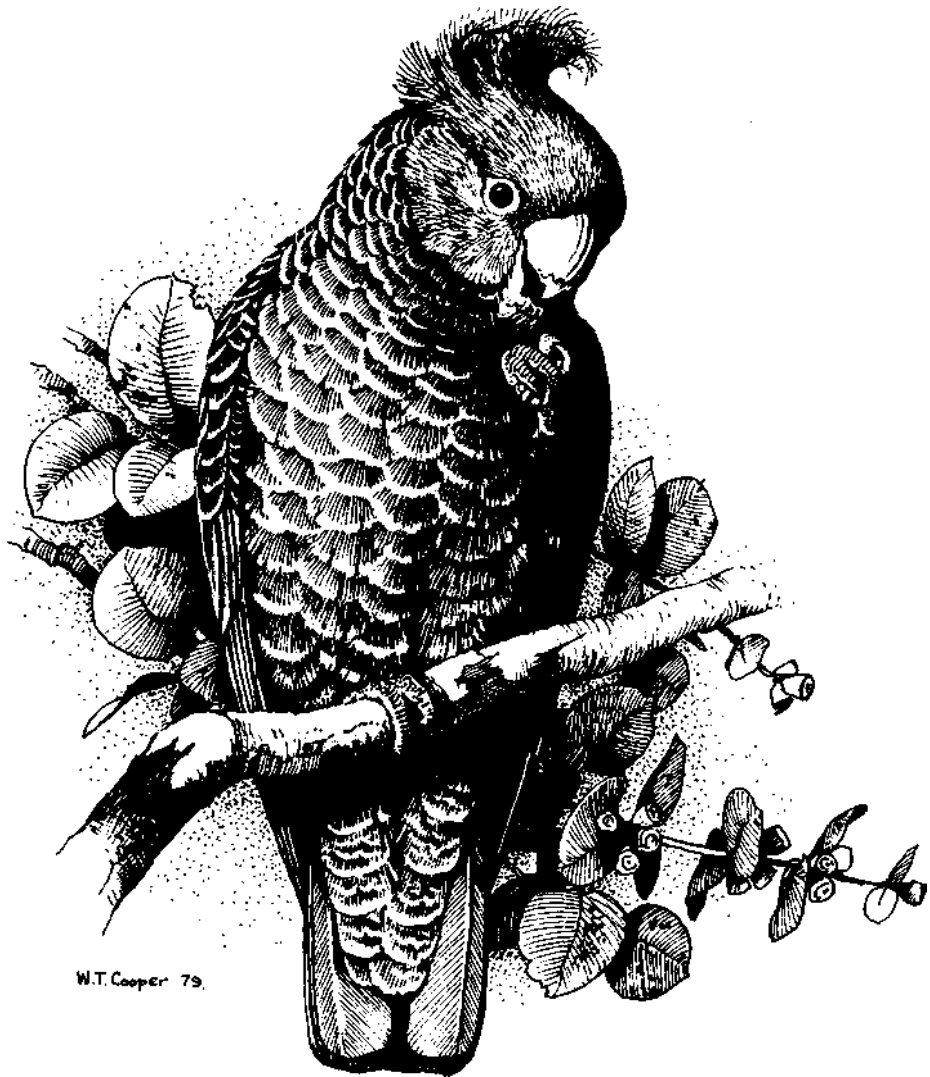


ISSN 0314-8211

CANBERRA BIRD NOTES

Volume 7
Number 4
October 1982



W.T. Cooper 79.

EDITORIAL - MORE ABOUT COMMON NAMES

It is now more than four years since the publishing of the RAOU Recommended English Names for Australian Birds. Much has been written and said about various names used in the list and styles and conventions adopted by it. Quite a number of important works on Australian birds have been published in this time and all authors have found some reasons to vary from the recommended list. Several major new works are in the pipeline and rumour has it that these will also follow the author's own common name preferences and biases.

Quite obviously there is no one common list that will suit all, there never has been and probably will never be. However, the sooner regional and personal pettiness is forgotten and one common names list is adopted by all bird clubs, the sooner we can all get back to taking an interest in the birds we are talking and writing about. So many pages of ornithological newsletters and journals (including this page) have been wasted in discussing the pros and cons of various bird names. This is, in the end, unproductive in time, money and space.

The parochial nature and small mindedness of all the arguments concerning common names would be bad enough without the completely negative effect it has on the education and building of awareness in ornithological matters of the vast majority of Australians. Tens of thousands of Australian's see TV specials about our Australian birdlife, read articles in the general press and buy posters, calendars, etc, depicting native species. Much of the educational value of this contact is lost because the information does not reinforce previous ideas because the names used are different! The advantages of having thousands of people (and especially children) interested and knowledgeable about birds is partially lost because of internal bickering amongst a handful of 'serious' birdwatchers who cannot see beyond their own backyards. If you have not followed my argument and still need convincing take a raw enthusiastic beginner and start them off on birdwatching. If they have 2 or 3 different books they will often have to learn 2 or 3 names for the one bird - see how long the enthusiasm lasts as the confusion takes over.

It is obviously unimportant to a degree what names we use in speech but there must be a consistency in the written names used. The RAOU, Australia's national ornithological body, has recommended a set of common names and it is up to all of us to ensure that these are followed. If we are serious about our interest in birds we should be concerned about developing the interest of other people and not about keeping our knowledge locked up in a maze of conflicting and unnecessary names.

HISTORICAL RECORDS OF BIRDS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS SERIES,
NO 3 RECORDS OF BIRDS "SEEN IN CANBERRA" UP TO 1943

Neil Hermes

The information in this article was extracted from the notes made by John de la Valette in a copy of the booklet 'List of Birds of the Australian Capital Territory' by G M Mathews. This article is the last of a series resulting from the chance discovery of some old unpublished records (see CBN 7, p 45-46 'Origins of Information Used in Mathews ACT Bird List'). As has been previously stated, I have not been able to contact de la Valette or independently establish the accuracy of this information. The data presented here is unvetted and the records should be considered, at best, unconfirmed sightings. The list has been altered to conform to current nomenclature and species order. It should be noted that entries appearing in this article should not be used to confirm entries on Mathews' list since Mathews and de la Valette were close friends for a year in Canberra and Mathews may have used de la Valette's observations when compiling the published list on the birds of the ACT.

