



Birds which might be seen include Southern Emu-wren, Eastern Bristle Bird, Chestnut-rumped Heathwren, Crescent Honeyeater and Ground Parrot

**COMMITTEE MEETING** There will be no Committee Meeting in October as a number of the Committee will be involved in the Nymboida Camp

**NYMBOIDA CAMP October 20<sup>th</sup> to 27th 2007 Leader Betty Hudson.**

**NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER** Deadline for articles for the next *IBOC News* is the weekend 20, 21 October. Please send items to the editor, cashmansjr@bigpond.com or mail them to 5 Madden Street, Fernhill 2519

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** Our meeting on 12th November will be the AGM of the Club. All executive positions will be declared vacant, reports will be given and elections held

**Welcome to Gleniss Wellings, who has joined the Club. Nice to have you with us.**

### **A Night at the Flics**

About 25 people attended the revival of a social evening of DVDs at Barbara & Brian Hales' cinema. We watched 2 shows the first was Urban Predators which was about butcherbirds, owls, magpies and crows living with us in a suburban environment. The second was of the camp at Wellington Caves taken by Martin Potter. This brought back memories of our time there particularly the Barking Owl in the car park, and reminders of how dry it

### **Neil Wheway**

was during the time of our stay.

There were no peanuts or popcorn at this venue but a scrumptious supper that the film goers had brought with them. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed evening and we didn't have to pay admission to get in. It is hoped in the future to hold other evenings. So if you missed out this time, keep reading the newsletter, for coming attractions.

### **Karen Hansen**

Longtime Club member Karen Hansen passed away on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2007. Karen had grown up in Denmark where her family had a farm and small forest holding, an environment which developed Karen's love of nature and the land. She came to Australia in 1955, following a niece for whom she had cared and grown close to. When her niece and family returned to Denmark after a couple of years Karen decided to stay on in Australia, a decision which she never regretted.

I first met her at the Illawarra Natural History Society meetings in 1975. From her interest in all aspects of nature Karen particularly enjoyed the wonderful birdlife to be observed in Australia. When Doug Gibson commenced his series of 'Ornithology' classes through WEA Karen was keen to enrol and thrilled when out of

### **Richard Miller**

them the Illawarra Bird Observers Club was formed. Karen attended the lectures, film nights, walks and camps whenever possible and for several years helped out as one of our Monday night 'T ladies'. In subsequent years Karen became restricted in her walking but continued to enjoy Club meetings.

Karen returned to visit family and friends in Denmark on a regular basis until her later years and also travelled widely around Australia. She was always keen to say that she was happy to have travelled so much while she could, travel which included a plane flight over the Antarctic, and had no regrets, though I have a hunch that a trip to Kangaroo Island was still on her list.

Karen took great pride in her home and garden enjoying the trees, flowers, native animals and especially the birds which visited her 'sanctuary' in West Wollongong but not the neighbourhood cats which she cursed for killing her resident blue-tongue lizards. She had a plum tree which fruited prolifically and shared the produce with many Club members as well as supplying some fruit to one of the local retirement homes. She was a very keen vegetable gardener and always trying to convince friends and relatives of the need to have red, green and yellow veges every day. Karen was able to continue living in her own home and growing her veges until just before her 98<sup>th</sup> birthday so perhaps we should all heed her advice!

Karen was a proud lady of strong character. Her house walls displayed examples of her embroidery skills and she also had some photos of the family farm in

Denmark where she grew up, showing the large waterwheel which provided the power for her grandfather's woollen mill. Emily and I had the pleasure of visiting the family farm in Denmark so these photos brought back many fond memories for both Karen and ourselves the many times we dropped round to visit for a cuppa, a slice of pecan pie and a walk around her garden. We were always given flowers, fruit, veges or plants as we left. The Bird Club was an important, enriching and supportive part of her life and Karen was especially grateful to Laurie & Nola Williams for the enthusiasm and friendship which they generated amongst members during the formative years of The Club. Karen will be missed by the many friends she made through IBOC and for her participation and support of The Club but she leaves with no regrets after an active, happy and fulfilling life. Thanks for the friendship.

