

CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST

November 1991

No 173



THE MONTH AT SANDON

The birds seen at the bird bath during September were

Wrens

Honeyeaters - yellow faced and brown headed.

Robins - scarlet (a pair) and eastern yellow (a pair)

Grey fantail (a pair)

Thornbills - striated, brown, and buff rumped.

Birds seen on the property were

Magpies

Galahs

Grey currawong (pair)

Hooded robins (pair)

Grey shrike-thrush

Jacky winter (pair)

Golden whistler (pair)

Rufous whistler (pair)

Varied sittellas

Pallid cuckoo

Willy wagtail

Common bronzewing (pair)

Red wattlebirds

Speckled warbler

Masked lapwing

Rosellas - eastern (pair)

Sulphur-crested cockatoo

White-naped honeyeater

Yellow-tufted honeyeaters

Fuscous honeyeater

White-winged choughs

Black-faced cuckoo-shrike (pair)

Welcome swallow (pair)

Yellow-rumped thornbills

Silvereyes

Kookaburras

Pardalotes-spotted & striated

Richard's pipit

Olive-backed oriole (heard)

List supplied by Suzanna Starr.

[This is a total of 39 species. Can any other member of the Club equal this number?]

HONEYEATERS WEST OF WYALONG

Contributed by Simon Kennedy.

I always thought of the Goldfields forests as the best to find honeyeaters, but south of West Wyalong in Central N.S.W. has the best and most prolific and conspicuous collection of honeyeaters that I have ever seen.

The forest adjacent to the Newell Highway (turn west at a sign that says "Kildary 14") is an interesting contrast to the typical ironbark-box forest that we had seen in Victoria in the Tarnagulla area. The trees are silver-leaved ironbarks and grey box (an educated guess, not anything to go by) and a fairly thick understory of wattles and other low shrubs and a few cypress-pines scattered throughout.

The first thing we noticed was loud calling and squabbling of the spiny-cheeked honeyeaters, (sometimes 7 or 8 occupied one branch) and as we began to look more closely, yellow-plumed honeyeaters were common as were the more familiar white-plumed honeyeaters, and small battalions of brown-headed honeyeaters swept through much in the same way as they do at home. White-eared honeyeaters sat unobtrusively, watching the day go by, and a striped honeyeater was found later as well as a singing honeyeater. All of these species were seen in about 10 or 15 minutes.

On the way home, about three weeks later, we stopped at the same place.

We saw 10 species of honeyeaters in a very short time. This time, as well as seeing the above-mentioned, we saw a small colony of white-rumped miners. We went to the regrowth area across the Kildary Road (not across the highway). Here the high-pitched "pee" of the black honeyeater came my way. This was my first look at this diminutive creature. The black honeyeaters allowed some very good views indeed, and were quite approachable.

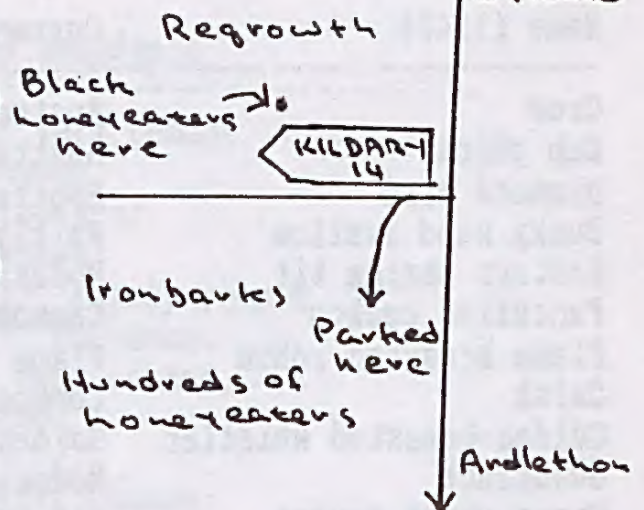
Brown headed honeyeaters were very numerous during the second visit. It was quite a spectacle and it was an added bonus in a rewarding holiday.

We rested in the regrowth, and a branch nearby carried a brown-headed, a white-eared and then a white-plumed honeyeater. in quick succession. The honeyeaters were everywhere you looked. It was a superb study of this family of birds.