The dates of these observations are not known beyond the fact that they were collected in a period up until the end of 1943. There are no mentions made of localities of the observations except that the observations were 'seen in Canberra' as opposed to other birds seen 'elsewhere'. Some records certainly came from around State Circle (see CBN 7 p 66-67 'Birds from Near Capital Hill'), de la Valette may have resided at the Hotel Canberra as Mathews did and it would seem possible that most of the birds observed on this list were seen in what we now call South Canberra and Canberra City.

de la Valette's List for Canberra, 1943

Australasian Grebe	Black-shouldered Kite
Great Cormorant	Brown Goshawk
Little Black Cormorant	Collared Sparrowhawk
Little Pied Cormorant	Wedge-tailed Eagle
Pacific Heron	Peregrine Falcon
White-faced Heron	Australian Hobby
Plumed Egret	Brown Falcon
Rufous Night	Australian Kestrel
Heron Sacred Ibis	Stubble Quail
Pacific Black Duck	*Brown Quail
Grey Teal	*Little Button-quail
Chestnut Teal	Dusky Moorhen
Pink-eared Duck	Eurasian Coot
Maned Duck	Bush Thick-knee

Masked Lapwing	Spotted Quail-thrush
Banded Lapwing	*Grey-crowned Babbler
Black-fronted Plover	*White-browed Babbler
Silver Gull	Rufous Songlark
Diamond Dove	*Brown Songlark
Common Bronzewing	Superb Fairy-wren
Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo	White-browed Scrubwren
Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo	White-throated Gerygone
Gang-gang Cockatoo	Brown Thornbill
Galah	Yellow-rumped Thornbill
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Yellow Thornbill
*Rainbow Lorikeet	Varied Sittella
Australian King-Parrot	White-throated Treecreeper
*Cockatiel	Brown Treecreeper
*Budgerigar	Red Wattlebird
Crimson Rosella	Noisy Friarbird
Eastern Rosella	*Regent Honeyeater
*Mallee Ringneck	Noisy Miner
Red-rumped Parrot	Yellow-faced Honeyeater
Pallid Cuckoo	White-eared Honeyeater
Southern Boobook	White-plumed Honeyeater
Barn Owl	White-naped Honeyeater
Spine-tailed Swift	Crescent Honeyeater
Laughing Kookaburra	New Holland Honeyeater
Sacred Kingfisher	Eastern Spinebill
Rainbow Bee-eater	White-fronted Chat
Dollarbird	Mistletoebird
*Singing Bushlark	Spotted Pardalote
Welcome Swallow	Striated Pardalote
Tree Martin	Silvereye
Fairy Martin	European Goldfinch
Richard's Pipit	House Sparrow
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	*Zebra Finch
White-winged Triller	Common Starling
*Song Thrush	Common Mynah
Flame Robin	Olive-backed Oriole
Scarlet Robin	White-winged Chough
*Red-capped Robin	Australian Magpie-lark
Hooded Robin	*Masked Woodswallow
Eastern Yellow Robin	*White-browed Woodswallow
*Jacky Winter	Dusky Woodswallow
Crested Shrike-tit	Australian Magpie (both black-
Golden Whistler Rufous	backed and white-backed)
Whistler	Pied Currawong
Grey Shrike-thrush Restless	Grey Currawong
Flycatcher Grey Fantail	Australian Raven
Willie Wagtail	*Australian Crow

The species marked with an asterisk are not regular species today in the ACT and are commented on in the text.

Of those species listed by de la Valette some are of particular interest and require comment.

Five species listed are additions to Mathews published list. These species are the Rainbow Lorikeet, Mallee Ringneck, White-browed Scrubwren, Crescent Honeyeater and the Common Mynah. These species are noted on a copy of the published list with the following explanation the additions to the list were made by me and subsequently accepted by Gregory Mathews'. The addition of the scrubwren and honeyeater are expected and add to the ornithological credentials of de la Valette. Rainbow Lorikeets are nomadic and have occasionally been recorded in the ACT. Mallee Ringneck have not been recorded in the region, however, it is perhaps significant that it is listed with many other typically inland birds especially parrots. The final additional species to Mathews list is the addition of the Common Mynah and this is discussed in the following section with the other exotics.

For two of the exotic species recorded, de la Valette added a comment concerning abundance; the European Goldfinch (common) and the House Sparrow (common). Common Starling was recorded with the notation 'I' (presumably immature). The Song Thrush record (with notation 'a', adult?) is interesting since the other ACT records are for 1935 and 1937 and de la Valette's records were for a period up to 1943. The hand written addition of Common Mynah to the published list is interesting since no records are known for the species before 1968. de la Valette observed other similar species (eg. starling and thrush) but marked his mynah record with the notation 'j' perhaps juvenile? It is interesting to note the blackbirds were not recorded in the ACT until 1949 and it is interesting to speculate as to whether de la Valette's were perhaps juvenile blackbirds. The record may have been of an unknown early unsuccessful introduction (a cage bird club existed in Canberra at the time).

The Australian Crow is clearly a misidentification but this is understandable given the reference texts available at the time and the confused state of knowledge of the corvid group. The Bush Thick-knee is a species that was recorded in the region up until the late 1960s and has since disappeared.

The rest of the species marked with an asterisk on the list are all birds typically found in western NSW. This raises the question that, if these records are valid, were there climatic reasons for the influx of these typically (by today's reasoning) inland birds or was the environment of the Canberra area more suited to these species then? Brief examination of Canberra's meteorological information shows that in the years 1940 and 1941 Canberra had below average rainfall and this may have been

reflected in conditions in the west. Perhaps other manuscripts and observations will come to light which will help us understand the changes that may have occurred in the avifauna of the Canberra area in the last 40 years.

N. Hermes, 'Kanangra', RMB 907, QUEANBEYAN, NSW, 2620

MUSK DUCK ON LAKE GINNINDERRA

Chris Davey

Since February 1979 monthly surveys of the waterbirds of Lake Ginninderra have been conducted. The lake is described and survey method detailed in a previous article (CBN, 5, p 3-13). During these surveys the numbers of Musk Duck *Biziura lobata* were noted and, since July 1979, the sex composition of the population and number of displaying males have also been noted.