### **BITS and...**

\* **Correction** from September Newsletter BITS and...p4 The collection of books and journals recently received by IBOC for the benefit of Club Members and other interested bird observers were donated by the Gibson Family from Doug Gibson's personal library.. Richard Miller's involvement was purely as a facilitator in distributing the material.

\* **Finance.** The Treasurer reported that Club Finances stood at \$1406.24 at 31 August 2007. Main expenditure in the last month was for Insurance, some \$700. To ensure that our Insurance policy covers you, please sign the attendance book at all meetings.

### **SPITFIRE and RAPTORS Quiz**

1. The British fighter, the Supermarine Spitfire of WWII fame was powered by a Rolls-Royce engine named after a medieval magician and a raptor. It was the M.....?
2. In late 1941, some marks of the Spitfire were fitted with another Rolls-Royce engine again named after a raptor starting with G. It was the G.....?
3. Rolls-Royce built five other engines fitted to different military aircraft, which were also named after raptors. They were the E....., another G....., K....., P....., & V.....?

The Editor recently read a great book, Jonathan Glancey's *Spitfire: the Biography*. 500 Spitfires were made in Australia in WWII at Fisherman's Bend. Temora Aero Club now has two restored Spitfires in flying condition.

### **LITTLE PENGUINS! DOG ON IT !**

Recently, in Warrnambool, Australia the world's first trial utilised a Maremma Sheepdog to guard the dwindling [penguin](#) population of Middle Island. For years the penguins have been attacked and killed by foxes and dogs. All previous attempts to save the penguins had been unsuccessful. A local chicken farmer suggested and supplied one of his working Maremmas for a trial. The trial has been so successful that the local council and wildlife officers have secured two Maremma pups for permanent relocation to the island.

[http://www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au/page/page.asp?page\\_Id=527](http://www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au/page/page.asp?page_Id=527)

Chris Cartledge noticed this item, and passed it on. Thanks Chris.

## MOUNT ANNAN BOTANICAL GARDEN- 16.9. 2007

Lorraine Pincus

Arrived at the gardens on time and joined the queue of cars waiting for the gates to open. From here we were able to see the large gardens of pink, white and yellow Paper Daises. We, all 18 members started the day with morning tea at the car park, joined by a friendly Grey Butcherbird. We were alerted by the excited raspy noise of a pair of Masked Lapwing vigorously flying back and forth obviously protecting eggs-- 4 in to be exact (Tom was persistent with his observations) nicely placed amongst the leaves and twigs on the ground near the foot path.

Most established trees were flowering in the Terraced Gardens but it was noticeable how dry the ground and small bushes and shrubs were. The Common Blackbirds were busy flicking the dry leaves aside to obtain the meal underneath. A small Grey Fantail was busily dancing in the air. The Yellow Thornbills and Silvereyes were elusively darting in and out of the Sheoaks and Casurinas. Silence was broken by the unusual call of 4 female Satin Bowerbirds and Joan observed one young male practicing with a blue object in his mouth. Our path eventually brought us to a small

dam where a Eurasian Coot was sitting on a nest, on an opposite bank we viewed an Australasian Grebe also nesting with her mate swimming nearby. The cars were driven to a shady isolated spot for lunch near the Historic Water Canal.

After lunch we wandered down a cycle path and to our delight we saw 2-3 pairs of Red-rumped Parrots visiting their nests, in the same tree two Dusky Woodswallows shared a limb.

From there we drove to Lake Nadungamba and Lake Gilingandum specifically to view Latham's Snipe, which we did as they flew by after being flushed out of the reeds by the "Secretary bird."

