



Contact Call

*Birders of North Queensland
Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union:
North Queensland Group*

September 1995 ♦ Issue: Orange-footed Scrubfowl

OFFICE BEARERS

Convenor:

Graham Harrington (070) 965 051

Secretary: Jo Wieneke (077) 714 707
C/O P O Box 265, Townsville QLD 4810

Treasurer: Sue Clegg (077) 715 268
Fax (077) 715 899

Representatives:

Mackay: Bill Higham (079) 517 505

Bowen/Ayr: Jon Wren (077) 862 614
Townsville

David James (077) 751 507

Innisfail/Tully:

Klaus Uhlenhut (070) 655 181

Cairns: Lindsay Fisher (070) 581 164

Atherton Tablelands:

Elinor Scambler (070) 953 296

Cape York Peninsula:

Michael Barnett (070) 698 365

Western Queensland:

Peter Britton (077) 872 188

Ingham vacant

BNQ CALENDAR

Sept 23rd-24th Sat -Sun

Campout at Princess Hills. Contact local reps for more information closer to the time.

Oct 29th Sunday

A second visit to Redden Island (Cairns). This diverse habitat should prove an interesting area for regular monitoring. Meet at gate near toilet block on road to Barron River mouth, Machans Beach at 7am. (Contact Lindsay for confirmation of this field trip.)

GOULDIAN FINCH

SURVEY

Klaus Uhlenhut has been busy organising volunteers to do the Gouldian Finch survey. Those of you who put your name down as being interested in partaking will have had two letters by now.

Klaus has arranged with the owners of a property west of Georgetown to allow survey volunteers access. He is in the process of arranging the same with another property in the vicinity of Mount Carbine where there was a record of Gouldian Finches a few years ago. This area will be closer for Cairns volunteers and should prove interesting country for other sightings

Access to these properties will be only for members involved in the survey, so if you have a few days to spare and fancy sitting by a waterhole for a few hours, contact Klaus.

Any sightings of Gouldian Finches by members will be welcome, so keep notes of where, when, how many and adult/juvenile ratio and remember they are often in mixed flocks with other finch species.

Due to business commitments with his wildlife tours, Klaus will be away a lot, so it is best to write to him :- P O Box 133, Silkwood Qld 4856 or Fax 070 655197.

A male Chestnut Teal in breeding plumage was seen at Hasties Swamp (south of Atherton) on 26/7/95. It is unusual for this species to be seen so far north.
Keith Fisher

GULF SAVANNAH

The Gulf Savannah Tourist Organisation have recently produced a birdwatcher guide which they are promoting in both Wingspan and The Bird Observer. They are to be commended for their enterprise in publicising this wonderful "outback by the sea" as a top birdwatching area. However, those of you who have received the publication (along with maps and other tourist information) will realise this first edition needs to have its bird list of 261 species totally revised. They have produced it in a rather strange alphabetical order rather than a taxonomic one.

A letter of encouragement from BNQ will be sent along with a bird list in the correct order!

For those of you wishing to obtain a copy, please write to the G. S. T. O at 55 McLeod street, Cairns QLD 4870.

A NEW DEAL WITH SQUATTER PIGEONS

I read David James cry for help re the sub-species / hybridisation of the Squatter Pigeon *Geophaps scripta* (Contact Call June 1995) with nostalgic interest.

Back in March 1989, I was surveying an area in the Lucy Downs/Gray Creek area, towards Greenvale, N.Q. with Sgt Bob Fraser, the police officer responsible for the region. During the day we came across several small groups of Squatter Pigeons which, to my surprise, displayed exact 50/50 colouration of both forms within their orbital rings from loreal to eye-stripes! The upper 180° blue and the lower 180° red (OK, OK, it may have been vice-

versa, it has been a few years and I have not returned to the area since.) Notwithstanding, the sharp demarcation was somewhat striking and Bob told me that it was not uncommon for him to see such colour percentages in the orbital skin of this species in the area. Of genetic complement and geographic location, however, this quarter would certainly be a good place to start looking.

I hope I have been of help to you Dave and perhaps I have encouraged other readers to look out for similar features in the areas that they travel.

Frank Harrison

□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

MEMBERS CORNER

In the June issue of Contact Call we mentioned that we would like to hear from members especially outside the Townsville/Cairns regions. This issue we have included a postal address which will help those of you who want to submit information - sorry that it was missed off before!

We were pleased to hear from one member on the Tableland, Sybil Bottoms, who related her birding experiences in the eight years she has lived in Tineroo. She has a perfect "hide" in her front balcony which overlooks the Lake and has a backyard list of 120 species.

She mentions that the first two years she lived there that she had frequent visits from Blue-faced Honeyeaters, but since then they have disappeared and she has seen none in the region since. Do any other readers have any observations of this bird on the Tableland?

Sibyl says she would be happy for any members to use her "hide" if they are in the area. Please give her a ring first (070) 958181.

NEWS FROM AFRICA

BNQ members Kath Shurcliff and Dave Houghton have been living in Tanzania for twelve months now (doesn't time fly!).

A recent letter made us all drool with casual mention of a Greater Famingo flying past and Crab Plovers in their "front yard". Kath is still trying to crack her 1000 species for Africa - Dave is over 500 now and still going strong. They are planning a trip to Madagascar in September with Brian Finch - another 100 endemics for Kath to aim for!

If anyone would like to drop them a line their address is P.O. Box 1920, Tanga, Tanzania, Africa.

Ys Ys

BIRD NAMES FOR THE NINETIES!

We hope you have studied the new taxonomic order of birds and are impressing your birding friends with mention of Nankeen Kestrels and Bush Stone Curlews - just like the old days! Don't dare let a hylacola or a calamanthus trip off your lips ever again - well not until "they" decide to change the names again!

We all have our favourite abbreviations of bird names and we would love to hear from you if you have one.

Fresh from our new list comes RODO's - yes instead of saying Feral Pigeon, sorry Rock Dove, comes this simple way of describing a bird we would all rather do without!

In order to help BNQ members with the new taxonomic order, we have produced in list of 494 species that can be seen from Mackay north and west to the border. Send a stamped addressed envelope to Lindsay Fisher, PO Box 2209 Cairns QLD 4870 if you want a copy. Needless to say, we would love to get 500 on the list, so please let us know if we have missed any off!

OUT WEST

Sitting beside Cumberland Dam in the shade of a tree watching flocks of Budgerigars wheel around in a clear blue

sky must be one of the best outback experiences to have. In just a two hour period over lunch time we saw 51 species at this location west of Georgetown including three Banded Lapwings - always great to see. Flocks of juvenile Rufous-throated Honeyeaters without a rufous throat fooled us for a while!

This is just one of the many places to visit when you head west of the great divide. The contrast in birding from the lush green of the coast to the yellow and browns of the outback is huge. It is a constant delight to enjoy the different species that inhabit these wide open spaces and is amazing just how many birds can be seen in such dry areas. Three species of woodswallow in one tree, five species of finches coming in to drink at a waterhole and Wedge-tailed Eagles flying alongside you as you drive along a track.

Make the effort - GO WEST, you won't be disappointed!

Lindsay Fisher

CONTRIBUTIONS PLEASE!

We would love to hear from local representatives and members. If any one has any sightings, reports or comments please fax them to Lindsay (070) 312 748 or Sue (077) 715 899

Deadline for the December issue is 31/10/95. We look forward to hearing from you!



Megapodius reinwardt