Since August 1979, Lake Ginninderra has also been surveyed every two months as part of the waterbird surveys conducted by COG. During these surveys two observers walk around the lake noting the numbers of all waterbirds seen. The sex composition of the population of Musk Duck or the number of displaying males is not recorded during the COG surveys.

The number of Musk Duck on Lake Ginninderra from January 1979 to January 1982 is presented in the accompanying figure. To minimise the effect of different observers and different survey methods the data has been smoothed. The numbers of males and the proportion of displaying males is shown beneath the curve in the figure.

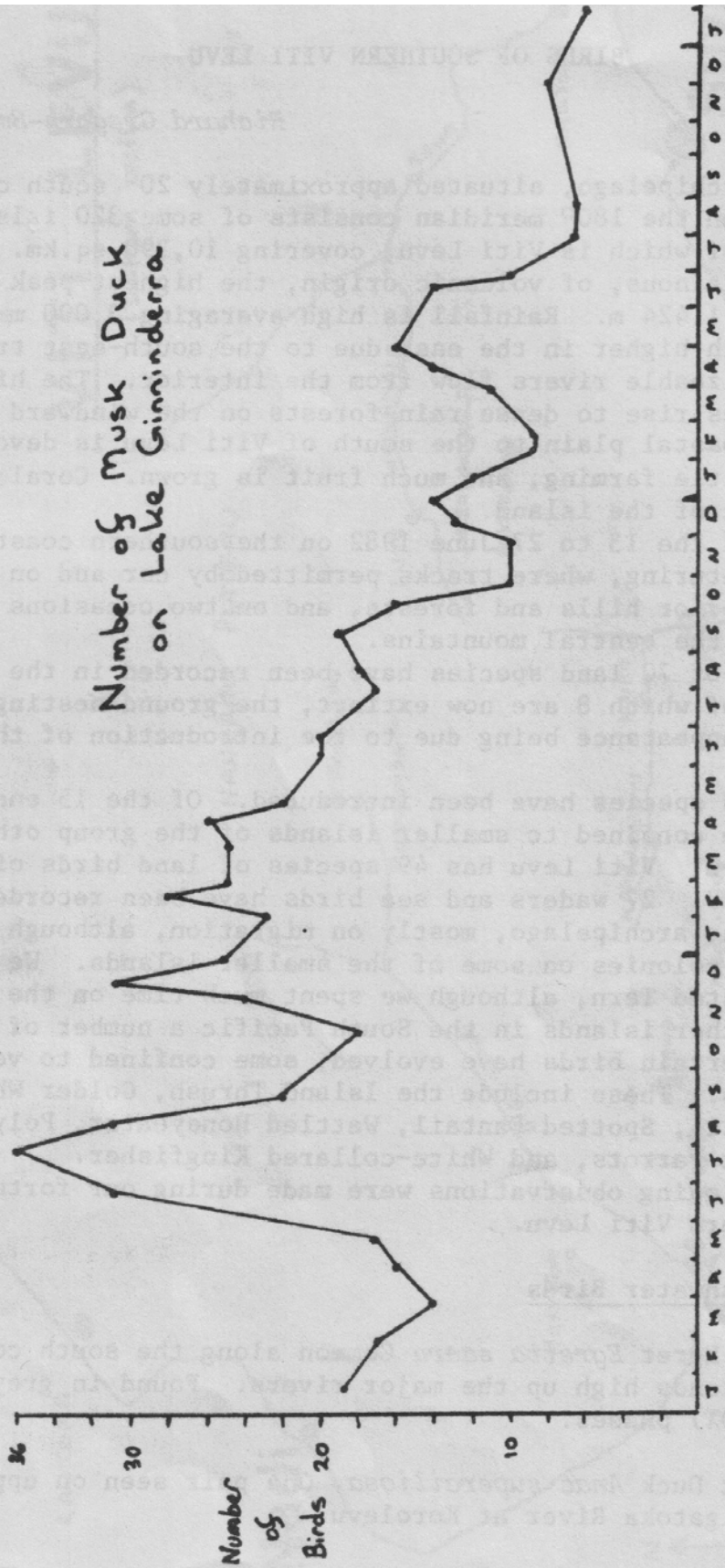
A decline in the number of Musk Duck on Lake Ginninderra since July 1979 is shown. Since a peak of male displays during the summer of 1979 there have been virtually no displaying males since August 1980. The increase in the proportion of displaying males seen during the summer of 1979 is completely absent in 1980 and 1981.

I wish to thank Bob Digan and Cedric Bear for the use of their observations.

C. Davey, 24 Bardsley Place, HOLT, ACT, 2615

Number of males	21	6	9	16	10	15	22	19	14	12	7	11	11	5	11	10	6	4	2	4	5	5	6	2
% males displaying	19	17	11	31	30	20	4	16	14	25	14	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	0

Number of Musk Duck
on Lake Ginninderra



BIRDS OF SOUTHERN VITI LEVU

Richard Gregory-Smith

The Fijian archipelago, situated approximately 20° south of the equator and on the 180° meridian consists of some 320 islands, the largest of which is Viti Levu, covering 10,390 sq.km. Viti Levu is mountainous, of volcanic origin, the highest peak being Mt Victoria, 1,424 m. Rainfall is high averaging 3,000 mm annually, much higher in the east due to the south-east trade winds, and sizeable rivers flow from the interior. The high rainfall gives rise to dense rain forests on the windward side. The narrow coastal plain to the south of Viti Levu is devoted to crops or cattle farming, and much fruit is grown. Coral reefs surround most of the island.

We spent the 13 to 27 June 1982 on the southern coast of Viti Levu venturing, where tracks permitted by car and on foot, into the interior hills and forests, and on two occasions into the south of the central mountains.

A total of 70 land species have been recorded in the Fiji archipelago of which 8 are now extinct, the ground nesting species disappearance being due to the introduction of the mongoose.

Ten bird species have been introduced. Of the 15 endemic species 6 are confined to smaller islands of the group other than Viti Levu. Viti Levu has 49 species of land birds of which we recorded 33. 27 waders and sea birds have been recorded in and around the archipelago, mostly on migration, although there are breeding colonies on some of the smaller islands. We saw only the Crested Tern, although we spent much time on the coast.