Black-faced woodswallows, peaceful doves, and small birds were seen here as well. But the honeyeaters took centre stage. I can't express the bewildering array and diversity and ease of observation of the honeyeaters.

Honeyeaters seen were

- Spiny-cheeked honeyeater (very numerous)
- Striped honeyeater (one)
- Yellow-plumed honeyeater (common)
- White-plumed honeyeater (common)
- Brown-headed honeyeater (quite numerous)
- Singing honeyeater (a handful)
- Black honeyeater (a handful)
- White-eared honeyeater (a handful)
- Red wattlebird (only one)
- White-rumped miner (a small colony)



All these birds were seen in that small area in two visits which would together comprise about one hour.

[Next issue: Rainbow beach - a sub-tropical birdwatch]

SUTTON GRANGE BIRD LIST 1942

Compiled by Mr Cox in 1942.

Name (1942)	Current name and abundance
Aust bee-eater	Rainbow bee-eater. Seasonal visitor.
Barn owl	Population varies with season.
Bearded honeyeater	Yellow-winged honeyeater? Fairly common.
Black cormorant	Little black cormorant. F. common on dams.
Black duck	Pacific black duck. Common on larger dams.
Blackbird	Common. Introduced bird.
Black-faced cuckoo-shrike	Common.
Black-faced honeyeater	Yellow-tufted honeyeater. Common.
Blue crane	White-faced heron. Common.
Blue wren	Superb fairy wren. Common
Boobook owl	Southern boobook. Occasionally seen.
Bottle swallow	Fairy martin. Moderately common.
Bronze cuckoo	Horsefield's cuckoo or Shining bronze cuckoo.
Bronzewinged pigeon	Common bronzewing. Moderately common.
Brown hawk	Brown falcon. Common in paddocks.
Brown tree-creeper	Common.
Bush lark	Singing bushlark? Rare.
Butcher bird	Grey butcher bird. Rare.
Cat bird	Grey-crowned (rare) or white-browed babbler.
Caterpillar eater	White-winged triller.
Cockatoo parrot	Cockatiel. Uncommon.
Corella	Long-billed corella. Fairly common.
Crimson parrot	Crimson rosella. Common.
Curlew	Southern stone curlew? Formerly was common.

Name (1942)	Current name and abundance
Crow	Australian raven and little raven both occur.
Dab chick	Australasian grebe. Common on dams.
Diamond bird	Spotted pardalote. Common.
Dusky wood swallow	Fairly common.
Eastern shrike tit	Moderately common.
Fantailed cuckoo	Common.
Flame breasted robin	Flame robin. Common winter visitor.
Galah	Common.
Golden-breasted whistler	Golden whistler. Moderately common.
Goldfinch	Moderately common. Introduced.
Green grass parrot	Red-rumped parrot. Common in grassy areas.
Greenleek	Musk lorikeet. Common.
Grey bell magpie	Grey currawong. Moderately common.
Grey falcon	Uncommon.
Ground lark	Pipit.
Harmonius thrush	Grey shrike-thrush. Common.
House swallow	Welcome swallow. Very common.
Jackass	Laughing kookaburra. Common.
Jacky winter	Common.
Kestrel hawk	Australian kestrel. Common.
Leatherhead	Noisy or Little friarbird. Both are rare.
Magpie	Abundant.
Masked woodswallow	Uncommon.
Miner	Noisy miner. Common in redgum areas.
Mistletoe bird	Moderately common.
Mudlark	Australian magpie lark. Common.
Nankeen night heron	Rather uncommon.
Olive-backed oriole	Fairly common.
Olive-winged nuthatch	Orange-winged sittella. Fairly common.
Owlet nightjar	Moderately common.
Pallid cuckoo	Fairly common.
Pectoral rail	Buff-banded rail? Rare.
Pied bell magpie	Pied currawong. Common visitor.
Powerful owl	Recent records for Mt Alexander.
Red backed parrot	Red rumped parrot. See green grass-parrot.
Red browed finch	Red-browed firetail. Common.
Reed warbler	Clamorous reed warbler. Common in reed beds.
Regent honeyeater	Rare. Decreasing in numbers.
Ring eye	Silver eye. Common.
Robin red capped	Red-capped robin. Uncommon.
Rosella	Eastern rosella. Common.
Rufous breasted whistler	Rufous whistler. Common.
Sacred king fisher	Sacred kingfisher. Occasionally seen.
Sand piper	Black-fronted dotterel. Common on dams.
Scarlet breasted robin	Scarlet robin. Common.
Scissors grinder	Restless flycatcher. Fairly common.