Our last area to be explored was the Banksia Theme Garden, there were small Banksias, not attracting any honeyeaters. Only a very dry riverbed and dam, but plenty of noise and noisy kids, no bird would dare fly by. At this point we 'called it a day' but not before seeing and hearing a Golden Whistler.

It was a lovely spring day to enjoy the company of others and to watch the birds. Thank you Betty for a great day.

### 52 Bird Species seen

Black Swan	Red-rumped Parrot	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Australian Wood Duck	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Dusky Woodswallow
Pacific Black Duck	Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoo	Grey Butcherbird
Hardhead	Laughing Kookaburra	Australian Magpie
Australasian Grebe	Superb Fairy-wren	Little Raven
Australian Pelican	Spotted Pardalote	Satin Bowerbird
Australian White Ibis	Striated Pardalote	Red-browed Finch
Purple Swamphen	White-browed Scrubwren	European Goldfinch
Dusky Moorhen	Yellow Thornbill	Welcome Swallow
Eurasian Coot	Little Wattlebird	Fairy Martin
Latham's Snipe	Noisy Miner	Red-whiskered Bulbul
Masked Lapwing	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Clamorous Reed-Warbler
Spotted Turtle-dove	Eastern Whipbird	Silvereye
Galah	Golden Whistler	Common Blackbird
Little Corella	Grey Shrike-thrush	Common Starling
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Magpie-lark	Common Myna
Rainbow Lorikeet	Grey Fantail	
Eastern Rosella	Willie Wagtail	



Masked Lapwing *Photos Tera Wheway*

### **BIRDING ABROAD The Lower Luangwa, Zambia**

**David Winterbottom**

Here is a vignette from a trip we made in September, 2006.

There was only a trickle of water running through the sand under the embankment below our camp (we had the honeymoon suite!) although the river bed must have been several hundred metres wide. However, there were pools enough to cool the hippos, with their attendant Redbilled Oxpeckers. It also brought in lots of birds - Egyptian Geese, White Crowned and Blacksmith Plovers were on the sands with Threebanded Plovers, Common Sandpipers and the occasional Greenshank, all overlorded by a magnificent African Eagle.

Lilacbreasted Rollers, Whitefronted and Little Bee-eaters hawked above the bank whilst many Pied and one Giant Kingfisher waited for an opportunity. Hundreds of Helmeted Guineafowl chuntered across the sand whilst, at a respectable distance, a pride of lions came out to sun bathe. Even further away some Giraffe stalked past.

A game walk yielded more animals than birds. First we skirted gingerly past a

couple of big Buffalo, then we met the pride of Lions who slowly backed off, followed by the rumblings of Elephant in the bush, so we quickly backed off. A large herd of Eland and some Giraffe were curious, and a young Leopard was great sighting. We stopped short of getting between a Hippo and its water hole at which there two small herds of Elephant. Then we passed close to a King Cobra on the way back. It was all rather too exciting to notice many birds, except for the flocks of Lillian's Lovebirds – not to be missed – the African equivalent of Budgies!

Marabou, Yellowbill, Saddlebill and Openbill storks were to be seen on nearby dambos (billabongs) as were a number of White-faced Duck and Spurwing Geese, the odd African Jacana and Black-winged Stilt, and just one Painted Snipe – very rare there apparently. The Great Egrets, Little Egrets and Cattle Egrets are the same as ours, but Grey and Blackheaded Herons

take the place of our Whitefaced Heron. Virtually every day in camp we saw Fork-tailed Drongos, Longtailed Glossy Starlings, Red-billed Quelia, Blue Waxbills, Bateleur and Tawny Eagles, Arrowmarked Babblers, Red-billed Hornbills and lots of Doves.

An evening drive, after a picnic sundowner overlooking the river, revealed a Pearl Spotted and a Giant Eagle Owl.