As on other islands in the South Pacific a number of subspecies of certain birds have evolved, some confined to very small islands. These include the Island Thrush, Colder Whistler, Fiji Shrikebill, Spotted Fantail, Wattled Honeyeater, Polynesian Triller, Musk Parrots, and White-collared Kingfisher.

The following observations were made during our fortnight's stay in southern Viti Levu.

Land and Freshwater Birds

Eastern Reef Egret *Egretta sacra* Common along the south coast and its range extends high up the major rivers. Found in grey (80%) and white (20%) phases.

Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa* One pair seen on upper reaches of Sigatoka River at Korolevu.

Fiji Goshawk *Accipiter rufitorques* Endemic grey goshawk. One seen at Korotongo on the Coral Coast, one in grassy hills above Nakalavo. Endemic.

Marsh Harrier *Circus approximans* Relatively common. Seen on grassy slopes above Nakalavo, Natewa trail, Navua and Suva areas.

Many-coloured Fruit Dove *Ptilinopus perousii* 10-12 seen feeding on fruiting Peepul trees near Thurston Gardens, Suva.

Golden Dove *Ptilinopus luteovirens* One seen in dense mahogany planted rainforest at 500 m on trail to Nambukelevu village. Endemic.

Peales Pigeon *Ducula latrans* Common in rain forest in foothills and lower mountain slopes. Endemic.

Feral Pigeon *Colwnba livia* Seen along Coral Coast, particularly Korolevu, and at Suva. Locally common.

White-throated Pigeon *Colwnba vitiensis* Found on forested slopes from upper Sigatoka to upper Wainamala Rivers where not uncommon.

Spotted Turtle-Dove *Streptopelia chinensis* Common along coast from Nadi to Suva in grassland and garden areas. Extends into hills to at least 600 m; seen in significant numbers at Numbuyanitu and Nambukelevu villages. Introduced.

Collared Lory *Phigys solitarius* Along Coral Coast plain, often feeding in coconut inflorescences. In sub-forest along upper Wainamala River. Common. Endemic.

Yellow-breasted Musk Parrot *Prosapeia peronata* Seen in rain-forest; one in upper storey in Colo-i-Suva; two in sub-stage along Nambukelevu track. Endemic.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba* Seen after dusk on coast at Namanggumanggua.

White-rumped Swiftlet *Collocalia spodiopygia* Common along Coral Coast, in foothills, and extending into mountains along upper reaches of Sigatoka and Wainamala Rivers.

Collared Kingfisher *Halcyon chloris* Found along Coral Coast extending into foothills, and into mountains along courses of Sigatoka and Wainamala Rivers.

Pacific Swallow *Eirundo tahitica* Two seen at Korolevu on Coral Coast.

Polynesian Triller *Lalage maouloa* Common along Coral Coast, in foothills and along upper courses of Sigatoka, Navua and Wainamala Rivers.

Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer* Common along South coast from Lautoka to Suva. Found along upper reaches of Sigatoka and Wainamala Rivers in the foothills. Introduced.

Scarlet Robin *Petroica multicolor* Found in foothills and along upper courses of Sigatoka and Wainamala Rivers in sub-forest and secondary growth. Uncommon.

Vanikoro Broadbill *Myiagra vanikorensis* Found along Coral Coast, in foothills and extending into upper reaches of Sigatoka and Wainamala Rivers. Common.

Spotted Fantail *Ktvipidura spilodera* Seen along upper Wainamala in sub-forest, and along foothill trails to Numbukelvu (500 m) and Nuku (300 m) in mahogany planted rainforest. Uncommon.

Fiji Warbler *Vitia ruficapilla* Six found in an area of rainforest at 500 m on Numbukelvu track. Two seen on Nuku track at 300 m. Inhabits dense scrub under storey. Uncommon. Endemic.

Orange-breasted Honeyeater *Myzomela jugularis* Common along Coral Coast, in Suva gardens, and extending through foothills to upper reaches to Sigatoka and Wainamala Rivers. Endemic.

Wattled Honeyeater *Foulehaio cartmculata* Common along Coral Coast and into hinterland. Inhabitant of Suva gardens. Found regularly in rainforested foothills and extends to upper reaches of Sigatoka, Navua and Wainamala Rivers.

Giant Forest Honeyeater *Gymnomyza viridis* Seen feeding on fruit with lories in rainforest canopy. Heard in rainforest on Ntffiibukelvu and Nuku trails, both in foothills above 300 m. Uncommon.

Silvereye *Zosterops lateralis* Common along Coral Coast and hinterland into upper reaches of Sigatoka Valley. Flocks in low trees and scrub.

Layards White-eye *Zosterops explorer* Flocks in hills and along upper Sigatoka and Wainamala Rivers. Shy and keeps mostly to upper storey of rainforest. Locally common. Endemic.

Red-headed Parrot-finch *Erythrura cyanovirons* Flocks and smaller parties common along Coral Coast and hinterland. Seen in Suva gardens. Extends along upper Wainamala and Sigatoka Rivers.

Strawberry Finch *Amandava amandava* Flocks seen along Coral Coast lowlands between Sigatoka and Navua. Locally common. Introduced.

Polynesian Starling *Aplonis tabuensis* Two seen in rainforest upper storey on Nambukelvu trail.

Common Mynah *Acridotheres tristis* and Jungle Mynah *Acridotheres fuscus* Both common along coast from Nadi, although Indian perhaps more so. Both species in foothills and along upper reaches of Sigatoka and Wainamala Rivers. Both species were introduced.

White-breasted Woodswallow *Artamus leucorhynchus* Common along Coral Coast and forests south of Nadi, foothills, and extending to upper reaches of Sigatoka and Wainamala.

SEA BIRDS

Crested Tern *Sterna bergii* Common along reef throughout Coral Coast.

R. Gregory-Smith 13 Astelia Place, RIVETT, ACT, 2611

CORRECTION

In Mathew Larkin's article on breeding Red-browed Treecreepers (CBN 7, p 70) there was a deliberate error by the Editor. Of course all careful readers of CBN will have realised that the nest described was in a Mountain Gum *Eucalyptus dalrympleana* not *Eucalyptus viminalis* as incorrectly stated in the article.

