but the chances of their survival are poor.

In late 1967 a Starling was caught in Shetland by the writer. The bird had a normal upper mandible while the lower was deformed, bending at roughly 45° from the normal. The bird was banded and released.

In early 1968, after the writer left the area, the bird was found dead in the grease trap of a kitchen within yards of the area where it was initially trapped.

It is believed that the mortality resulting from bill damage usually escapes notice because deformed birds are not normally banded. Both leg and bill injuries are fairly common in birds and mortality may be expected to be high where the abnormal bird has to take risks to obtain its food.

Mike Carins.

BIRDS OF DUNK ISLAND, NORTH QUEENSLAND

The following observations, made by my wife and myself during a holiday on Dunk Island 7-20 July 1973, might be of interest. The names are in accordance with the 1969 C.S.I.R.O. Index of Australian Bird Names. I was lent a copy of Banfield's list of birds of Dunk Island, by one of the few permanent residents on the island. The birds we saw coincided with this list.

The Brush Turkey had not been seen for many years and we got within six feet of one. The Scrub Fowl were exceedingly numerous and becoming a nuisance. Vegetables and flowers were much in evidence in their nesting mounds.

We saw both the White-breasted Sea-Eagle and the Osprey on their nests; the latter on a rock facing the sea.

On the following list, those birds which were plentiful are marked with an asterisk. We saw many birds that we could not identify and they have been omitted from the list.

Brown Booby	Grey swiftlet *
Little Grebe	Sacred Kingfisher *
White-faced Heron *	Mangrove Kingfisher
Reef Heron * Red-	Rainbow Bee-eater *
backed Sea-Eagle	Welcome Swallow *
White breasted Sea-Eagle	Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike
Osprey	White-winged Triller
Scrub-Hen *	Varied Triller *
Brush Turkey	Rufous Fantail
Beach Stone-curlew	Northern Fantail Leaden
Caspian Tern	Flycatcher * Spectacled
	Flycatcher Rufous Shrike-
	Thrush * Mistletoebird
Wampoo Pigeon	
Torres Strait Pigeon	
Brown Pigeon *	

Bar-shouldered Dove *	Yellow-breasted Sunbird *
Peaceful Dove	Dusky Honeyeater *
Green-winged Pigeon	Lesser Lewin Honeyeater *
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo *	Lewin Honeyeater
Little Bronze Cuckoo	Varied Honeyeater *
Mangrove Honeyeater	Masked Finch
Shining Starling	Yellow Oriole
Yellow Figbird	Spangled Drongo
White-breasted Woodswallow *	

Tony and Frances Lucas

A FLOCK OF RESTLESS FLYCATCHERS

At 8 a.m. on the 22.8.73, following a heavy frost, seven Restless Flycatchers were observed preening and sunning themselves on the top most branches of

A wattle tree, *Acacia decurrens*, situated in my garden in Hughes. Eventually the birds flew in tight formation into a stand of eucalypts where I lost sight of them.

David Rushton.

MEETINGS

October 10: Dr. W. Braithwaite (C.S.I.R.O.) The Open Season on waterfowl in southwestern Australia.

November 11: F. Crome - Rainforest Pigeons.

Note there will be no meetings during December & January.

EXCURSIONS

Neil Hermes has taken over from Mark Clayton as Excursions Officer. We are very grateful to Mark for the time and effort he has put into making the Excursions a major function of COG.

COMMITTEE

We regret that in the previous issue of CBN, we omitted to mention that at the June AGM. R. Schodde was elected a Committee member.

CONTENTS

Page

Garden Birds at Campbell

A.C.T.	- Mildren Basten	1
Birds of Khancoban from March, to May 1973	- Michael Rowe	6
Deformed Bills	- Mike Carins	21
Birds of Dunk Island North Queensland	- Tony & Frances Lucas	22
A Flock of Restless Flycatchers	- David Rushton	23
C.O.G. Meetings and Excursions		23

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