We spent a bit of time watching a pair of Water Dikkops (Thick-knees) before they took off to make their mournful cries. A Leopard, a Civet, several Large Spotted Genets, Porcupines and Scrub Hares made the evening more interesting. Back in camp the day finished with a sumptuous al fresco dinner under the stars, to the grumbling sound of hippos coming out for their nightly grazing and the eerie whoop of a hyena.

### **Those Bad table manners at Breakfast too !**

As often as I can, on a Sunday morning, I wander up the Mt Pleasant track and travel south along the Mt Keira ring track. On a clear morning it is delightful. Thankfully, very few people take advantage of this wonderful Wollongong resource and it is rare to see another bushwalker.

Lately, half way up the Mt Pleasant track, I have been serenaded by 'Larry' the lyrebird. Larry is unusual, at least in my experience, because he loves to sing not at ground level, but 5m up on a horizontal branch of a large red cedar. I suppose his voice travels further that way, and it gives the ladies more of a chance to catch his latest hits. It is truly wonderful to listen to his repertoire and to try to identify each call.

Along the ring track in July large rainforest trees are fruiting. There is a certain division of labour apparent here. First there are laurels with big black fruit that seem to be the favourite of Satin Bowerbirds. Green Catbirds are also present. Further

### **Roger Truscott**

still and the lilly pillys are absolutely laden with pale pink fruit. Here there has been in the past 2 weeks, a flock of about 30-40 Topknot Pigeons.

Their routine is constant. Catch the sun first on the bare branches of a red cedar to warm up and facilitate digestion, then at a time decided by one or many, off they all go to settle on the top branches of a nearby lilly pilly. You can hear the wing beats as the flock passes by, then the racket as they alight and fruit starts to hit the forest floor. I watched them closely and for every one berry eaten some 2 or 3 are dropped apparently with deliberation. Why should this be? Are they just messy eaters, or do they feel each fruit first, as you would avacadoes in a supermarket and, if not ripe, discard it (I am referring to the pigeons here of course). There is no shortage of fare here (unlike a Bondi tram), so such apparent wastefulness does not incur a penalty. Uncivilised behaviour or not, it is wonderful to watch such a brekky scene.

### **Of Birds and Poems**

### **John Douglas Pringle**

*The Scot, John Pringle, came to Australia, shortly after World War II. Pringle was editor of the Sydney Morning Herald, and later editor of the Canberra Times. This essay was published 35 years ago, in his book, On Second Thoughts, and records his astonishment at seeing the birds of Australia, which we so easily take for granted.*

Magpies and currawongs are only slightly shyer and less aggressive than kookaburras. The magpie sometimes attacks human beings in defence of its nesting site. In spite of this habit they are friendly and endearing birds, easily tamed and rightly popular. Their lovely melodious, yodeling call is one of the most beautiful of all Australian bird-calls, heard especially in the dawn.

As I have already said, I could fill an anthology of poems about the magpie, but two stand out in my mind as the most vivid and accurate. The first is by James McAuley:

The magpie's mood is never surly;  
Every morning waking early,  
He gargles music in his throat.  
The liquid squabble of his note,

Its silver stridencies of sound,  
The bright confusions and the round  
Bell-cadencies, are pealed  
Over the frosty half ploughed field.

Then swooping down self-confidently  
From the fence-post or the tree,  
He swaggers in pied feather coat  
And slips the fat worms down his throat.

Now Judith Wright:

Along the road the magpies walk  
With hands in pockets, left and right.  
They tilt their heads and stroll and talk.  
In their well-fitted black and white

They look like certain gentlemen  
Who seem most nonchalant and wise  
Until their meal is served – and then  
What clashing beaks, what greedy eyes!

But not one man that I have heard  
Throws back his head in such a song  
Of grace and praise – no man nor bird.  
Their greed is brief; their joy is long.  
For each is born with such a throat  
as thanks his God with every note.

It seems to me that an even an Eskimo who reads these two poems would know exactly what the magpie looks and sounds like.