AUSTRALIAN KESTRELS NESTING AT
CAMPBELL PARK AND RUSSELL HILL OFFICES

Bob Digan

The following information was gathered during the continuing ACT Raptor Study Group survey of birds of prey (see CBN 6 p 78).

Campbell Park Offices

These offices are a complex of 4 seven-storey buildings on the lower eastern slopes of Mount Ainslie. All the buildings are of stressed concrete construction. During 1981 2 pairs of Australian Kestrel *Falco cenchroides* nested in the buildings. The nest site for both pairs is formed by a three-sided cavity of concrete beams supporting the floor above. The dimensions of the cavity are 65 cm wide, 55 cm deep and 35 cm high. The measurements were obtained from duplicate cavities within the building. The nest sites were on the 4th floor of Building 1 and the 6th floor of Building 4. In neither case is it possible to look directly into the cavities thus the number of eggs laid and hatching data could not be obtained. Due to the building's alignment neither nest site is in view of the other although only 250 m apart. The entrances to the nest sites face north-east.

Since 21 May 1981 a single kestrel was watched hunting and perching south-east of the buildings. On 11 September two kestrels were seen in this area. Between this date and 6 October this pair of birds gradually moved their activities towards what was to become the nest site in Building 4. No other kestrels were seen around the office complex during this period.

BUILDING 4 NEST SITE: This building is now four years old. Continuous occupation of this nest cavity was noted from 7 October. On 16 November two young were seen. Both young birds left the nest by 4 December. Only insects were seen being fed to these young. According to officers in the area this is at least the second time kestrels have nested there.

BUILDING 1 NEST SITE: Unlike the other nest site there was no indication of kestrel activity at this end of the building. If I had not been given a contact by Julie Cardew (Raptor Group member), I may have missed this pair nesting. A female kestrel was first seen in this cavity on 15 October. These birds seem to have arrived in the area and immediately commenced nesting. According to Mrs Betty Gill, whose office is opposite the nest site, this is at least the third consecutive year kestrels have nested here. The building is now ten years old. On 20 November two young were seen and on 24 November a third young bird was seen. These three young had left the nest site by 15 December. These birds were seen being fed with insects and the body of a mouse and hindquarters of a bird

with dark brown, almost black, feathers and flesh coloured legs were seen on the edge of the nest cavity.

Dispersal: From the dates of leaving the nest sites more than one kestrel was frequently seen around the buildings until 12 January 1982. After that, with one exception, only single birds have been seen. On 5 April, two kestrels perched in a tree on the western side of the buildings. These birds preened for 3 minutes, one was male, a good sight of grey tail feathers obtained. Up until the time of writing (8 July 1982) only a single bird has been seen (on 31 May) since 5 April.

Russell Hill Offices

These offices are located south-east of Mount Ainslie. The construction is of stressed concrete but unlike the Campbell Park Offices the finish is smooth.

On 12 February 1982 two fully feathered begging young were seen on Building G which is immediately west of the American War Memorial column and is 3 storeys high. One young bird was on the second floor ledge the other on the third. From enquiries I found out that kestrels had nested on the third floor ledge behind a column which runs up through all the ledges. This location would give the birds a protected space of about 50 x 50 cm. The building faces east but access to the nest is on a north-south axis. The officer I spoke to said this was the third consecutive year kestrels had nested there. He believed there had been earlier nestings. This is confirmed by the Olsens who have been told of nestings at Russell Hill in 1975 and 1976 but whether these occurred at the Building G site is not known.

In conclusion there were three pairs of successfully nesting kestrels within 2 kilometres in the Russell Hill/Campbell Park area. The known spread of the breeding period i.e. occupation of nest site to departure of young, was 58 and 61 days. This estimate agrees with records by Olsen and Olsen (1980),

Acknowledgement: I wish to thank Jerry and Penny Olsen for reading the draft article and suggesting improvements.

REFERENCE:

P Olsen and J Olsen, Aust Wildl Res, 1980, 7, 247-55.

R Digan, 16 Templeton Street, COOK, ACT, 2614

ADDITIONS TO THE BIRDS OF THE BHERWERRE PENINSULA, JERVIS BAY,
ACT

Chris Sonter

Black Falcon *Falco subniger*

A single bird seen flying low over a cleared swamp-heathland gully near junction of Caves Beach Road and Jervis Bay Road. Observation was made in good light and as close as 25 m on 14 January 1980. It is interesting to note that from my personal observations, and from assessing those observations of other ornithologists that there was a significant irruption and dispersal of this species from inland to coastal areas. Though the record of the Black Falcon at Jervis Bay is unusual it does coincide with other observations of the species being outside its normal range. The writer was experienced with the species prior to seeing the individual at Jervis Bay and has seen many more since that observation whilst at his present address.

Topknot Pigeon *Lopholaimus antarcticus*

Not previously recorded on the peninsula. Fourteen birds disturbed from top of tall tree in dense dry sclerophyll forest near the 'new' Steamer's Beach car park. They left the shelter of the tree in a compact flock to fly in a direct north route on 19 May 1982. I have no previous records of this species between May and August on the south coast or tablelands.

Beautiful Firetail *Emblema bella*

Jack Hobbs observed a solitary bird at Flat Rock Creek, Jervis Bay. No other details are available regarding this species. Notes relating to the obvious scarcity or absence of this species on the peninsula was made by me in discussion in my previous paper (see CBN July 1980, 5:3).

C. Sonter, 72 San Mateo Avenue, MILDURA, VIC, 2500

ODD OBS

RAINBOW LORIKEETS

Bruce and David Lindenmayer

Two Rainbow Lorikeets were observed at 1800 hours on 3 February 1982 in trees on Macquarie Oval. These may well have been the same two birds observed by David in December 1981 in the grounds of Canberra High School.