Name (1942)	Current name and abundance
Scrub tit	Brown thornbill? Very common.
Shell parrot	Budgerigar. Uncommon.
Sparrow	Very common. Introduced.
Sparrow hawk	Collared sparrowhawk?
Spine bill	Eastern spinebill. Fairly common.
Spotted finch	Diamond firetail. Uncommon.
Spur winged plover	Masked lapwing. Very common.
Starling	Common. Introduced.
Straw necked ibis	Common.
Striated tit-warbler	Striated thornbill. Common.
Sulphur crested cockatoo	Common.
Swan	Common on larger bodies of water.
Swift	White-throated needletail or fork-tail swift.
Tawny frogmouth	Fairly common.
Teal	Grey teal. Fairly common on large dams etc.
Wattle bird	Red wattlebird. Very common.
Wedge tailed eagle	Common.
White cheeked honeyeater	Yellow winged honeyeater. See Bearded H.E.
White eared honeyeater	Common.
White fronted chat	Fairly common.
White plumed honeyeater	Very common
White shafted fantail	Grey fantail. Very common.
White throated treecreeper	Common.
White winged chough	Common.
Willy wagtail	Very common.
Wood duck	Maned duck. Common near dams.
Yellow faced honeyeater	Common.
Yellow plumed honeyeater	Most uncommon in this district.
Yellow tailed tit	Yellow rumped thornbill. Very common.

[The current names were found by first looking up old editions of Leech and Cayley. Comments from readers are invited].

NOTES FOR OCTOBER

COPPER ELTHAM BUTTERFLY grubs were found on the club's excursion to the botanical gardens. The majority of bursaria bushes were found to be without sign of grubs or ants. Some bushes appeared to have been heavily grazed but were without sign of the caterpillars.

BUSTARDS, ORANGE CHATS and CRIMSON CHATS were seen in the Little Desert by K Turner and M Oliver. These were new records.

INDIAN MYNAB has been seen near the junction of Barkers Creek and Forest Creek. (IH). This would be the first record we have for it in the centre of the town.

HAWK TAKES SPARROW. A hawk was seen to catch a sparrow in the house yard. (EK)

FROGS are plentiful at Harcourt at present. (BE).

PAINTED HONEYEATER is nesting again at Fryerstown. (C&CN).

CUCKOOS appear to be plentiful again this year. Fan-tailed, pallid and bronze cuckoos have been heard and seen many times. Will the population continue to increase, year by year until host birds become very scarce?

BELL'S SWAMP BIRD LIST

Bird list for 28/9/91 by Philip West.

Sacred ibis	Willie wagtail	Chestnut-breasted shelduck
Magpie	Masked lapwing	Black-winged stilt
House sparrow	Galah	White-plumed honeyeater
Black swan	Australian shoveller	Yellow-billed spoonbill
Grey teal	White-eyed duck	Pink-eared duck
Wood duck	Little grebe	White-faced heron
Little raven	Red-rumped parrot	Black-tailed native hen
Kookaburra	Richard's pipit	Black-fronted dotterel
Pacific heron	Musk lorikeet	Red wattlebird
Coot	Australian raven	Superb fairy wren
Magpie lark	Black duck	Dusky moorhen
Little corella	Long-billed corella	Yellow-rumped thornbill
Starling	White-fronted chat	Black-faced cuckoo-shrike
Fairy martin	Brown tree creeper	Little pied cormorant

[This is an impressive list. The Australian shoveller, Pink-eared duck, Black-tailed native-hen and Black-winged stilt all on the one excursion makes this a most successful outing.]

KALIMNA COMMITTEE HAS 20th BIRTHDAY

Dear Members of Castlemaine Field Nats

The members of the Kalimna Park Preservation Committee are holding a small gathering on Sunday 24th November, 2.30 pm at the rotunda in Kalimna Park to celebrate the 20th anniversary of its inaugural meeting. The committee members are inviting former members and members of organisations which have been associated with them over the years. Afternoon tea will be served.