.....  
The currawongs are less popular and have a bad reputation for bird-nesting and egg-robbing, but personally I cannot help liking this bold elegant black and white bird with its long tail and bright golden eyes, and its ringing cries, 'currawong, currawong,' as it swoops and flits from tree to tree. I am glad that Judith Wright shares my feelings:

The currawong has shallow eyes-  
Bold shallow buttons of yellow glass  
That see all round his sleek black skull.  
Small birds sit quiet when he flies;  
Mothers of nestlings cry *Alas!*  
He is a gangster, his wife's a moll.

But I remember long ago  
(a child beside the seldom sea)  
the currawongs as wild as night

quarreling, talking, crying so,  
in the scarlet-tufted coral-tree;  
and past them that blue stretch of light,

the ocean with its dangerous song.  
Robber then and robber still,  
he cries now with the same strange word  
(*currawong-currawong*)  
That from those coxcomb trees I heard.  
Take my bread and eat your fill,  
Bold, cruel and melodious bird.

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## TAWNY!

Professor Gisela Kaplan of the University of New England has recently released her book *Tawny Frogmouth* after years and years of study. 'This bird is heart-meltingly gorgeous as perhaps only a baby koala or a labrador puppy can be,' she says. 'And as individuals, Tawny frogmouths often have a charming disposition, very similar to that of parrots.'

Tawny Frogmouths, the only nocturnal birds living in backyards across most of the country have a darker side too. The irises of the male's eyes turn from yellow to red before they attack any male or female that enters their territory. They are the 'skunks of the air.' Sometimes they

ejaculate foul smelling faeces, 'with enormous force and also over a wide area,' perhaps to ward off snakes and monitor lizards that eat their eggs and chicks.

But these big-eyed fluffy birds also partner for life and are protective, devoted parents. 'Once the young have left the nest, the family tends to roost closely together.' By eating cockroaches, spiders, mice, centipedes, scorpions, snails and slugs, they help humans get rid of pests, but they are threatened by man-made inventions such as barbed wire and pesticides.

*From an article by Deborah Smith in the SMH 24.9.07*

## Mid week walk- Jamberoo 12/9/07

Those able to get to this mid week walk were well rewarded. The weather was perfect for being outdoors and the birds obviously appreciated the arrival of spring...leading to a bird count of 53! The turning circle outside the van Oudtshoorn's home soon filled with cars and Tom Wylie had already started the list before a party of 24 set off to find more elusive bird life.

After a browse around Nic and Daphne's property we crossed a footbridge over a tiny creek and ventured onto a friendly neighbour's land. Tales were told of resident Tawny Frogmouths and a count of 90 bird species observed over a year. I was able to point out to the knowledgeable Sylvia what stinging nettle looks like. She touched it just to check! It doesn't grow in

## Val Dolan

the part of Western Australia she knows so well. Walkers at the head of the group spotted a Kookaburra enter its nest in a hollow log. All of us had a perfect sighting of a raptor diving for prey on a grassy hill. Back at the starting point for morning tea Daphne offered a delicious freshly baked chocolate cake around. She was up early! A few visitors, well satisfied with their pleasant morning, left the group and the rest of us set off along the road .

Coral trees were a favourite spot with the birds and they seemed very territorial with sometimes three different species at different heights in the one tree. A creek follows the road, making it a perfect environment for bird life but it is private property and many KEEP OUT signs

reminded us of this fact. Fortunately arriving at the gate of Brigadoon we were told that the owners had agreed to let us explore their property. A walk along a grassy creek bank led to a precious stand of native trees. I reclined in the shade of an old gum tree and chatted to a local, who was trying to dispose of some crofton weed, about the privilege of living in harmony with wildlife. He has a long term resident carpet snake, nicknamed, Monty.