BLACK FALCON - SWAMP HARRIER INTERACTION ON THE GUNDAROO ROAD

Jerry Olsen

At 0826 hours on Friday 12 February 1982 I saw a male Black Falcon *Falco subniger* and a Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* flying together at about 30 m altitude over the Gundaroo Road 2 km north-east of the Barton Highway. The Black Falcon flew at and struck the harrier twice and the harrier dropped to about 1 m and continued flying south-west with the Black Falcon flying about 30 m above it. They flushed a flock of Galahs *Cacatua roseieapilla* and Common Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris* and the Black Falcon pursued them making four rapid shallow stoops without success. The falcon then swung back, flew over the road directly over my car and overtook the harrier again which had continued south-west at about 30 m altitude while the Black Falcon pursued the birds. He again flew at and struck the harrier and the harrier again dropped to an altitude of 1 m. The falcon continued to shadow the harrier flying into a gully near the Barton Highway. The falcon appeared to be using the harrier to flush prey.

J Olsen, EMB 1705, Ready Road, SUTTON, NSW, 2620

ODD OBS

OBSERVATIONS OF WHITE-THROATED NEEDLETAILS *Neil Hermes*

At about 0800 hours on 6 March 1982 there were large numbers of White-throated Needleetails feeding low over my house in the Burra Valley south of Queanbeyan. The house is in an elevated position at an altitude of 1000 m and to have needleetails feeding low over the house in summer is not uncommon. Some birds were flying in close pair formation and made loud fast trilling calls. This activity continued for several hours and there were always many birds in sight.

At about 1030 hours a group of between 75 and 150 birds came together high above the surrounding hills and formed a tight column of birds. The birds called with a trilling call and after about 15 minutes the column slowly began to disperse with pairs of birds moving away either in close 'normal' flight or in tight fast flying pairs giving fast 10 part staccato calls. By 1100 hours the column had completely dispersed. By midday only a few birds were in evidence and they were very high - almost too high to observe. The day was by then quite hot and completely clear.

WATCH OUT FOR COLOUR-DYED WADERS

In August and September 1982 a team of nearly 60 people are participating in the Australasian Wader Studies Group North-west Australia Expedition. This month-long research expedition is centred in the Broome-Port Hedland area in northern Western Australia, where over 150,000 migratory waders spend the summer months. On this expedition, it is planned to cannon-net waders and colour-dye them on the underparts with Picric Acid. This is a bright yellow dye which fades to orange after a week or so, and lasts up to four months. People visiting coastal areas or areas where waders are present, are asked to watch for colour-dyed birds and report the details of any sightings to the addresses below. These birds may turn up in any place in Australia or New Zealand (or Kelly's Swamp) and so observers are asked to watch out for colour-dyed birds where ever waders of any species are found. Date, place (lat and long if possible), number of birds, size of flock and habitat should be noted. The colour dyeing involves all species of waders. Please contact:

The Secretary	or Australasian Wader Studies
Australian Bird Banding Scheme	Group c/- Royal Australasian
Division of Wildlife Research	Ornithologists Union
CSIRO	21 Gladstone Street MOONEE
PO Box 84	PONDS VIC 3039
LYNEHAM ACT 2602	

Brett A Lane, Australasian Wader Studies Group* National
Co-ordinator

ODD OBS

AUSTRALIAN HOBBY

Bruce Lindenmayer

On 28 January 1982 whilst at an office barbeque in Telopea Park my attention was drawn to a small raptor which was calling loudly as it landed in the top of a pine tree. The bird was readily identified as an Australian Hobby *Falco longipennis* from its size, dark upper parts, rufous breast and almost complete collar. It had a small passerine in its talons which it proceeded to pluck, with a constant stream of feathers. I was unable to identify the prey, but found a headless male sparrow on the ground about 15-20 m below. The falcon remained in the tree for about 20 minutes during which time it plucked and ate the prey.

WHERE TO WATCH BIRDS - NO 8 - BATLOW DISTRICT

Jean Armstrong

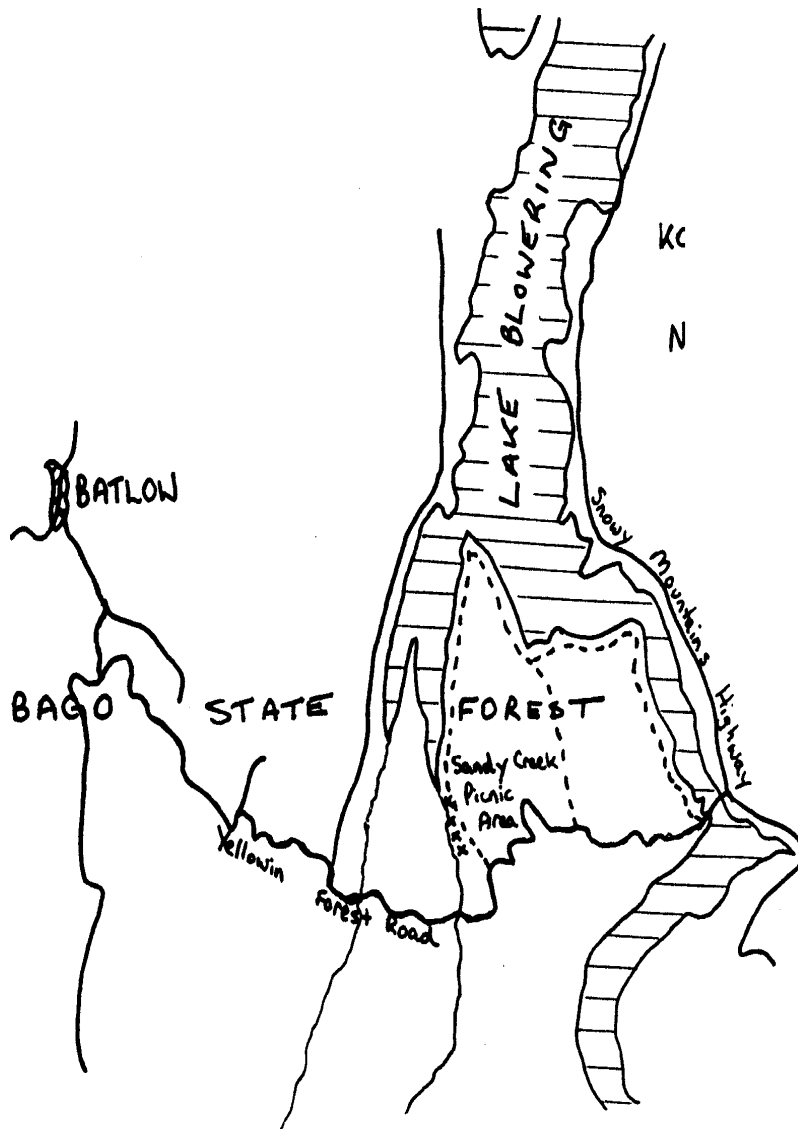
Batlow is a long way to travel from Canberra (except as the crow or raven flies) to look for birds that would also be in the ACT. However, it could well reward the hopeful and the intrepid and those wishing to discover new birdwatching places.