They would be pleased if a representative of your organisation could come to this gathering. Will you please let us know if you are able to attend by ringing Ken Cooper on 72 1676 by 14th of November.

CUP MOTHS

Many of the local forests appear to be almost dead. Many of the trees have lost most of their leaves, and the forest has a dark-brown appearance, rather like that in the middle of a severe drought.

The cause is the result of a plague of defoliating caterpillars. The caterpillars are the larvae of the cup moth. The caterpillars are green in colour with tufts of coloured stinging hairs. Other names for the caterpillars include Chinese junks and stinging joes.

They eat gum leaves. Sometimes they skeletonise the leaf, and at others they eat the entire leaf. Sometimes a tree will be almost completely defoliated. The name 'cup moth' is given because the cocoon looks like a small cup.

Not all of the caterpillars pupate. many apparently fall off and die. Certainly a car left under a tree in the forest soon has numbers of the caterpillars on it.

Ravens appear to be one of the few birds to eat the cup moth caterpillars, and ravens can be noticed more often in the forest now than at other times.

Some of the areas with dense infestations are the Chewton forest south of ETTY Street, and the Muckleford and Smith's Reef forests. It will be interesting to see how the forest recovers.



SUPPER: Nov 8: K Meehan & B Envall Dec 13: E Duffin & B Maund

COMMITTEE: Ern Perkins (Pres), Chris Norwood (VP), Rita Mills (Newsletter), Maggie Oliver (VP), Barbara Maund (Sec), Kaye Turner, Enid Hall, Beris Perry, Clodagh Norwood (Treas), George Broadway, Brenda Envall.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Newsletter posted - subscription plus \$6

Student/Pensioner	\$7	Single	\$10
Supporting	\$20	Family	\$15

CASTLEMAINE F.N.C. PROGRAM

- Sat 2 Nov. KALIMNA WALK.** 9.30 a.m. as part of garden festival. There is a charge for non CFNC members. Meet Kalimna Circuit track.
- Fri 8 Nov. BONY-BIG FELLA BIRDO** - an examination to references in birds in the Arthur Upfield novels about the Aboriginal detective, Napoleon Bonaparte. Talk by Pat Bingham. High School at 8.00 pm.
- Sat 9 Nov. TIPPERARY SPRINGS.** Walk from the springs to Twin Bridges. Leader R. Mills. 1.30 pm at SEC, Mostyn Street. Leader R. Mills.
- Thurs 28 Nov. BUSINESS MEETING.** 38 Campbell St at 7.30 p.m.
- Fri 13 Dec. MEMBERS & VISITORS NIGHT.** Program provided by members. Bring a plate.
- Sat 14 Dec. TARADALE.** Taradale bushland and/or The Cascades. 1.30 at SEC, Mostyn St. Bring afternoon tea.
- Fri 14 Feb. TWO ASPECTS OF VICTORIA.** Walking in the Glenelg River district with Beris Perry and George Broadway, and the Bogong High Plains with Chris Norwood. 8.00 pm at the high school. This is the annual meeting.
- Mar 6-9. THE BASIN CAMPOUT.** Labour Day weekend, 1992, hosted by Field Nat Club of Victoria. Held at The Basin Youth and Convention Centre. Excursions to National Herbarium, Botanic gardens, Westgate wetlands, Dandenongs (geology and botany), Chandler's Hill, MMBW farm at Werribee, Doongalla Forest and Studley Park. Cost \$80 (full accommodation). Details from E. Perkins. Booking closes 7 February.
- Fri 10 April. MISTLETOES.** Talk by Malcolm Calder.
- Sat 11 April. MISTLETOE EXCURSION.** Excursion to Gaash Road.
- Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Inc.** P.O. Box 324, Castlemaine 3450.
- MEETINGS:** Second Friday of each month (Jan excepted) at Castlemaine High School at 8.00 p.m. Business meetings on the fourth Thursday at 38 Campbell St at 7.30 p.m. All members are invited to attend. Visitors are invited to attend the Club's sessions.