On the way back to the road our host at Brigadoon thoughtfully provided chilled tankwater for the group. Because of the prolific birdlife and the glorious day we finished later than usual and some members had to file off due to afternoon commitments, so we were less than 24 by this time. Apologies that the bird list is *Thanks to Val who had to write this report while under a distressing eye problem. Below is an interim bird list which we hope to enlarge on later.*

incomplete due to my mismanagement and in spite of Tom's three carefully recorded pages. Joan remarked that we hadn't seen any White-headed Pigeons or Brown Cuckoo Doves. As I rounded the back corner of my house a Brown Cuckoo fluttered away, one of 8 seen recently in my backyard by my neighbour. The same afternoon I enjoyed a cool drink on my front verandah and counted 10 White-headed Pigeons resting on the power lines. Driving home I had seen fields of Cattle Egrets in breeding plumage surrounding the local cattle at Jamberoo and horses at Kembla Grange. Thanks to Nic and Daphne and their friendly neighbours for allowing us to enjoy the native birds they obviously take pleasure in. A decision is to be made after 3rd October about tourist helicopter rides over this idyllic environment at Jamberoo Valley.

Australian Wood Duck	Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Golden Whistler
Chestnut Teal	Laughing Kookaburra	Rufous Whistler
Pied Cormorant	Variegated Fairy-wren	Magpie-Lark
Great Cormorant	Spotted Pardalote	Grey Fantail
White-faced Heron	Large-billed Scrubwren	Willie Wagtail
Brown Goshawk	Brown Gerygone	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Brown Falcon	Yellow Thornbill	Grey Butcherbird
Nankeen Kestrel	Striated Thornbill	Pied Currawong
Masked Lapwing	Noisy Miner	Australian Raven
Galah	New Holland Honeyeater	Green Catbird
Long-billed Corella	Eastern Spinebill	Satin Bowerbird
Australian King-Parrot	Eastern Whipbird	Welcome Swallow
Crimson Rosella	Eastern Yellow Robin	Common Myna

#### ....and Pieces

\* Neil Wheway suggested that a couple of speakers be purchased to enhance the sound quality when laptop and our projector is used with a DVD. The Committee asked Neil to investigate the prices of suitable speakers.

\* The Dubbo Field Naturalist and Conservation group, with whom we exchange Newsletters, are also celebrating their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Among other activities the group has recently planted 100+ wattles in a local reserve. They advertise the Australian Birdfair at Leeton on 15<sup>th</sup> to 18th November, and have an interesting article about the Birds Australia Gluepot Reserve in South Australia.

\* **Spitfire and Raptor Quiz** Answers

1. Merlin 2. Griffin 3. Eagle, Goshawk, Kestel, Peregrine, Vulture.

**OCTOBER CAMP Nymboida Canoe Centre, Nymboida nr Grafton 20-27<sup>th</sup> October**

The October Camp this year will be at the Nymboida Canoe Centre at Nymboida, which is 34km SW of Grafton, on the Armidale road. The centre is well signposted on the approach to the village. Neither food nor fuel is available in Nymboida, the nearest being in Grafton. Please make sure you leave Grafton with a full tank.

Travel to camp is via either the Pacific Hwy to South Grafton where you turn left onto the Gwydir Hwy for a short distance and then turn left at the roundabout onto the Armidale Road, or along the New England Hwy to Tamworth, then to Armidale where you take the Waterfall Way to Ebor and then turn along the Grafton Road. Either way it is close to 700km and an overnight stop is strongly recommended each way. The UBD map of either the Coffs Coast or Far North Coast NSW will give a good overall map of the area.

If you have not already added your name to the list of members attending the camp, please let Betty Hudson know on 02 4236 0307 or Mobile 0432 829 945 if you intend coming to the camp, so that accommodation can be booked for you.

Please note that there are no EFTPOS or Credit facilities at the Centre. Please bring the money for your camp fees with you, as payment will have to be made to the centre at the end of camp



Black-winged Stilt

*Photo Chris Chafer*