There are two routes to take to Batlow from Canberra, the direct way via Brindabella, and the indirect way, which takes about the same time as the direct, which is via Yass. Whichever road you take you will go through Tumut.

Near the sewage works on the western side of Tumut, are a series of ponds. A gravel road leads down past some of these ponds and on to the Gilmore Creek. This area is a haven for birds, carp and water rats. Pelicans, duck and teal float on the dirty water, moorhens and swamphens muddy about on the edge, where a Black-fronted Plover may also be daintily working. Many varieties of heron and ibis are usually busy in the grass and there is sure to be a great demand for sites in the trees about. Galahs, Red-rumped Parrots, Crimson Rosella, Dollarbirds, kookaburra, Sacred Kingfisher, Tree Martins and Striated Pardalote are all hunting in the hollows and are often alas being replaced by starlings. Reed-warblers sound triumphant from the reed bed. Cisticola often frequent the tall grassy areas and the joy of whistlers out sing the mournful note of the cuckoos.

If you are able to drag yourself away from the joys of the Tumut sewage works here and continue to Batlow, I would suggest you turn left into Batlow where the sign points to Blowering Lake. Beyond Batlow and the dreary pine forest, the Yellowin Forest Road winds downwards through magnificent eucalypts, where if it were night you may hear the Powerful Owl and certainly with a spotlight see Greater Gliders. Just before Yellowin Creek a road branches off on the left to Blowering Lake. Before reaching the lake a secondary road goes off to the right and crosses Yellowin Creek. Follow this around a point and into a little bay where Sandy Creek joins the lake. The little bay could be worth a stop. There are often lots of waterfowl there and there was once a small gang of Blue-billed Ducks. A road continues around the lake but take the one that runs into the bush and on along Sandy Creek. The Sandy Creek area is a reserve where there is usually a good number of different birds from Emu to Mistletobird. Several stops at likely places, or a meandering walk through the area or along the creek should all result in many interesting sightings.

There is a road on either side of Sandy Creek and both finally come back to Yellowwin Forest Road where if the weather is dry you can turn left and continue to Jounama Ponds and back to Tumut via the Snowy Mountains Highway.



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WATCH OUT FOR NASAL SADDLED DUCKS

P Fullagar, C Davey

A detailed study of the behaviour of Pacific Black Duck *Anas superciliosa* and Grey Teal *A. gibberifrons* has led to many birds being individually marked at Gungahlin, ACT.

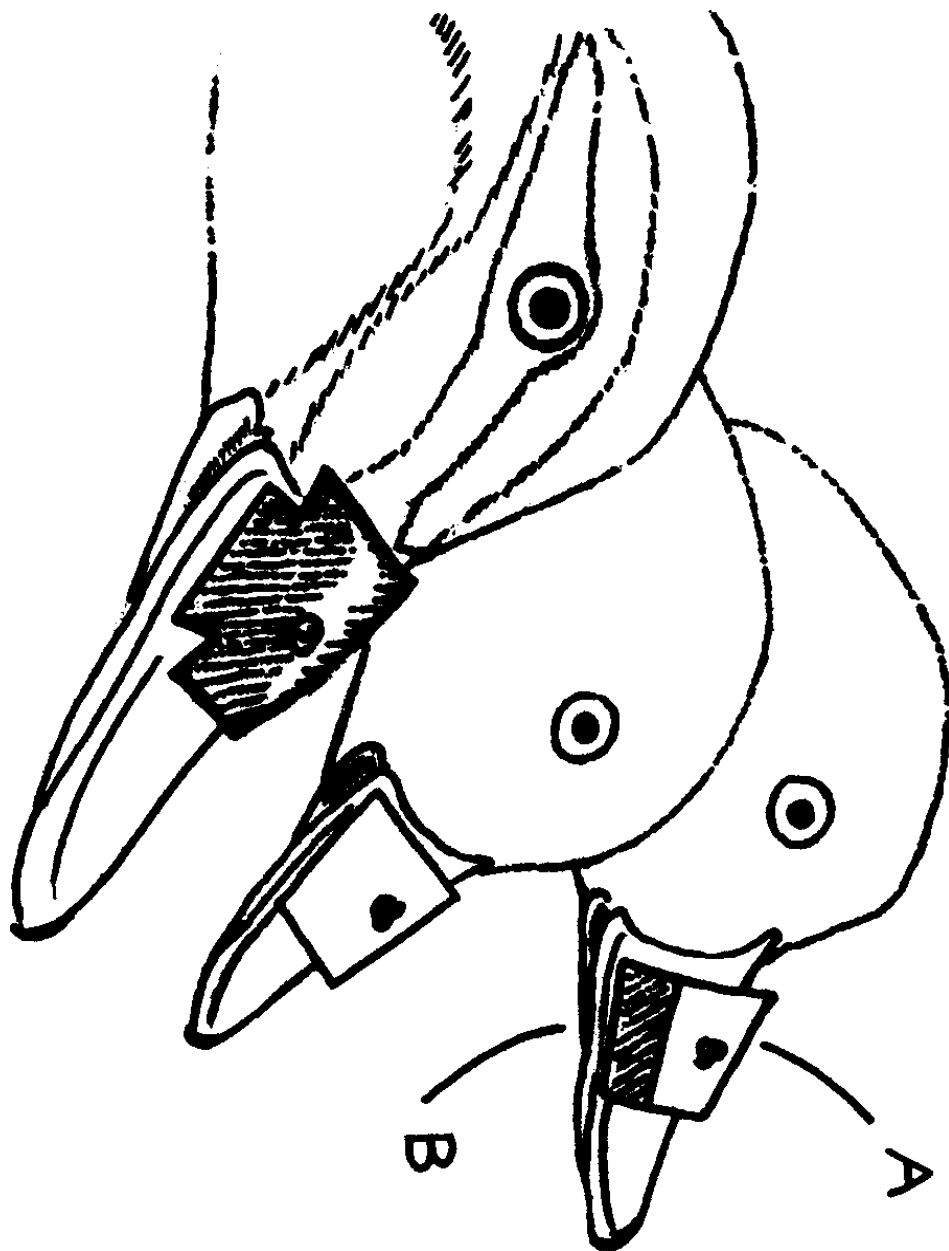
A nasal saddle consists of a strip of shaped plastic placed over the upper part of the bill and held in place with a plastic pin through the nostrils. Many of the marked ducks bred and successfully raised broods during the 1981 breeding season. There have been a few local observations away from Gungahlin, and one as far as Bendigo, Victoria.

The Pacific Black Duck saddles are white for ducks and blue or red for drakes. Each bird is identified by the colour of the saddle and by a number represented by a series of nicks repeated on both sides around the edge of the saddle. Each nick has a certain value, the number and position of the nicks determine the individual's number - see Figure 1. For each colour 32 individuals can be identified because one saddle can have no nicks and is therefore scored zero. Some of the white saddles are identified by painted numbers rather than by nicks.

The Grey Teal saddles are too small to be nicked or to have numbers placed on them and identification is made by the colour combination of the saddle. The saddle's colour may be entire or the lower half of each side replaced with a different colour - see Figure 2. In the latter case the colour 'A¹' is called first.

Any observations on the location of the marked birds and whether the birds are alone or in company would be much appreciated.

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COG EXCURSION TO BARREN GROUNDS AND THE COAST

We started at Barren Grounds on 13 February 1982 at 1000 hours. The weather was terrible with a very thick fog, you literally could not see 25 m ahead of you. When we could see we saw some interesting birds - Eastern Bristlebird, Pilotbird and Southern Emu-wren, to name a few. At one stage there were a few emu-wrens and a bristlebird sitting in the same shrub for all the world to see!

After lunch we set off on a 7 km circular walk within the reserve (I think it was more like 10 km). There we saw a Grey Currawong, an immature Fan-tailed Cuckoo and an Australian Kestrel having an aerial tussle with what we assumed to be a Collared Sparrowhawk.

Afterwards, we drove down Jamberoo Pass to Minnamurra Falls. There we observed Brian Fitzgerald in action negotiating a quantity discount for the entry fees! We also saw a Black-faced Monarch and some Topknot Pigeons.

The party dined in state at Onkel Tommes, and but for the genuine 'Dawn Chorus' at Jamberoo we wouldn't have woken the next morning. The sight of Michael Doyle trying to eat breakfast and listen to Wagner while young kookaburras begged for food in the tree above was rather amusing.

Before breakfast we walked the road up the pass where we saw two Brown Pigeons, Black-faced Monarch, Satin Bowerbird and Grey Butcherbird. Someone thought he heard a Green Catbird. A Superb Lyrebird was heard but not seen. Later, while driving down the pass, we came across a Brush Bronzewing strutting across the road. It didn't take any notice of us so we all had a good look.

In the afternoon we drove to the inlet of Lake Illawarra to look for waders. Present were Bar-tailed Godwits, Grey-tailed Tattlers, Lesser Golden Plover and Eastern Curlews. It was a very successful trip. Many thanks to Alistair Drake for his organisation and to the rest of the group for their company.

Michael Wright, 12 Pope Street, HUGHES, ACT, 2605

ODD OBS

LITTLE FRIARBIRD SIGHTED

Ian Taylor

The second of April 1982 was the first warm, sunny day after a period of heavy rain. The afternoon was clear and still. In my garden in Ainslie, fourteen Noisy Friarbirds and four Red Wattle-birds were flying two to four metres in the air from the tree-tops, telegraph poles and power lines in pursuit of airborne insects. I was observing this activity from the window when I noticed an unusual bird with a distinct patch of blue behind its eye and a grey crown. I checked the bird against the field guide as it sat in front of me on the power line and I was able to identify it as a Little Friarbird. For about fifteen minutes I watched the bird feeding with the others. During this time it perched within a metre of a Noisy Friarbird which made comparison between the two species simple. Large mixed flocks of Noisy Friarbirds and Red Wattlebirds remained in the area for some days but I did not see the Little Friarbird again.

GARDEN BIRD CHARTS

Editor

Members are reminded that Garden Bird Charts are still available for you to record your 1982-1983 observations. It is not too late to start recording and incomplete charts are much more useful than no charts at all. Brian Fitzgerald has copies of charts available at meetings for 50 cents a copy. Contact Cedric Bear, Henry Nix or Neil Hermes (phone numbers on back page) if you cannot collect your chart at meetings. Details on the method of completing the charts is given in CBN 6 p 112.

SPECIES INDEX TO CBN Vol 1 to Vol 4

Editor

A species index for the first four issues of CBN has been published by COG. It has been published in the old smaller format and augments the previous individual volume indices. The index was compiled by Kay Anway and runs to 80 pages. It covers the period July 1968 to October 1979. It is being sold at cost (\$3.00 per copy) and is available from Brian Fitzgerald (Phone 485140) or at COG meetings.

Canberra Bird Notes is published quarterly by the Canberra Ornithologists Group. The subscription rates are: single \$8.00; family \$10.00, both with one copy of CBN; Institutions \$10.00.

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CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Editorial - More About Common Names	
Historical Records of Birds in the Southern Highlands	86
Series, No 3, Records of Birds "Seen in Canberra" up to 1943	87
Musk Duck on Lake Ginninderra	90
Birds of Southern Viti Levu	92
Correction	96
Australian Kestrels Nesting at Campbell Park and Russell Hill Offices	97
Additions to the Birds of the Bherwerre Peninsula, Jervis Bay, ACT	99
Black Falcon-Swamp Harrier Interaction on Gundaroo Rd	100
Watch Out for Colour Dyed Waders	101
Where to Watch Birds - No 8 - Batlow District	102
Watch Out for Nasal Saddled Ducks	100
COG Excursion to Barren Grounds and the Coast	104
Garden Bird Charts	106
Species Index to CBN Vol 1 to Vol 4	107